

Sports & Outdoors

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2016 Pistol River Wave Bash

Familiar faces atop the podium



Photo by Kevin Pritchard / American Windsurfing Tour
16-year-old Max Schettewi, who won both the youth and amateur divisions on Saturday, gets inverted during a ride.



Photo courtesy of American Windsurfing Tour
Morgan Noireaux, center, wins his first Wave Bash pro title after seven tries. Boujmaa Guilloil, left, and Kevin Pritchard finished second and third, respectively.



Photo courtesy of the American Windsurfing Tour
Kevin Pritchard performs a one-footed back loop on his way to finishing third in the men's pro final on Sunday. Strong afternoon winds propelled the competition on Saturday and Sunday after a lack of wind caused a three-day delay to the start of the event.



Photo by Kevin Pritchard / American Windsurfing Tour
Ingrid Larouche gets some air on her way to winning the women's pro final. Her sixth Wave Bash win in seven events.



Photo by Kevin Pritchard / American Windsurfing Tour
Ingrid Larouche, center, pops the champagne after winning the women's pro title. Sarah Hauser, left, and Tatiana Howard finished second and third, respectively.

■ As weekend winds increased, veteran Wave Bash competitors Noireaux and Larouche claimed pro division titles

By Ryan Sparks
Pilot staff writer

The wind in Pistol River could only hide for so long. When it finally kicked in, the Wave Bashers made the most of it.

A three-day delay didn't dampen the competition at the 2016 Pistol River Wave Bash on Saturday and Sunday, as strong weekend winds allowed for a fantastic spectacle of athleticism.

Saturday's competition featured the youth, amateur and masters divisions, with the day being dominated by 16-year-old Maui native Max Schettewi, who

took home both youth and amateur titles — his first AWT wins.

"This is one of my favorite events because of the community here," Schettewi said. "Everyone asks if you are here for the Wave Bash. It's really a good feeling and makes you feel welcome."

Sean Aiken won the masters division, earning the victory over Ferdinando Loffreda and Jeff Albright.

On Sunday, the grand masters, women's and men's pro division took center stage; with strong winds invigorating the competition, it was a couple of familiar

faces that earned pro division titles.

"Queen of the Big Winds" Ingrid Larouche, who was upset by Sarah Hauser in last year's final, landed a huge forward to edge Hauser and Tatiana Howard for the women's title.

It's Larouche's sixth Wave Bash title in seven years.

The grand masters event saw Pistol River's own Dana Miller earn the top prize over Dwight Bode and Colby Deer in a close heat.

The men's pro competition wrapped up the event in true grand fashion on Sunday afternoon.

The pros battled it out with huge loop and tweaked aeriels.

After the judges had cast their ballot, Morgan Noireaux, who has competed at every Wave Bash but never won, earned the 2016 title over last year's winner, Boujmaa Guilloil, and Kevin Pritchard.

"It's the same people that seem to beat me every time so it's good to get one back," joked Noireaux. "To come here for so many years and finally get one, it feels good."

For Wave Bash newcomers Howard and Vicki Abbott, riding the big winds of Pistol River

was a new and intimidating experience, but one they welcome.

"I launched myself into a big backloop and crashed and injured my sternum," admitted Abbott, who hails from Cape Verde, a group of islands off the west African coast. "Oregon is one of the most beautiful places I've been to windsurf. The coast is just spectacular."

Howard, who hails from Maui, said there are some differences between riding here and on the big island.

"I never sail on anything less than a 4.2-meter sail," she said. "Here, I sailed on

a 3.8 and it was overpowered. I could have gone even smaller than that."

Both Abbott and Howard acknowledged that the southern Oregon coast's beauty hides its danger.

"It's super intimidating," said Howard. "I can go in big Hawaiian waves, but here it's open, rugged coastline. You can see the current going through the water. It's wild, raw and intense."

"It was interesting because it's extremely windy and very cold," said Abbott. "It's not what I'm used to but it was a lot of fun."

2016 Wild Rogue Relay

Finish line festivities planned for Azalea Park on Saturday

■ Approximately 1,000 runners will complete the two-day race with large festival that includes music, food

By Ryan Sparks
Pilot staff writer

More than 1,000 runners comprising 90 teams will descend upon Azalea Park on Saturday as they complete the two-day, 220-plus mile trek that is the Wild Rogue Relay.

The runners come from all over North America, with teams registered from such far-away locales as Georgia, Virginia, Illinois and British Columbia.

Competitors will be greeted to a more streamlined course and finish line area, as race officials implemented various changes based

on previous feedback, to improve the overall experience.

"We are trying to make the finish line flow a little better," said assistant race director Sydney Smedley, who went on to say that an independent company has been hired to be the official race timekeepers, as well as the introduction of information and first-aid tents.

While the course in Curry County will remain relatively unchanged, Smedley confided that they took a look at parts of the course and decided to make it more efficient.



File photo
The Wild Rogue Relay mascot, 'Sissy Squatch,' gives high-fives to runners as they cross the finish line of the 2015 race at Azalea Park in Brookings.

"It was a little too long, so we cut off some parts of the beginning," she said.

As runners cross the

finish line they will be greeted by mascots 'The Squatch' and 'Sissy Squatch' and presented with medals.

Smedley added that a new wrinkle to the event is that runners can predict their finishing times, with the

closest team winning discounted registration for next year's event.

"We focused a lot on the finish line this year," admitted Smedley.

In addition to the numerous vendors and entertainment available at the finish line, the band Black Snake will play live music, two Medford-based food trucks have been added to the mix, and a photo backdrop for team pictures will be available.

"This race is for runners who want to take the fun of running to the next level," Smedley said. "It's a total party, the whole time."

The public is welcome to join the festivities, which begin at approximately noon and run throughout Saturday.