

Media Release



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For immediate release.

CORNISH BEACH HOSTS ZAPCAT CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS

Teams from all over the country will come to Cornwall next week to take part in the deciding rounds of a national surf powerboat championship.

Watergate Bay's Extreme Academy will host the final two rounds of the Zapcat National Championship on Friday 25th and Saturday 26th September.

For the competitors, the renowned surfing venue has attained the status of the Zapcat racing's ultimate challenge, with the powerful waves testing the teams' skill and courage to the limit.

Martin Jupp of Zapcat Racing said: *"Traditionally we've always held the final rounds of the championships at Watergate Bay, it's become the unofficial home of the Zapcats. All the teams love it here and we get the best turnouts, everyone wants to race and win here. September can throw up some seriously challenging conditions, and we're looking forward to it being a fitting conclusion to a great season."*

Developed from surf life saving rescue craft, Zapcats are inflatable catamarans, powered by a 50 horsepower outboard engine. The boats can reach speeds and carry out manoeuvres that simply could not be attempted by craft of a similar size, pulling in excess of two 'g' in the tightest of corners.

Racing takes place within metres of the shore providing fantastic viewing for spectators, with the tight course invariably producing fast and frenzied racing. Racing on both days will start at midday with heats running through to the finals at 5.30pm.

And as well as deciding the overall champions for 2009, the Watergate Bay rounds will crown a stand-alone "King of the Surf" competition.

Currently topping the standings in both competitions are the crew of "Blue Sheets I": pilot Craig Davis from Southampton and co-pilot Rob Martin from Sandhurst, Berkshire.

With a lead of 150 points over their nearest rivals, "Rana Park", Davis and Martin need just 50 points from a possible 200 to clinch the title, but with Watergate Bay famous for dishing up unpredictable conditions, they're not taking anything for granted.

"We've been racing at Watergate Bay since 2005 so we know how the place can treat us," said pilot Craig Davis. *"You can never expect to win here because as well as racing against the other teams you're also racing Mother Nature. You could be faced with flat and gentle conditions or raging surf which throws the boats around, so reading the conditions and choosing a good line are just as important as raw speed."*

As well as being strong favourites to win the National Championship title, Davis and Martin are leading the "King of the Surf" standings ahead of Stroud crew "Randall & Payne".

For Davis, double success at Watergate Bay is their goal: *"We've been runners-up in the 'King of the Surf' competition for the last two years, so it would be great to go one better this time. We've got a lead of 45 points but there are 200 available at Watergate Bay so it's wide open - our aim is to get round the course safely and get some points on the board."*

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The South West is very well represented in the event, with around 10 Westcountry teams expected to enter, including three from the Plymouth-based Royal Marine Commandos.

For the safety of spectators and participants, a 500 metre section of the water will be closed to the public during practice and racing at both events. There are no restrictions on beach access during the Zapcat event, although spectators are requested to be aware of boats being moved on the beach. Surfers and other water users will still be able to use the rest of the beach.

Zapcat National Championship standings (after 12 of 14 rounds)

1st Blue Sheets I, 950 points - pilot Craig Davis from Chandlers Ford, Hampshire and co-pilot Rob Martin from Sandhurst, Berkshire.

2nd Rana Park, 800 points - pilot Neil Fraser from Fleet, Hampshire and co-pilot Jeremy Nazarin from Bournemouth.

3rd Speedy Hire, 795 points - pilot Daren Ford from Hayling Island and co-pilot Sam Hunka from Southampton.

King of the Surf standings (after 2 of 4 rounds)

1st Blue Sheets I, 200 points - pilot Craig Davis from Chandlers Ford, Hampshire and co-pilot Rob Martin from Sandhurst, Berkshire.

2nd Randall & Payne, 155 points - pilot Justin Whithorn and co-pilot Chris Baldwin, both from Stroud, Gloucestershire.

3rd Speedy Hire, 150 points - pilot Daren Ford from Hayling Island and co-pilot Sam Hunka from Southampton.

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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

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, stand-up paddlesurf and mountainboarding; technical equipment hire; and the **Extreme Store**, stocking a wide range of clothing and technical equipment. **The Beach Hut**, located on the ground floor of the Extreme Academy, is well known as Cornwall's coolest beach hangout and a great place to eat. **www.watergatebay.co.uk**

The Hotel, Watergate Bay has emerged from a £2 million programme of investment as a must-visit beach destination. With the public areas and bedrooms all refurbished in the past three years, the décor is beach house chic throughout. The contemporary modern look, award-winning dining and relaxed atmosphere are only topped by The Hotel's unbeatable location right on the beach. **www.watergatebay.co.uk**

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