

Crime watch

*Muggings escalate
in George - p3*

Tourism in Eden

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heats up - p17*

Anchors aweigh!

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turn 30 - p4 & 10*



Riding the Wedge

Only a surfer knows the feeling. Sampi Kamffer, left, doesn't let the pressure get to him - see report on page 24.

Photo: Michel Del-Cont

Best SA bodyboarders shine in national champs at Plett's Wedge

Words: Gareth White - Photos: Michel Dei-Cont

THE 21st annual 5A-rated SA Bodyboarding Championships, organised by Eastern Province Bodyboarding and the SA Bodyboarding Association (SABA), were held over six days at The Wedge in Plett and came to a successful conclusion on September 30.

Proving to be SA's top bodyboarders were David Lee from Southern Kwa-Zulu Natal, Michael Ostler (Central KZN), and Western Province's Pamela Bowren and Sacha Specker.

Although the contest started off in stormy weather, it also brought favourable swell conditions which remained consistent for the majority of the event, averaging at four to six foot with light winds and just enough sunshine to keep on-lookers warm on most days.

Participants came from all eight of SA's coastal provinces, each rider having been selected to represent their province after competing in a series of trials. Competition was fierce and many big names were eliminated during the qualifying stages - among them current world number two, Northern

KZN's Mark McCarthy, whose early exit from the Pro Division surprised many.

This year's championships were the richest to date with R25 000 of sponsored prizes for the Pro, Ladies and Drop Knee Divisions. The Masters, Men, Juniors and Boys did not compete for cash.

The event was opened with bodyboarders paying tribute to fallen friend, Ivan Friedman. Friedman, a well-known bodyboarder, was diagnosed with cancer earlier this year and sadly lost his battle with the disease. Participants paddled out as one, gathering in a circle and spreading flowers in remembrance of their friend.

As part of the event, Debis Fleet Management sponsored two development clinics for disadvantaged kids from the local NPO, Born In Africa. The kids were taught bodyboarding basics by professional riders, and were then encouraged to ride their first waves.

In a closely contested heat that saw great exchanges between the riders, David Lee from Southern KZN, was de-

SA CHAMP:
Kwa-Zulu Natal's David Lee, right, won the Pro Division and is proud to be SA's new bodyboarding king



clared the winner of the Pro Division finals after impressing judges with his powerful manoeuvres and overall ability. Marc Jucker (EPBA) and Jonathan Maritz (WP) finished second and third respectively.

Michael Ostler (CKZN) took the title of Juniors Division Champ, while his team mates Ian Campbell and Dane Beales took second and third places.

In the absence of Karla Costa-Taylor (CKZN), it was a close call between local rider Lyndall Pells and Pamela Bowren (WP). In the end, Bowren took the Ladies title with Pells finishing second, and Plett's Geline Derbyshire in third place.

The Drop Knee Division boasted one of the most spectacular finals of the competition and with his powerful riding, Sacha Specker (WP) was crowned the new SA champ, while Derek Footit (SKZN) took second place and Chris Bosman (EP) third.

This year also marked the unveiling of the Ivan Friedman Memorial Trophy for Sportsmanship, awarded to Stephan Coetzee (NKZN) for his humility throughout the contest.

The Men's Division was won by local Ryan Jucker, followed by Wayne Beekman (SKZN) and Wayne du Preez (CKZN).

Wesley McQuillan (EP) took first place in the Masters Division, with WP's Brett Simpson second and Michael van Huyssteen (CKZN) third.

First place in the Boys Division went to Adam Waites (CKZN), second place to Murray van Vuuren (EP), and third to Jason Selby (WP). The Expression Session was won by Daniel Worsley (WP).

With the SABA circuit behind them and SA Champs quickly becoming a fond memory, riders have time to reflect on their achievements, recover from a week of gruelling competition, and begin training for next year's SA Champs.



BOARD AND BEACH ACTION AT THE WEDGE: Geline Derbyshire, top left, who took third place in the Ladies Division, strums up a tune with friends; at right, the Born in Africa kids get a taste of salt during the surf development clinic; and at far right, Ryan Jucker gives local bodyboarding champ Lyndall Pells some moral support between heats

