

Battle of the Wedge - Plett bodyboarders take on SA's best

Titles are on the line and pride is set to take centre stage as our country's best bodyboarders are doing battle at one of SA's most desirable bodyboarding venues, The Wedge in Plettenberg Bay, right now. GARETH WHITE reports.

THIS year marks the 14th annual Wedge Classic, which started yesterday and concludes on Friday July 11, making it the longest running SA Bodyboarding Association

(SABA) event ever. This year's Wedge is kindly sponsored by FNB, Robberg Fine Foods, Reef Wetsuits, Science Bodyboards and Pam Golding Properties, in association with Off

thehook, The Surf Shop, Surf Café and Flashbacks.

Local rider and current SA men's champion Ryan Jucker, 27, and his girlfriend of eight years and top ladies competitor, Lyndall Pells, 23, will have to be on top form to withstand the onslaught of competition in their respective divisions.

Jucker will be hoping to make it three in a row, having claimed victory in last year's Wedge Classic and SA Champs, both held in Plett.

The Wedge is known for its fickle nature and a lot will depend on the forces of nature as to whether competitors are granted that perfect swell.

"The Wedge seems to favour a solid south-west ground swell which seems to unleash the deeper inner beast that few have experienced and many have dreamt about. Its banks were almost shattered after the floods last year and only over the last couple of months have we seen



WILD WEDGE: Lyndall Pells in action

glimpses of return to the old form," said Jucker.

He will try and adopt the same "free surf" strategy that served him well last year. "Worrying too much about impressing the judges changes my style of surfing to my detriment, so I'll try to have as much fun as possible," he said. Let's hope this allows him to bust the big moves he is known for.

"The best thing about contests is that you are forced to step up a few levels. I'm keen to see Wesley Potts, Jamie Higgins and Wayne Beekman ride as

they always bring their A-game to the Wedge," added Jucker.

Competition will be just as fierce for Pells, who will face off against current SA ladies champ and SA team rider, Pamela Bowren. Added to that pressure, Pells feels the pinch of having grown up in Plett and always being asked the same question by locals: "Are you going to win?"

"I have learnt to laugh it off and just relax, otherwise I always lose it in the finals. I love competing with other girls at the Wedge because it is such a great

wave and it's easy to ride. I often find myself encouraging competitors in the heats - I just get so amped and want them to also experience what I do all year round," said Pells.

Other local contenders to watch are Sampi Kamffer, Chris Bosman, Justin Lindsay, Murray van Vuuren and Geline Derbyshire. The event marks the conclusion of the SABA tour for 2008 and with coveted tour titles on offer, spectators are assured of a dazzling conclusion.

Besides the action taking place in the surf there will be plenty of beach activities throughout the day to promote the healthy family environment and cool lifestyle associated with bodyboarding. For a little extra action organisers will run an Expression Session for select riders - whoever performs the most radical manoeuvre, wins. So get down to the Wedge and be part of the action, or visit www.wedgeclassic2008.40.co.za

Duesouth Xterra kicks off in Knysna tomorrow

THE first leg of the action-packed 2008/9 Duesouth Xterra presented by Nissan returns to the Garden Route as part of the Knysna Oyster Festival, when top SA athletes and outdoor enthusiasts converge on Pezula Private Estate to participate in this exciting event

tomorrow (July 10).

The Duesouth Xterra consists of four events hosted across the country in the Garden Route, North West, KZN and the W-Cape. The Knysna event features two disciplines where individual athletes or teams of two can tackle the challenge, which

consists of a 3km trail run, 25km mountain bike and 10km trail run. All three legs take place in and around Pezula.

Newcomers to the sport can compete either as individuals or in two-member teams in the Duesouth Xterra Lite, consist-

ing of two 3km trail runs and a 12km mountain bike.

The Duesouth Xterra Lite starts at noon and the main event at 2pm. Call 033 386 0815, e-mail bex@maxcluer.com or visit www.duesouth.co.za for more information.



LOCAL HI-FLYER: Top SA Duesouth Xterra athlete Dan Hugo - who has been keeping our flag flying high on the international Xterra circuit - returned home to take on the first leg of the action-packed 2008/9 event tomorrow at Pezula

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