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Mitchell, Duncan hit O'ahu first on record-breaking day

By Stanley Lee
Advertiser Staff Writer

The best conditions in years led to a record-breaking day at the Quiksilver edition Moloka'i to O'ahu Paddleboard Race.

Australia's Jamie Mitchell crossed the 32-mile open ocean race in 4 hours, 56 minutes, 3 seconds to win his third straight title at Maunalua Bay Beach Park at Hawai'i Kai yesterday. With swells and winds favoring paddlers for the first time in five years, the top nine finishers broke the previous record of 5:22:48.

"Anything under five hours is amazing," Mitchell said. "No one has ever won three and that was pretty good motivation. You don't know how much your body can take until you push it that hard. Ask anyone out there today, we're all hurting the same."

"I thought before the race, somebody would break the record given the winds, conditions, waves and tide," added Brian Rocheleau of Honolulu, who finished fourth overall in 5:04:16 and was the first local finisher. "I'm shocked a lot of people broke the record."

In the women's race, Kanesa Duncan of Manoa broke the women's record by 54 minutes, winning her first title since 2002 and third overall.

Considered the world championship of long-distance paddleboarding, the race started yesterday morning at Kaluakoi Hotel and Golf Club on Moloka'i. Paddlers then crossed the Kaiwi Channel with winds blowing at 15 to 20 miles per hour and a swell of 4 to 6 feet.

Since 1999, paddlers faced uncharacteristic channel conditions of limited breezes and swells.

"It was some of the funnest conditions I've ever been in in my life," said New Zealand's Cory Hutchings, who finished second in 4:58:19.

Mitchell overtook Hutchings for the lead 3 ½ hours into the race. Hutchings still thought he could overtake Mitchell "if I paddled really hard."

But once Hutchings saw Mitchell's straighter line of approach to O'ahu, he knew it was over.

"I think his line was better," said Hutchings, who had never paddled for more than 2 ½ hours. "He came in on a straighter line. Once that happened, I was pretty much happy with second."

Mitchell was relieved after the race, especially after feeling weeks of pressure to win.

"Today was relief," said Mitchell, who remains undefeated in international competition this year. "People expect me to win sometimes and I don't really like that. There are a bunch of great paddlers out there and I'd rather the hopes be spread out to a lot of people."

Duncan, the women's winner, was also surprised by her time.

"When I started off looking at the times originally, I thought realistically I could go under 6:45, and today I wanted to make 6:30," Duncan said. "To go under six hours, I don't think I could ever go that fast on a stockboard. I'm pretty happy."



Australian Jamie Mitchell won his third consecutive Quiksilver edition Moloka'i to O'ahu Paddleboard race in 4 hours, 56 minutes, 3 seconds.



Jamie Mitchell was one of nine competitors to beat the previous course record of the Moloka'i to Oahu Paddleboard Race.

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Her emotions after the win were much different than those on Saturday after discovering the bottom of her board had melted. Jamie Mitchell

"I sort of had a downer," Duncan said. "But to come back and go under six hours is really awesome."

The stockboard event was won by Tim Foran of Australia, who had also never paddled in a race of this size.

"I can't believe how tough that was," Foran said. "You see Koko (Head) Crater and it seems like it's getting further and further away and you never think you're going to get there."

Stockboards are about 12 feet in length, while paddleboards are 12 to 18 feet. Both are streamlined surfboards designed to ride open ocean swells and paddled either in a prone or kneeling position.

Foran said he is not looking at a board for a couple of weeks and will go on his honeymoon in South America. He and Hutchings said they will probably do the race again next year.

"Hopefully it will give me the experience to do it again," Hutchings said.

For paddlers like Duncan, she's learned how to accomplish things by crossing the Kaiwi Channel.

"You have to believe in yourself," Duncan said. "It sounds really cheesy, but when you're out there and it's hurting, you just really have to think and know, 'I can finish it and do good.'"

Reach Stanley Lee at slee@honoluluadvertiser.com or 535-8533.

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Quiksilveredition Moloka'i to Oahu Paddleboard Race

Men

Overall (Elite)

1. Jamie Mitchell, Australia 4:56:03*
2. Cory Hutchings, New Zealand 4:58:19
3. Aaron Bitmead, Australia 5:02:23

29-under

1. Brian Rocheleau, O'ahu 5:04:16*
2. Justin Mitchell, Australia 5:34:28
3. Mike Menkewicz, O'ahu 5:55:24

30-39

1. Chad Noble, Australia 5:21:49*
2. Guy Pere, O'ahu 5:25:46
3. Dawson Jones, O'ahu 5:37:15

40-49

1. Mick DiBetta, Australia 5:11:19*
2. Sean Richardson, Calif. 5:21:34
3. Chris Owens, O'ahu 5:36:06

Stockboard Elite

1. Tim Foran, Australia 5:39:01

2. Matt Sack, Hawai'i 5:50:19
3. George Ramos Jr., O'ahu 5:50:57

Stockboard, 29-under

1. Tom Hinds, Calif. 6:23:51

Stockboard, 30-39

1. Adam Payne, Australia 6:33:09
2. Kevin Horgan, Kaua'i 7:08:24

Stockboard, 40-49

1. Kamuela Aea, O'ahu 6:09:10
2. Bruce Stine, Kaua'i 7:12:00

Stock Team, 59-under (combined ages)

1. Jimmy Austin/Dolan Eversole, O'ahu 5:04:48*
2. Kaimalino Andrade/Jeremy Cole, O'ahu 6:02:56
3. Travis Des Roches/Curen Ohama, O'ahu 6:10:18

Stock Team, 60-79 (combined ages)

1. John Gangini/Victor Hemmy III, Maui 5:12:29*
2. Victor Lopez/Kiva Rivers, Maui 5:30:36
3. David Mello/Blair Thorndike, Maui 5:42:52

Stock Team, 80-99 (combined ages)

1. Todd Bradley/Buzzy Kerbox, O'ahu 5:26:56
2. David Daly/David Kalama, Maui 5:28:27
3. Charlie Buckingham/Ralph Sifford, Maui 5:35:11

Stock Team, 100+ (combined ages)

1. Johnny McCandless/Jack Dyson, Maui 6:46:06

Women

Overall

1. Kanesa Duncan, O'ahu 5:53:49*
2. Jane Cairns, Calif. 6:53:24

Mixed Team

1. Stephanie Barneix/Walter Geyer, France 5:46:37
2. Darlene Randles/Keith Malloy, California 5:53:11
3. Chitose Iwanami/Taku Araki, Japan 6:04:35

*—record

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