

Media Release



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For immediate release.

Watergate Bay to host surfboat racing

Brute force, determination and technique will all be required at Watergate Bay next Saturday (10th July) as surfboat racing returns to the Cornish beach.

Crews from the UK Surf Rowers League will compete at Watergate Bay in the third round of the Shyman & Shygirl Summer Surfboat Series.

The traditional oar-powered surfboats will compete in a series of short, intense races which see crews first battle out through the incoming waves, then attempt to surf the breaking waves back to the beach. The first heats start at 10.30am, with the finals due to be completed by around 1pm.

Will Ashworth of The Hotel & Extreme Academy, Watergate Bay said the fast-paced races are great to watch: "There's nothing quite like surfboat racing - imagine five people in a boat, rowing 400 metres out to sea through breaking waves, around a buoy, and catching a wave back to the shore before a neck-and-neck sprint to the finish.

"The fact that they're rowing backwards with all their trust in their team-mate's steering is exciting and astonishing in equal measure."

On the day each crew will compete in three qualifying races with a final for the top six boats, meaning there will be a guaranteed eight action packed races on the day.

With strong results in previous rounds at Porthcawl, Wales and Saunton Sands near Croyde, Devon, current reigning series champions Porthtowan Bali Blues lead the men's standings by 14 points.

Despite this, Peter Gaisford, secretary of the UKSRL, believes the prospect of large surf at Watergate Bay offers the opportunity for their rivals to catch-up.

"Of the five rounds of Summer Series competition, Watergate Bay provides the most exciting conditions for unpredictable racing.

"The crew from Porthtowan may have dominated the first two events but this round could really ruin the lead for them as surf levels the playing field and puts pressure on everybody to perform. If a team gets it wrong, expect to see capsized boats with whole crews in the water."

The Women's Open championship is closer to call with Bude Runners (71 points) leading current champions Porthtowan Pure Blue by 10 points.

Peter Gaisford believes this could be down to a new training regime designed to cope with the physical demands of competitive surfboat racing: "Over the winter season, Bude Runners have been put through their paces by a fitness trainer from the Royal Marines and their hard work is starting to pay dividends.

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Media Contact:

For more information and images contact: Jim Michell at Barefoot Media.
Telephone: +44 (0)1208 895089 Email: jim@barefootmedia.co.uk



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“This level of commitment shows you how much winning matters to those taking part. It’s going to be an exciting day, that’s for sure.”

For the safety of spectators and participants, a 500 metre section of the water will be closed to the public during racing. A small section of the beach will also be closed as the crews start and finish their races on the sand. Surfers and other water users will still be able to use the rest of the beach.

More information on this and other events at Watergate Bay can be found at www.watergatebay.co.uk/events.

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Images

High resolution print-ready images can be downloaded from our online [Media Centre](#) (click for direct link).

Notes to Editors

Surfboat Racing was introduced to Cornwall in the 1970’s by a visiting Australian lifeguard, who donated a boat to the Porthtowan Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC). The Summer Series is a five-event competition for Mens and Womens crews scheduled over the summer months. Crews compete in three “round robin” races at each event and the six highest scoring crews go forward to row for the “golden point” final on the day. These points are carried forward to the next event. The winning Men and Women crews are those with the highest scoring overall point score at the end of the Series.

The **Extreme Academy, Watergate Bay** is one of Britain’s leading venues for beach sports and events. Founded in 1999, the Extreme Academy comprises specialist schools for surfing, kitesurfing, waveski and stand-up paddlesurf (SUP); technical equipment hire; and the **Shop on The Beach** stocking a wide range of clothing and technical equipment. www.watergatebay.co.uk/extremeacademy

Located right next to the sand, **The Beach Hut** has stunning views across Watergate Bay from both the indoor tables and from the decked balcony that runs around the restaurant. From breakfast to dinner – it’s one of Cornwall’s best beachside hangouts. Recommended by Time Out Devon and Cornwall Guide 2010, and in 2009, The Guardian voted The Beach Hut’s Extreme Hot Chocolate as ‘a must-try experience’. www.watergatebay.co.uk/thebeachhut

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