

North Carolina Surf to Sound Challenge rebounds following Florence hiatus

Jarrold Covington of Wilmington, NC, and Stephanie Shideler of Southold, NY, were crowned the new elite male and female champions

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA, USA, November 7, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Canceled last year following one of the worst hurricanes in state history, North Carolina Surf to Sound Challenge rebounded in Wrightsville Beach this weekend with nearly a 50-percent growth compared to 2017. "The biggest thing that impressed me about this race was the number of every-day paddlers that signed up and participated," said Race Director, Mark Schmidt.

According to Schmidt, 2019 turned out to be the largest Surf to Sound Challenge ever, with 119 participants compared to approximately 80 in 2017. The increase is due to local and regional signups and a growing interest in the variety of paddle races on the schedule, including the sport of outrigger canoe (OC), rapidly increasing in popularity in the mid-Atlantic.

Weekend weather conditions were brisk and favorable as fall weather moved into North Carolina. However, racing conditions were especially challenging on Saturday in the ocean and sound. According to the US Coast Guard crew on watch from Wrightsville Beach, seas were 4-5 ft. with unrelenting winds of 15 mph. On Sunday, the winds abated somewhat, with afternoon temperatures rising into the low-60s.

Jarrold Covington of Wilmington, NC, and Stephanie Shideler of Southold, NY, were crowned the new elite male and female champions in Saturday's 6.5-mile Surf to Sound title race. Covington owns the outdoor recreational company Wrightsville SUP, and Shideler is a former Wall Street banker who gave it up to pursue her passion for the paddling sport. Shideler will represent the



Jarrold Covington of Wilmington, NC – Courtesy of Robert B Butler



(L-R) Stephanie Shideler, NY; April Zilg, CA; Laurel Kritkausky Coburn, VT – Courtesy Robert B Butler

USA in the ISA World Standup Paddleboard Championship in El Salvador in late November.

North Carolina native April Zilg, ranked number two in the world by the Association of Paddlesurf Professionals, won this weekend's OC-1 division in The Froth, an 11-mile endurance race in the ocean and sound. Terry Kent of Ithaca, NY, earned the OC-1 men's title. Greg Flach, of Baltimore, MD, captured the 11-mile surfski honors.

Zilg, a three-time Surf to Sound Challenge champion now living in California, finished in the top spot in the SUP 14-ft. Women's division title in Sunday's Blockade Runner Flatwater Championship, a 9-mile race for advanced paddlers. John Batson, from Hilton Head Island, earned the SUP-14 Men's title in this race.



OC-6 competition at 2019 Surf to Sound Challenge - Courtesy Robert B Butler

The outrigger canoe six-team member (OC-6) racing division introduced a new chapter in the paddling competition with success based on teamwork in beautifully designed and sleek watercraft over 40-ft long. Reggie Barnes, Craig Stephens, Mike Medwedeff, Wesley Stolp, and Chris Martin won the Men's Division; Bernadette Burton, Misty Brown, Melissa Luther, Wendy Smith, Cat Marinich, and Rebecca Grandey won the Women's Division; and, Jack Marinich, Cameron Deisroth, Jenna Blackburn, Anna Blackburn, Barry Blackburn, and Steve Lewis won the Mixed Division.

The Big Boss Brewing Company in Raleigh captured the title in the Corporate Challenge Relay.

[Click here for photo gallery and additional event results](#)

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