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2021 JAMES BESCHEN – MICHAEL CALLAHAN MEMORIAL LIFEGUARD RACE

NORTH WILDWOOD — The Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol had just five points with two events remaining Friday.

Not a problem.

Darrick Kobierowski won the singles row and Brett Pedersen won the can run to give the Crest 10 more points and the team title at the 52nd edition of the Beschen-Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Races at the 15th Avenue beach.

Seven Cape May County beach patrols competed. Crest finished with 15 points overall. Wildwood was second with 12. Avalon finished third with 11. Scoring was 5-3-2-1 for the first four places in each of the six races.

“I knew going into the can run that I had to score points,” Pedersen said. “With everyone around me, I just wanted to go for the win.”

Wildwood Crest won five of the six races in 2019 to win the team title for the second time in a row. The races were not held last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Friday, Upper Township, Avalon, Wildwood and North Wildwood each won races. Other patrols that competed were Sea Isle City and Stone Harbor.

Crest also won the Cape May County Championships on July 9.

“It felt amazing,” Pedersen said. “Our patrol is off to a great summer. We just want to keep it rolling.”

The races honor Jim Beschen and Mike Callahan, North Wildwood lifeguards who were killed in the Vietnam War. North Wildwood Beach

Patrol Chief Tony Cavalier and relatives of Beschen and Callahan gave out the awards.

The can run is a one-person surf dash in which the guards basically swim a freestyle event. It used to start with the guards jumping off a lifeguard stand, but that stopped a few years ago, Pedersen said.

“That was an extremely tough race,” Pedersen said. “I had the whole patrol behind me cheering. So, I just wanted to do it for them. Just wanted to stay ahead of them the whole time.”

Upper Township’s Ryan Fischer and Kyle Rumaker won the doubles row, the first race. The duo was neck-and-neck with Avalon’s Erich Wolf and Jack Glomb as they approached the shore, both catching the same wave at the end.

The Upper lifeguards had a rough warmup and almost broached coming in, Fischer said. But held the boat straight long enough to win.

“That’s all that matters,” Fischer said. “It was definitely a close race. It got dicey there at the end. It was a close race all the way out. The tide was just in our favor (Friday).”

“The ocean is different every race,” Rumaker said. “A lot of crews have are going to have a chance to go after it this year.”

Avalon rookie Dolan Grisbaum won the swim for the second time in his career. The recent graduate from Ocean City High School also won the event at the Cape May County Championships.

During his first race last week, the conditions were rough and he got off to a slow start. But there was a current going out Friday, and he said he was a little wide going around the second flag “But I managed,” said Grisbaum, The 2021 Press Boys Swimmer of the Year. “It feels good.”

The Boston University commit is looking ahead to the Dutch Hoffman Memorial Lifeguard Championships on July 30, saying he wants to take on Joey Tepper, an Egg Harbor Township graduate and a rising sophomore at

the University of Tennessee. Tepper, like Grisbaum, is a standout swimmer in the area.

“It’ll be tough, but I think I can do it,” Grisbaum said.

North Wildwood’s Stephan Cassel, Richie Giandrea, Travis McCray and Mark Strange won the surf dash.

Giandrea has been on the patrol for five years, but never made the team.

Until now.

“It was awesome,” said Giandrea, who thanked North Wildwood Beach Patrol chief Tony Cavalier and captain Bill Ciavarelli. “Every day we come in and work out. It feels good to be here.”

The home beach was loud when Mark Strange, who ran the final leg, crossed the finish line.

“We just have to go, and can’t stop,” Giandrea said. “It’s a far dash.”

Wildwood’s Pat Clemens won the paddleboard race. He described the conditions as “effortless,” especially compared to last week’s Cape May County Championships.

“I was able to get a lucky wave at the end there,” Clemens said. “I was able to pull ahead on my knees the whole time. I feel good.”

Race results

Team scoring (top three): 1. Wildwood Crest 15, 2. Wildwood 12, 3. Avalon 11

Doubles row: 1. Ryan Fischer-Kyle Rumaker (Upper Township), 2. Eric Wolf-Jack Glomb (Avalon), 3. Danny Rogers-Pat Scannapieco (Sea Isle)

Swim: 1. Dolan Grisbaum (Avalon), 2. Jack Levari (Stone Harbor), 3. Brett Pedersen (Wildwood Crest)

Paddleboard: 1. Pat Clemens (Wildwood), 2. Corbin King (Sea Isle), 3. Stephan Cassel (North Wildwood)

Surf dash: 1. Cassel, Richie Giandrea, Travis McCray, Mark Strange (North Wildwood), 2. Ben Melle, Tom Sampson, Matt Comas, Brendan Lewis (Wildwood), 3. Andrew Torney, Pat O’Hanlon, Tucker DeLuca, Jake Carpenter (Sea Isle)

Singles row: 1. Darrick Kobierowski (Wildwood Crest), 2. Wolf (Avalon), 3. Rogers (Sea Isle)

Can run: 1. Brett Pedersen (Wildwood Crest), 2. Dave DiLeoahardo (Stone Harbor), 3. Aiden Blake (Upper Township)

2019 James Beschen – Michael Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Race

By BRIAN CUNNIFF

NORTH WILDWOOD — The Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol's competitive racing team has gotten off to a dream start this summer.

After winning both the Cape May County Lifeguard Championships and the Longport Women's Invitational earlier in the week, the Crest dominated Friday's Beschen-Callahan Memorial Lifeguard Championships to remain unbeaten through three races.

Wildwood Crest won five of the six events at the Beschen-Callahan race in posting 28 points to run away with the team championship. Host North Wildwood was a distant second with 12 points and Wildwood was third with 10 points.

Upper Township, Sea Isle City, Avalon and Stone Harbor also competed.

Brett Pederson was the star of the competition for the Crest. He won the box paddleboard race; joined Pat Bakey, Jon Burkett and Nate Belisario for first place in the surf dash relay; and finished second in the can run.

Burkett also won the box swim and Bakey teamed with Jake Klecko for victory in the doubles row.

The Crest's Darrick Kobiwerowski won the singles row.

North Wildwood's Luke Snyder kept the Crest from tossing lifeguard racing's version of a perfect game by edging Pederson for first place in the can run.

The 51st annual event honors Jim Beschen and Mike Callahan, a pair of former North Wildwood lifeguards who were killed while on active armed services duty during the Vietnam War in the 1960s. As usual, members of the Beschen and Callahan families were on hand for the race.

The competition was completed in 57 minutes.