

Surf City wins first LBI title since '80 with strong 2nd day

■ Lifeguard races: Barnegat

Light, which led with only four of the 16 races left, finishes second.

By RICK PETZOLD

For The Press, (609) 272-7210

LONG BEACH TOWNSHIP — The sun had gone down, back behind the sand dunes and houses, and beyond that, over a bay you couldn't see. Yes, it was nighttime on the beach on Long Beach Island.

A long day came to an end and Mark Dileo was soaking wet. His own friends had thrown him in the ocean.

And he couldn't have been happier.

The Surf City Beach Patrol captain just helped and witnessed his team capture its first Long Beach Island Lifeguard

Tournament in 27 years on Sunday.

Surf City won with 88 points. Barnegat Light (82) was second and Long Beach Township (74) third.

After hoisting their trophy on the podium, the entire squad lifted Dileo in the air on his back, as though crowd surfing, and went down a steep decline of sand to hit the ocean one final time.

"It was great," Dileo said. "I've been waiting 24 years for that. I started in 1983 and the last time we won was '80. And, you know, 15 years as a captain and you don't know if you're ever going to win."

And for a while, that uncertainty remained.

A surfing Barnegat Light took the lead with just four of the 16 events from the two-day competition remaining. On the

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of the tournament Friday. On Saturday, only four of the seven scheduled races were held, due to a seawall that made it unsafe for the boats to go out. ... Long Beach Township led after the first day. ... It was the 46th annual LBI tournament

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tourney results

Team Scoring: 1. Surf City, 88; 2. Barnegat Light, 82; 3. Long Beach Township, 74; 4. Ship Bottom, 70; 5. Beach Haven, 39; 6. Harvey Cedars, 27.

Mill Row: 1. Brian Bigos, Brennan Coughlin (Ship Bottom) 12:05; 2. Josh Bligh, Mike Fitzpatrick (Long Beach Township); 3. Brady Stauffer, Nate Castiello (Barnegat Light).

1,500 Paddle: 1. Ross Reynolds (Surf City) 3:01; 2. Travis Grant (LBT); 3. Jonny Skolnick (SB).

Women's Row: 1. Jenn Welc, Alyssa DeAngelis (SC) 2:32; 2. Shannon Dries, Brittany Royer (LBT); 3. Emily Merchant, Bethany Schmidt (Harvey Cedars).

Surfboat Rescue: 1. Jeff Hahn, Mark Dileo (SC) 4:50; 2. Dennis Vetstein, Todd Barbuto (SB); 3. Don Adams, Cory Pelow (BL).

Iron Man: 1. Billy Webster (SB) 11:44; 2. Nate Humberston; 3. Darren Poolak.

1,000 Doubles: 1. Matt Opremacak, Ben Sniecius (BL) 2:26; 2. Ted Johnson, Mike Coler (Beach Haven); 3. Mark Dileo, Rip Wagner (SC).

1,000 Swim: 1. Alan Bakes (SC) 4:24; 2. James Loveless (BL); 3. Madeline Heilman (LBT).

Women's Swim: 1. Ashley Morris (SC) 4:56; 2. Meaghan Brown (BL); 3. Tracey Hemmerle (SB).

Paddle Rescue: 1. Seth Livsey, Mike Pantzer (BL) 2:51; 2. Pat Doyle (Rip Ring) (LBT); 3. J.P. Botti, Jared Temple (BH).

Line Race: 1. Doug Adams, Nate Castiello, Brad Reeser (BL) 3:52; 2. Andrew Stutz, Chris Rosser, Dave McDermott (LBT); 3. Rob Myers, Steve Bonanni, Chris Bigos (SC).

Singles Row: 1. Steve Welc (SC) 2:19; 2. Tom Duralek (LBT); 3. Don Adams (BL).

Mixed Doubles: 1. Rip Wagner, Collette Preire (SC) 2:33; 2. Filly Webster, Lindsey Gerkens (SB); 3. Ann Hood (Beach Haven) (LBT).

Surf Dash Relay: 1. James Polito, James Loveless, Brady Stauffer (LB) 7:31; 2. Darren Podolak, Paul Dungee, Jeff Hahn (SC); Luke Baran, Kevin Tallon, Sean Kelly (LBT).

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But so too, was Surf City. Steve Welc went out and captured the 1,000-foot singles row, halting Barnegat Light's momentum. Surf City's Rip Wagner and Collette Preire then took the mixed-doubles row. And Darren Podolak, Paul Dungee and Jeff Hahn's second-place effort in the surf dash relay sealed it.

"I can't even explain it," Welc, a seventh-year guard, said. "Nobody on this patrol has ever won it before. It's new to all of us."

According to Welc, the patrol's motto this summer has been, "One team, one dream."

With the clouds reflecting the last pink and orange tints of dusk, Surf City realized that dream Sunday night.

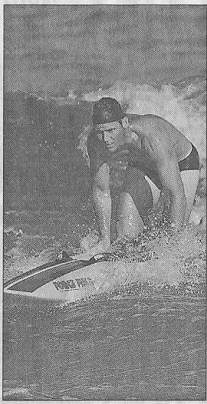
NOTES: High winds and rough surf Friday caused postponement of the opening day

strength of Doug Adams, Nate Castiello and Brad Reeser, the northernmost beach on LBI won the line race, capping a comeback from fourth place to first.

It seemed as though order would be restored. Along with Long Beach Township, the teams had combined to win every tournament over the past 17 years.

Members of the Barnegat Light squad were seizing the moment.

"I think it's, every year there's a surge," said Mike Pantzer, who combined with Seth Livsey to win the paddle rescue just moments before the line race. "The second night, our team comes out and puts it on. Seriously. Whatever happens in the first night doesn't matter. Our team's set for a two-night race."



Press photo by Ray Cembor

Ross Reynolds from Surf City paddles toward his victory at the LBI Lifeguard Tournament on Sunday. Surf City won the tournament.