



July 17, 2022

mini G ocean race packs a mighty punch

Twenty knot winds and pumping swell had sweat and adrenalin flowing in equal measure for 120 paddlers on 54 craft lining up yesterday for the first of two epic downwind races in far north Queensland.

For many years, mini G has been considered a 'little sister' to the Great Barrier Reef Ocean Challenge (GBROC), one of Australia's most iconic iron and changeover events over 45 kilometres from Yorkeys Knob to Port Douglas.

But with a change of format and mother nature turning on some awesome and challenging downwind conditions, there's no doubt mini G has grown up to be a fantastic ocean race in its own right.

The shorter 14.5km course took paddlers on a downwind run from Yorkeys Knob beach, around Scout's Hat and Double Island and back to the finish line at Ellis Beach.

It proved an epic ride with seasoned ski paddlers crushing in just on one hour, while novice OC6 crews, including paddlers competing in their very first marathon, took a little longer to negotiate the conditions.

Craft making a first appearance in the mini G-GBROC, included Savage Canoe's v3 with sail as well as a crew of foil paddlers led by world record holder James Casey from Sydney. Seeing their winged boards fly half a metre above the swell had to be seen to be believed but you needed to be quick – James finished ten minutes clear of the pack in just 50:41.

Overall line honours went to ocean ski paddlers Todd Boreland (Northern Beaches) who at 1:00:23, just edged out Peter Dorries (Mooloolaba) 1:00:38 and Alex Pawlow (Cairns Ocean Ski Paddlers) 1:01:48.

Australian outrigger champion Matt Abbott from Coconuts OCC (1:05:24) looked at ease in his own backyard finishing in front of Mooloolabah's Andrew McAleenan and Sunset Bay's Jerry Turvey.

Julie Stanton was the first woman over the line in her first competitive race with Cairns Ocean Ski Paddlers, and Australian outrigger marathon champion Robyn Saultry taking line honours in 1:17:22 and gold in senior master women ahead of Mission Beach's Claire James. Naomi Turvey from Sunset Bay took out master women's in 1:23:48.

Hometown heroes were Andrew Buckley and Beal Beal (Hekili OCC) finishing first in master men's OC2 (1:06:18), while Mission Beach brothers Flynn and Gus Rowe took 1:09:53 ahead of Marlin Jones and Austin Wythes (Hekili) in open men's division.

Another sibling combination from Mission Beach, Azariah and Eliana Wigley-Gill, took out the open women's OC2 (1:22:55) ahead of Dam Outrigger's Jessy Carlow and Kyra Long; with father and daughter Ralph and Steph Seed (Dam OCC) teaming up to win open mixed division in 1:16:53.

Hekili OCC had crews win gold in Unlimited open men's (1:14:23), open women (1:19:20); novice open women (1:26:29) and golden master women (1:35:53), while Coconuts took out open mixed (1:18:51) ahead of Hekili and Bluefins Dragon Boat.

Hekili Outriggers president Charlie McKillop said the event was everything the club had hoped it would be after making the decision to host mini G and GBROC over two weekends.

"For so long mini G has been seen as an add-on or a step-up to the main event but what we witnessed on the weekend is it's a fantastic event in its own right," she said.

"It augers well for future growth of the event when we can offer paddlers from around Australia and the world two, awesome downwind races in our beautiful tropical waters, as well as a paddling holiday in paradise. Who wouldn't want to do that?"

Overall top 10 across the line:

1 James Casey, Coach Casey Club (Foil, OM) 50:41; **2** Todd Boreland, Northern Beaches Sydney (OSki SMM) 1:00:23; **3** Peter Dorries, Mooloolaba (OSki SMM) 1:00:38; **4** Alexander Pawlow, Cairns Ocean Ski Paddlers (OSki MM) 1:01:48; **5** Craig Fowler, Port Noarlunga SA (OSki MM) 1:05:24; **6** Matt Abbott, Coconuts OCC (OC1 MM) 1:05:24; **7** Beal Beal-Andrew Buckley, Hekili OCC (OC2 MM) 1:06:18; **8** Adam Beale, NQ Ocean Ski Paddlers (OSki MM) 1:07:32; **9** David Ahmed, Indian Ocean Paddlers (OSki SMM) 1:08:29 **10** Danny Topfer, Brisbane OCC (OSki SMM) 1:08:29; **11** Brett Mesner, Cairns SLSC (OSki OM) 1:09:09; **12** Flynn & Gus Rowe, Mission Beach (OC2 OM) 1:09:53; **13** Andrew McAleenan, Mooloolaba (O1 OM) 1:10:49; **14** Ross Bannerman, Coral Sea OCC (OSki GMM) 1:10:49; **15** Marlin Jones-Austin Wythes, Hekili (OC2 OM) 1:12:11; **16** Graeme Bower, Palaranda Pussies (OSki PMM) 1:12:36; **17** Julie Stanton, Cairns Ocean Ski Paddlers (OSki SMW) 1:12:36; **18** Chris Marais, Coral Coast Outlaws (OSki SMM) 1:13:37; **19** Muz Latham, Noosa (OSki GMM) 1:13:40; **20** Hekili, Jesse Cowley (OC6 unlimited OM) 1:14:23.

OC6 results:

Open Men unlimited craft, **1** Hekili (steerer, Jesse Cowley) 1:14:23; **2** Hekili (Greg Lyell) 1:16:24; OW **1** Hekili (Jude Kennedy) 1:19:20; Novice Women **1** Hekili (EJ Mattheson) 1:26:29; OpenMx, **1** Coconuts OCC (Adrian Darveniza); 1:18:51 **2** Hekili (Hilary Brown, steerer) 1:19:09; GMW, **1** Hekili (Joanne Stonehouse) 1:35:53.

For complete results, go online to:

<https://www.webscorer.com/racedetails?raceid=283373&did=334776>