

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH WAHINE CLASSIC 2017

The ocean delivered challenging waves to the contestants at this year's WB Wahine Classic, celebrating its fifth anniversary! As we negotiated sporadic storm conditions, the girls maneuvered through waves as big as they are, and performed admirably, scoring points for multiple turns per wave.

Our standout on the amateur side is Callie Summerlin of Surf City, NC, and Roanoke, Virginia. Her high scores of 9.2 and 8.2 out of a possible perfect 10 definitely set the mark for the rest of the competitors. Competing in short and long board categories, she advanced through both divisions with high scores, placing first in both!

On the pro side, our star is Kat Neff of Carolina Beach, NC, winning pro short board and placing 2nd in pro long board. Kat is on her way to her freshman year at University North Florida, with her contest winnings in her pocket!

In the five years since transitioning from the East Coast Wahine Championships to the Wrightsville Beach Wahine Classic, some of our local girls have stepped up their game. Contestants Samantha Newkirk, Gabby Viorel and Katelyn Sewell, dedicated SNC competitors, both finaled in their respective long and short board events. These girls, along with Virginia Beach contestants Camden Hoover and Rachel Wilson, and South Carolina Bree Labiak, surf short board and long board with impressive skill. South Carolina surfer Bailey Kaiser competes here every year, making the finals. Local Alyssa Parker also scored her personal best, winning Girls short board. Most of these girls also competed in the tandem event, which is a crowd favorite. The SUP surf event has grown, with Camden Hoover making the final with much older competitors! Camden gets the "most heats surfed" award! Our local / international SUP star, April Zilg, placed first in SUP surf. She somehow fit our event into her packed event schedule! On Sunday, during finals, lightning caused the contest to go on hold during two of the final heats. As finals reconvened, the Pro Long board final was held in a downpour. Hundreds of spectators and many competitors lined the beach anyway, watching Karson Lewis and Kat Neff walk to the nose. Both girls were hanging 5 toes over the nose, and Karson hung 10 for the win! Mother / daughter team Jo and Leilani Pickett also competed together in this final, splitting peaks. Much cheering ensued, almost as much as the tandem event! Leilani first surfed this wahine contest in 1997, when she was 7 years old. She is now 27, still surfs this event, and makes the event poster each year. This year's "best maneuver awards" go to Grace Muckenfuss, 2nd place finalist in pro short board, and Karson Lewis, 1st place finalist pro long board.

The support of community businesses is heartwarming, and allows this event to continue. Thirty local businesses contributed to this event. Our event sponsor, Marine Warehouse Center, contributes the biggest financial donation to support our Wahine Classic. This family business supports surfing, especially for girls, including the owner's two daughters!

Our next sponsor tier includes supporters Oceanic Restaurant, The Blockade Runner Resort Hotel, Maddie Merriweather, Crystal South Surf Community, Wilmington Oral Surgery, and Intracoastal Realty.

The surf shops that donated product for awards are Aussie Island, Surf City Surf Shop, 17th St Surf Shop, South End Surf Shop, Hot Wax Surf Shop, Sweetwater Surf Shop, and Recon Surf Shop. Distributors Eastern Skateboard Supply, Dakine, L Space, Sea Folly, and Rip Curl also donated product.

South End Surf Shop owner Jeff DeGroot hosted our Friday evening social, cooking hot dogs and providing space for competitors to check in and enjoy Kent Knorr of North Carolina Ukulele Academy (www.alohau.com) as he played for our families. Upstairs at Sundays Café, owner Marissa graciously provided space for film screening, where Cucalorus organizer Dan Brawley screened short films produced by women, featuring women surfers. Local competitor Samantha Newkirk presented her films as they screened. Businesses who also contributed are Tower 7 (Live Eat Surf), Cape Fear Commercial, Clontz Newkirk Real Estate Group, Wrightsville Beach Landscaping, Thomson, Corder and Co., Carolina Marine Terminal, Old Fort Construction, and Bob King Buick GMC. Jimmy Johns fed sub sandwiches to everyone on the beach during the entire weekend, and Surf Berry brought their famous smoothies to us on Sunday. King Neptune Restaurant teamed up with Surf City Surf Shop to provide a pink surfboard for the raffle, and Recon Surf Shop donated a rinse kit for the raffle.

Thank you to everyone involved for your support. The one group that is most important in the setup, execution, and takedown of this entire event, and absolutely the best administrative team, is the Southern North Carolina District Director Amy Rose, and her husband Sandy, along with Rhonda Yohe, announcer Mike Beech, and Mary Ann Mangiacapre. Our judges include Eric Knight, Steven Mangiacapre, John Sideris, Mason Yohe, Dylan Stone, Brennan Plotner, and Jed Jeffrey. Big “props” to scaffolding crew Johnny Langone, Craig Newkirk, and Will McEachern, and t shirt design and print CSI Promotions. Also, thank you to Daniel and Maria Thompson, and Peter Lamporte for their financial support. Our beautiful award trophies were hand made by Bev Cordero in Puerto Rico! Bev is from Emerald Isle, NC. Our faithful photographer, Ed Potter, as well as Susan Yerry, Rob of East Coast Surf Project, Michelle Leyrer, Grace Muckenfuss and others graciously endured the long hours, crazy weather, and provide all their photos on social media free of charge!

Support sometimes comes from unexpected places. Will Page and Intracoastal Realty teamed up to fund and produce the contest video that you can view on our community facebook page, Wrightsville Beach Wahine Classic, and business facebook page Crystal South Surf Camp. This video will also be linked to our website, www.wahineclassic.com. Ellen Bassett of Maddie Merriweather designed and updated this website daily for 3 months!

And so, this contest is a wrap. Until next year, girls, keep surfing and enjoying each others' company!

Jo Pickett

www.crystalsouthsurfcamp.com

www.wahineclassic.com