

Competition News

By Rob McGowan

2000 NATIONALS

Our newest chapter, Imperial Beach, hosted the 2000 California Surf Lifesaving Championships on July 19, 2000, on the south side of the I.B. Pier. The Juniors competed the following day on both sides of the pier. Although the weather didn't exactly cooperate, with fog forcing a two-hour delay, and icy cold water, we got through all of the events and managed to finish just before dark. There was enough surf to make things interesting, and we had a record 174 competitors. Jennifer Shelden and her crew did a commendable job, especially considering it was their first shot at hosting Regionals. Special thanks are due to the members of the executive board that manned the front lines and did their best to keep things moving. Gordon Gray almost single-handedly handled the registration. The towels that were given as awards were a nice touch, and useful too. In a close race for the team points championship, LACOLA beat San Diego City 540 to 437. Laguna picked up third place, followed by Del Mar and Cal State. L.A. City made a strong showing to finish sixth, with Long Beach, U.S. Ocean Safety, Santa Cruz, and Newport rounding out the top ten. The Regionals will return to Imperial Beach in 2001, with the lifeguard events on July 12 and the Junior Lifeguard events on July 13.

San Diego raised the bar a notch at the 2000 USLA National Lifeguard Championships. They put on quite a show, producing the most memorable Nationals that I have ever seen. They had free food, fireworks, and funding for 30 officials. The surf was good, the weather was hot, the competition was great, and with the exception of a handful of rowers, everyone was well-behaved and had a good time. A lucky few of us even got to sleep over the water on the historic Crystal Pier. Los Angeles County captured the Team Championship for the 13th straight year, followed by Monmouth County and San Diego. Del Rey and Boca Raton, Florida picked up 4th and 5th. Heidi Kissel and Mitch Kahn won the individual high point awards. Complete results have been posted on the USLA website. San Diego will host the USLA Nationals in 2002, when they return to our coast.

2001 NATIONALS

The Southeast Region, the Miami Beach Chapter, and the City of Miami Beach will be our hosts for the USLA Nationals in 2001, so get ready for some heat and humidity. The dates are August 9, 10, 11 at Lummus Park and Beach between 8th and 10th Streets in South Beach. There is a pool competition in the planning stages for Sunday, August 12. The purpose of this pool competition will be to help pick the best possible team (since half of the events are now held in the pool) for the 2002 World Championships in Daytona Beach, Florida. Check the USLA website and www.uslanationals.org for more details on the 2001 National Championships, as they become available. We will be picking the team to represent the USA at Rescue 2002 from the results of the Miami USLA Nationals.

GOODWILL GAMES

The USLA earned an invitation to the Goodwill Games that will be held in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia in September, 2001. The competition will be a team based surf competition, consisting of 12 events, both team and individual, with team point scoring and prize

money. The events include a men's and women's beach sprint, a mixed board rescue race, a men's and women's surf race (2 competitors per team), a women's board race (2 per team), a men's ski race (2 per team), men's and women's flags, Ironman and Ironwoman (2 per team), and a Lifesaver Relay. The promoters are picking up the expenses for a team of 9 competitors plus a manager/coach. The dates are September 1 and 2 at Kurrawa Beach on the Gold Coast. USLA President Don Rohrer appointed Tim Gallagher to the manager/coach position. There is \$100,000 (Australian \$) prize money being awarded to the teams based on their placing each day and overall. We plan to select the team members at trials to be held June 22 thru 24, 2001, in San Diego. Please spread the word to all competitors.

COMPETITION RULES

The USLA National Board of Directors met in Newport Beach at the beginning of November, 2000. Based on decisions made in the Competition Committee meeting, there will be a few changes in the competition rules. The "M" course will be eliminated in the Ironman race, due primarily to safety concerns. The individual high point awards will be tabulated using Open Division points only, including relays. The 3-day format will be maintained for Nationals, with preliminaries for team events on Thursday. The schedule will be revised to reflect this change, and start times for events will be removed. Foreign competitors will only be allowed to compete in individual events at Nationals (no events that involve the flag line). Anyone involved in a fight at future USLA events will be disqualified from the remainder of that competition and all USLA sanctioned competition the following year. Anyone striking an official will be banned from competition for life. Anyone entering the water in an event that they are not a participant in is subject to disqualification. The four teams per Chapter rule was clarified. In future Nationals, each Chapter is limited to a total of 8 individuals in two-person team events, regardless of split Chapter teams. Team entries are to be made by Team Captains only. There will be two divisions for the team championship in future Nationals. Division A is for chapters with 101 employees or more and Division B for chapters with 100 employees or less. Finally, all competitors must wear their own Chapter's competition beanie (not that of any other Chapter), and the beanie must be worn on the competitor's head at the start and finish of each event. These rule changes and clarifications will be incorporated into the next update of the USLA Competition Rules.

Other 2001 lifeguard competition dates that I am aware of at this time include Semana Nautica in Santa Barbara on June 30, the Malibu Ocean Festival at Zuma Beach on July 14, and the International Surf Festival (Taplin) August 2-5 in Manhattan Beach.