

Scott Bass 

(Administrator)

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HENNESSEY'S INTERNATIONAL PADDLEBOARD CHAMPIONSHIP

HENNESSEY'S INTERNATIONAL PADDLEBOARD CHAMPIONSHIP DRAWS WORLD'S BEST TO FAMOUS NORTH SHORE, OAHU, HAWAII

Haleiwa, HAWAII – (July 7, 2004) - - The 6.5-mile \$11,000 Hennessey's International Paddleboard Championship is a unique race that has positioned itself somewhere between an all out sprint and a marathon. As a result, organizers anticipate a record field of entries – close to 200 - when it takes place on the North Shore of Oahu, Saturday, July 24.

Staged along one of the most picturesque coastlines in the world, starting out at Turtle Bay Resort and passing by the famous Sunset Beach and Pipeline before finishing at Waimea Bay, the Hennessey's International has attracted a broad field of competitors from around the world.

In a sport that is currently enjoying a world-wide resurgence that far exceeds its Hawaiian and Californian roots, the Hennessey's International will this year field paddlers from as far abroad as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

Preceded by several short sprint races earlier in the season, the Hennessey's International is an important event for professional paddlers and is the precursor to the 32-mile Molokai to Oahu race - considered to be the world championship of paddling, that follows a week later on August 1st.

"This race was specifically designed to fit in, both in length and timing, with the Quiksilver edition Molokai Race," explains seasoned paddler and Hennessey's International Race Director Dolan Eversole.

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"The goal of this race was to offer an exciting event that many people can enjoy while still offering a course that is challenging enough to attract a world-class field. We want the whole experience to be rewarding so we offer a spectacular course and a great after-party for everyone at Waimea Falls Park to highlight the social side of the sport. It definitely ranks as one of the top three paddleboard races in the world for the course, the field and the prize money on offer."

Headlining the race will be defending champion Jamie Mitchell, an Australian lifeguard who has been unbeatable in recent years. Mitchell, 27, is also the Molokai to Oahu champion and views the Hennessey's as an opportunity to both cover the cost of his travels and put the finishing touches on his Molokai preparation.

"The Hennessey's race is a perfect event for us," says Mitchell. "It gives us an extra opportunity to cover all that goes into the Molokai like support boats, flights and accommodation.

"I still class it as a sprint - about an hour-long race. It's a technical course and the course plays a big part in the race. There are all sorts of different lines you can take depending upon the tides and other conditions. It's a perfect precursor for Molokai - not too long. You're doing race pace - sprinting for about an hour, there's a bit of endurance involved, it's

downwind, and it's a fun course. I don't think you could get a better chance to blow out the cobwebs and race. There's no training for racing like actual racing."

Not to be outdone is the strong lineup of Hawaii's own lifeguards, who pride themselves on their local ocean knowledge and year-round peak fitness. For many of them, paddleboarding is an important part of their summer training that keeps them primed for the arduous rescues of the Hawaiian winter. Top Hawaii lifeguard paddlers the likes of Brian Rochleau, Guy Pere, Matt Dubrule and Victor Hemmey will take to the challenge this year.

Along with Mitchell, top contenders are Mick DiBetta (Australia), Cory Hutchings (New Zealand champion), and veteran paddler Chris Owens (Hawaii). In the shorter stock class

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(paddleboard length is 12 feet), California's Sean Jappe, just 19, is expected to pose a major challenge. Jappe won the stockboard division of last year's Molokai-to-Oahu race and was also the youngest paddler, then 18, to cross the Molokai Channel solo. In the women's division, defending champion Hayley Bateup (Australia) will face a tough paddle-off with Hawaii's Kanesa Duncan.

In celebration of this year's event, Macy's will be offering a limited edition Hennessey's Championship t-shirt, by Gotcha. These shirts will be available exclusively at Macy's while supplies last.

For media information:
Jodi Young, in Hawaii – Tel: (808) 638-7700

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