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NEWS

Riding into the record books

Australian 'party wave' feat collapses

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Assistant Editor

CARLSBAD — After 16 attempts and more than an hour and a half in the water, 40 surfers unofficially broke the world record for the most surfers on the same wave at the same time.

The existing mark, recorded by the Guinness Book of World Records, was set in Australia with 38 surfers in 2002.

The new record, set at South Carlsbad State Beach on June 29, was the brainchild of Cardiff-by-the-Sea resident and owner of the San Diego Surfing Academy, Pat Weber. The academy is based in Carlsbad.

"It takes a lot to get 40 people up on the same wave," Weber said fresh out of the water. "It really is a tribute to their skills."

About 100 spectators watched as surfers ranging in age from 11 to 63 paddled out into the mild surf and waited while organizers stood on the shore and coached the surfers to prepare for the "party wave."

To break the record, surfers were required to stand on their board for at least five seconds. Fifty six surfers attempted the feat, but repeatedly either fell or missed the wave.



The video tape of the event and signed affidavits from the three professional judges will now be sent to the Guinness Book of World Records. According to the Web site, verification can take up to six weeks.

Weber said the event celebrated the 10-year anniversary of his company. The surfers were also helping raise money for the Special Olympics. Thanks in part to T-shirt sales and raffle tickets at a fundraising lunch at the Elks Club in Cardiff-by-the-Sea after the event, Weber said their goal was to raise \$10,000 for the Special Olympics.

"This is the first time we have worked with the Special Olympics and we are looking forward to working with them in the future," Weber said.

Roxane Thompson, area director for Special Olympics in north San Diego, said she was happy to be working with the surf academy and was excited to see such a great community integrated effort.

"If there ever was a record for biggest party wave, it should belong to Southern California," Thompson said. "It was unbelievable. Mother Nature was supportive and the surfers were talented beyond belief to catch the same wave."

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Encinitas resident and Carlsbad fire department engineer Jack Crabtree said he participated in the event because he just wanted to help out.

“It was a lot of fun,” said Crabtree, still dripping with saltwater. “That is the first time I have ever surfed on a wave with 40 people.”

“The spirit and joy everyone had here today is what the Special Olympics are all about.”

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