

Chasing a victory



Times-Beacon photo by Shawn Huber

The Surf Dash Relay portion of the 2008 Long Beach Island Beach Patrol Association Lifeguard Tournament Saturday on Brant Beach. For more, see Sportsweek, beginning on page A9.

Surf City wins second straight LBIBPA title

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LONG BEACH TOWNSHIP — The Surf City Beach Patrol competition team finished off its summer with a bang.

During the second night of competition in the 47th annual Long Beach Island Beach Patrol Association Lifeguard Tournament on Saturday, Surf City captured its second straight championship, edging Barnegat Light by one point.

Surf City won the tournament title by winning the final event — the Surf Dash Relay — when the trio of Darren Podolak and Harrison and Jeff Hahn finished ahead of Barnegat Light's Nate Humberston, Mike Taylor and Brady Stauffer, who finished second.

"I had a feeling we could pull

it out," said team captain Mark Dileo, whose squad won with 85 points, followed by the Light with 84 and Ship Bottom with 73. "But Barnegat Light has been dominant in the Surf Dash for years, so we loaded our Surf Dash team with our three best swimmers, just in case winning the tournament came down to the last event.

"And our guys did a great job. They swam like I never saw them swim before."

Following Surf City, Barnegat Light and Ship Bottom were Harvey Cedars in fourth with 56 points, Long Beach Township in fifth with 49 points, and Beach Haven in sixth with 36 points.

"We've had a fantastic summer," Dileo said. "This was a dream team, and all of our guys and gals did a great job for us. I

couldn't have asked for a better tournament season."

Surf City's second straight tourney title marked the fourth time it has won it. In addition to last year's crown, the only other two times Surf City had captured the title occurred during back-to-back years in 1979 and 1980.

Surf City's back-to-back titles are the first since Long Beach Township accomplished the feat with three straight crowns in 1997, 1998 and 1999.

After dominating its own Epic tournament by winning all five events to start the season, Surf City had won four of six competitions during the past month, including the annual Lavallette and Ortleigh Beach tournaments, and finished second in the other two by a combined 4.5

points.

During the island tournament, Surf City competitors won seven of 16 events, including three of the last five after falling behind both Barnegat Light and Ship Bottom in the team standings prior to the grueling Line Pull event.

Surf City started its run toward the title when swimmer Andre Garner and line-pullers Nick Labida and Kyle Gronostajski pulled off one of the tournament's major event upsets by finishing ahead of four-time defending champions Doug Adams and Nate Castiello of Barnegat Light, who had pulled a swimmer to victory each of the previous four years.

Dave Bonnani pushed Surf

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City in front of Barnegat Light when he won the next event, the Singles Row, but Barnegat Light regained the lead when Don Adams and Meghan Brown were victorious in the Mixed

Doubles Row, and Brian Elwood finished ahead of Surf City's Ross Reynolds in the 1,500-foot Paddle.

Barnegat Light held a one-point advantage going into the

final event. Teams received eight points for a first-place finish in an event, as opposed to six points for a second-place finish.
