

Surfing Lawyers win SurfAid Cup

By John Sampson



With barely seconds to go, the Australian Surfing Lawyers won the prestigious OzForex SurfAid Cup at South Curl Curl Beach, Sydney, on Friday, 1 November.

Against more favoured corporate teams, the lawyers came from behind using wit, a close analysis of cup rules and a measure of skill to take home the annual event in difficult two-foot plus waves.

Supported by surfing luminaries such as Tom Carroll, Layne Beachley, Simon Anderson, Luke Egan and Matt Hoy, as well as Rugby League legends Andrew Johns and Mark Gasnier, this year's event raised a record \$183,000 for remote communities in popular surfing regions in Indonesia.

Founding father of ALSA (Australian Lawyers Surfing Association) New South Wales barristers Peter Strain and Patron Craig Leggat SC were delighted with the win. 'We are an informal group of lawyers bonded by

our love of surfing and with a commitment to 'not for profit' groups connected to the surfing community and other groups interested in matters concerning the environment,' Craig said.

'Hopefully the win will raise our profile, attract more members and more importantly raise more funds for the causes we support.'

Team captain Matt 'Warbo' Warburton, Hudson's chief legal Officer, said: 'Each year ALSA (Australian Lawyers Surfing Association) travels to a remote surfing location and while it's a fantastic adventure for us we endeavour to give something back to where we surf, which is generally in impoverished communities.

'This year we surfed in West Timor and donated to the local school. We have competed in the SurfAid Cup since its inception and to win against some of the corporate heavyweights is a great thrill. More

importantly it is another way of giving back in a structured way through SurfAid who are doing great things.'

The Surfing Lawyers made the finals but were given little hope of winning in the tag-event against more formidable teams stacked with ex-pros.

Hopes were revived when Trent March of Allens picked up an outside set and flew down the line launching a furious backhand attack at the lip and scoring one of the longest and highest scoring waves of the day with an 8.67.

However the lawyers' hopes dimmed as the normally steadfast Guy Foster of Allens lost his way in the choppy, onshore conditions - only to be revived by Ryan 'Whippet' Clark of Bondi Rescue fame (each team is appointed a surfing legend) who slashed his way to put the lawyers within title contention.

They were dashed again as team



Far left: Trent March on the winning wave.

Left: cups aloft. L to R: Matt Warburton, Ryan Clark, Guy Foster, Trent March, James Walker-Powell.

Above: Victory to Surfing Lawyers. L to R: James Walker-Powell, Matt Warburton, Trent March, Guy Foster, Ryan Clark.

Photos: Blaise Bell.

captain Warbo got lost in the trashy conditions but not for lack of trying - taking off late and getting pitched onto the sand bar and winning 'Best Wipeout' of the event in the process.

With minutes to go it was up to James 'JWP' Walker-Powell, CEO of More4life, to save the day. Displaying disdain for youth or surfing legend, JWP sprinted to the water's edge, turbo paddled out the back, picked up a quick inside wave and paddled back out for his second wave which scores double points.

Only 90 seconds left hot favourites and defending champions, Aquabumps Shredders, needed just one decent wave to dash the lawyers' hopes. However the lawyers had studied the rules and realised JWP could win the cup if he could catch a wave and sprint up the beach ahead of Aquabumps and garner two bonus points for crossing the line first.

Losing all lawyerly restraint, the team dashed to the water's edge, shouting out instructions to JWP. JWP heard. He caught what was by any standards a mediocre wave, furiously paddled to the shore, good-naturedly flipped the bird at his competitor breathing down his neck, sprinted up the beach and fell, with seconds to spare, into the arms of his team mates.

Victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, the brief fulfilled, and 'the most exciting finish in SurfAid Cup history', according to SurfAid's Kirk Willcox. The lawyers beat their nearest rival, accountants Allan Hall, by 1.4 points, 46.73 - 45.33.

Sixteen teams competed in this year's SurfAid Cup including OzForex, Perpetual, Shaw Brothers, AMP Capital 1 and 2, CBA, Toybell, Citi Frothers, Paradise Investment Management, BlackRock, oOh!media and Crown Clowns.

SurfAid is a community-based humanitarian organisation whose programs include water and sanitation, malaria reduction and health education. For more information see <http://www.surfaid.org/>

For more information on The Australian Lawyers Surfing Association see <http://www.surfinglawyers.com.au/>