

## WINDSURFING

# Windsurfers make Waddell Beach first stop

American Windsurfing Tour picks North Coast beach as one of top spots

By **CATHY KELLY**

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**WADDELL CREEK** — This picturesque stretch of beach near the county line served this past weekend as the first stop in the 2012 American Windsurfing Tour.

Organizers called Waddell Beach one of the top windsurfing spots in the continental United States.

The Santa Cruz Goya Windsurfing Festival began Thursday and ended Sunday. Waves and wind were strong enough to compete on Friday and Saturday, tour director Sam Bittner said.

"Conditions on Friday were great," Bittner said. "It was absolutely spectacular."

The American Windsurf-

ing Tour is a new organization that held its first contest at Waddell last year, she said. They plan it to be an annual event, she added.

Last year's contest drew 75 competitors, and 80 signed up this year, Bittner said.

The competitors came from around the world, including France, Canada, Argentina and Chili, and several were world-class professionals, she said. The purse is \$5,000.

Judging is similar to in surf contests, Bittner said, primarily on technique and jumps.

In the pro division, the top winners this year were Levi Silver, Marcilio Browne and Graham Ezzy.

Women's division winners were Ingrid Larouche, Sam Bittner and Fiona Wylde.

Youth winners were Jordan Reid, Harley Stone and Casey Rehner.

Master's divisions winners were Reed Nelson, Brian Caserio and Bruce Dilbeck.

Kai Katchadourian, who grew up in Palo Alto and now lives in Maui, came in seventh in the pro division.

Katchadourian said he started windsurfing at Waddell Beach when he was 14 and still lives in Palo Alto in the summer months because the windsurfing is so good there.

"It's one of the best wave sailing and kiting in the continental United States," he said. "It's open to several swell directions. It's been great."

Windsurfing caught on at Waddell Beach in the late

1970s and competitions were held there from the mid-'80s to 2000, he said. But then much of the action moved elsewhere, including to Europe.

But American Windsurfing Tour has changed that, said Katchadourian, who is captain of the Simmer Style team.

"We're really blessed to have this area," he said. "And we're looking forward to a fantastic tour."

The tour heads to Oregon next, and then to Baja California, Mexico; Peru; Hatteras, N.C.; and Maui, Hawaii.

For more information, visit <http://americanwindsurfing-tour.com/california/>.

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