

Surf City wins in dominant fashion

By **ROBERT ZIEGLER**
STAFF WRITER

SEASIDE PARK — When the Island Beach Motor Lodge swimmer in the "row out, swim in" event crossed the finish line without the required torpedo buoy, the Surf City team wasn't sure if it should point out the infraction to the judges.

"We've been on the wrong side of a lot of similar calls this summer, and the guys felt there was a competitive advantage to not swimming with the buoy," Surf City captain Mark Dileo said. "On one hand, it stinks to (disqualify) somebody, but on the other hand, it stinks being (disqualified)."

The disqualification of Island Beach Motor Lodge in the second event of the first Island Beach Motor Lodge Lifeguard Tournament cost it the lead as the five-point swing vaulted Surf City into first place by three points.

Much to the delight of Dileo, his team went on to win the last two events in dominant fashion, ensuring the disqualification wouldn't be the deciding factor, to win the inaugural tournament with 19 points.

Island Beach State Park finished second with 14 points, while Manasquan (12), Island Beach Motor Lodge (8) and Bayhead (7) rounded out the standings. Teams were awarded five points for first place in an event, four for second and so on.

In the medley relay - an eight-person event involving swimming, paddling, kayaking and rowing - the paddling of Matt Holloway and Chris Bigos allowed Surf City to pull away from the field and kayakers Dave Bonanni and Jeff

Hahn increased the lead over Island Beach Motor Lodge and Island Beach State Park to about 20 seconds heading into the row.

Dileo and Steve Welc finished off the victory, while Island Beach Motor Lodge watched its chances of rebounding from the disqualification vanish as its surfboat flipped over in the surf.

Surf City wasted no time jumping out to a lead in the pick-up relay - in which seven people run, swim, paddle and row while picking up teammates at their respective buoys in the ocean - as it took a lead after Bigos' run and the swimming of Alan Bakes and Rob Myers and finished nearly half a minute ahead of second-place Island Beach State Park.

Bakes was the only competitor to compete in all four events for Surf City, which just decided to enter the tournament two days ago, according to Dileo.

"I sat down yesterday and picked the teams (for each event)," Dileo said. "I know the guys really well, their strengths and weaknesses, and I wanted to reward some guys that have been working hard."

Dileo said it's always nice to have new tournaments available to compete in.

"I want to thank Rich (Schlatter) from Island Beach Motor Lodge for extending the invitation to us," he said. "We're sorry we had the controversy, but we'd like to come back next year."

Schlatter served as the puller as Island Beach Motor Lodge won the line pull, in which a competitor swims a line out to a teammate and both are reeled into shore.