

Rescue 2002 -- One Visitor's View

By Michele Jacquin, Del Mar

Rescue 2002 brought us to the Florida Coast, both for the first time since the 1950s. Somehow, as little kids we had forgotten the humidity that hit us as we exited the air terminal in Orlando. Nevertheless, when we stepped from the sugar sand into the 78-degree ocean (59 degrees at home) we were excited to be in Daytona Beach. My companion, Jim Lischer had competed in Rescue 2000 in Sydney and was hoping to beat an Australian or two in the Master's on home turf



Rescue 2002 medal winners, from L-R: Joel Gittleston, L.A. County, Jim Lischer, Del Mar, Don Rohrer, L.A. County (Ret.)

Actually, it was a little different than home turf. Aside from sunrise over the ocean, there were a few other curiosities for the native Californian. It is a BIG DEAL to drive on the beach. They LIKE cars on the beach... and police cruisers with radar guns, and ice cream vending trucks, and umbrella renting rigs, and even a tractor hauling a huge dumpster for the trash. Lifeguards wear holstered pistols and no hats. We also saw very hardworking and enthusiastic Volusia County professionals and volunteers, who were thrilled to host the world's best Surf Lifesavers.

The competition was held on the wide flat beach in Daytona with pool events inland in Orlando. California was well represented in the Master's competition by a small but solid contingent mostly from S. California who brought home a respectable share of medals. As usual, the Aussies, Kiwis, and South Africans were prominent in the ocean events. The Europeans were strongest in the pool. California's competitors were well rounded. Medallists and finalists in both pool and ocean included Allison and Steve Rapp of San Diego City, Joel Gittleston of LACOLA, Chris Dobrosielki of S.D., Chris Zimmer of Imperial Beach, and Jim Lischer of Del Mar. Marshall Parks, Pete Heinig, Randy Erickoff, Alan Volsard, Jeff Koch and Scott Diederich also contributed to the fine showing of the west-coast crew. There were undoubtedly others and we apologize for not naming them.

The pool events were 50 miles inland in a fine semi-outdoor pool. The competition was enthusiastic in spite of the temperature and humidity being about the same whether you were in the water or not. The May sun was blistering at the beach, so the flag and beach sprints were especially testing. Many competitors had trouble with the squeaky fine cornstarch sand, resulting in more than one pulled hamstring. The waves were small, so prowess in large surf was not a factor in the paddle events. Many finishes were very close and exciting. The warm evenings were perfect for a stroll on the beach, or an outdoor meal at a surfside restaurant. A terrific party was held right on the sand the last night of competition. We saw some great efforts, cheered the medallists, and made new friends. See you in Italy in 2004!



*Newport Beach Junior Lifeguards practice for Beach Flag Competition.
Photo by Eric Wayman*