

HENNESSEY'S INTERNATIONAL PADDLEBOARD CHAMPIONSHIP EMBRACES PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Honolulu – (July 19, 2005) - - Relocating from Oahu's North Shore to South Shore, this Saturday's \$10,000 Hennessey's International Paddleboard Championship will showcase the past, present and future of the sport in an 8-mile course from Hawaii Kai to Kaimana Beach, Waikiki.

Australian lifeguard Jamie Mitchell, 28, is in the midst of a fourth consecutive undefeated season, having blitzed international fields in the recent 4th of July Independence Day sprint, the 17-mile Cline Mann, and the 18-mile Hennessey's US Championships in California last weekend. Mitchell will head an anticipated field of 175 paddlers this Saturday, as he sets out in defense of his fourth Hennessey's International title. His strongest opposition this year is expected to come from Hawaii pair Guy Pere and Brian Rocheleau, as well as California's Ryan Addison.

But while Mitchell represents the face of paddleboarding's present, the Hennessey's International will also showcase the past and future. A new addition to this year's format is the stand-up division – a throwback to the Beachboys of Waikiki who used to surf the South Shore using canoe paddles to power themselves into the waves. This style has enjoyed a resurgence over the past 12 months and Race Director Dolan Eversole anticipates the stand-up division will be hotly contested.

“These guys are really serious about what they're doing and I've a feeling we're going to see some really fast times come from them,” said Eversole. “They might even be up there with the leaders.”

Unlike the regular paddleboarders who race under the power of their two arms only, the stand-up division allows the use of any type of board and a paddle similar to an outrigger canoe paddle to propel themselves along. It is a difficult style that incorporates the balance of standing, the skill of stand-up surfing as they ride the swells, and the alternating stroke of a paddle.

The finish line area at Kaimana Beach will also host the future of the sport, with a free keiki race for children under the age of 16. This division has been included this year in recognition of the growth of paddleboarding and the surge in interest among rising youngsters who will become the future champions of the sport. Soft boards will be provided by the North Shore Lifeguard Association. Children will also receive a lycra racing shirt free of charge, as well as trophies. Registration for the keiki race will take place at 12:30p.m. at Kaimana Beach.

The Hennessey's International Paddleboard Championship covers the 8 mile distance from Hawaii Kai to Kaimana Beach, Waikiki. The race will start at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 23rd, ending at Kaimana Beach shortly after noon for the first finishers.

This year's race will be dedicated to the late Dale Velzy, who sadly passed away May 26, 2005. A legendary surfer, surfboard shaper and paddleboard maker, Velzy is also credited with naming one of Oahu's well-known North Shore surf spots: Velzyland, or V-land. A paddleboarder himself, Velzy had a major impact on the design of paddleboards and is credited as having been one of the top designers of the day, as well as playing a critical role in keeping the sport of paddleboarding alive when it was waning in the shadows of evolving shortboard surfing during the mid-20th century. There will be a lei ceremony to start the race in Velzy's honor, as well as a floral drop from an overhead helicopter.

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