

Avowed 'couch potato' becomes top international athlete – Meet April Zilg

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- An avowed "couch potato" eleven years ago, North Carolina's April Zilg is now a dominant athlete on the international stage of paddle sports.

In one short decade, April Zilg captured top honors in dozens of paddle sports competitions in oceans, lakes, and rivers around the world. She was named Salt Life's National Champion and the World Paddle Association's World Champion. Zilg is currently ranked second in the world overall by the Association of Paddlesurf Professionals.

Even so, with all her achievements and accolades, Zilg's most sought-after standup paddle goal wasn't realized until 2021 – winning the Carolina Cup Graveyard Race in her home state of North Carolina.

"Ten years ago, I couldn't paddle one mile without stopping and couldn't finish my first Carolina Cup," said Zilg, now a trainer and designer of programs to help other women and men in the sport. "It's surreal to say that I set out to reach a goal, and ten years later was able to achieve it. Sticking to something and seeing results gives me newfound confidence."



April Zilg, 2021 Carolina Cup Graveyard Race and Sprint Champion – Courtesy Robert B Butler



April Zilg – APP World Vice-Champion – Courtesy Association of Paddlesurf Professionals

"The Carolina Cup is one of the toughest races in standup," added Zilg. "The race throws all the obstacles at the athletes, so it helps if you're a well-rounded paddler. I'm looking forward to defending my championship on April 30th."

One of the world's largest and most prominent paddle sporting events, the Carolina Cup returns to Wrightsville Beach, April 27-May 1, 2022. The 11th Cup is a five-day festival of clinics, product displays, demonstrations, and competition – including six rousing races featuring amateur and

professional athletes using paddleboard, kayak, surfski, and outrigger canoe. Organized by the Wrightsville Beach Paddle Club, all activities are based at Blockade Runner Beach Resort.



April Zilg wins 2021 Carolina Cup APP Sprint Race – Wrightsville Beach – Courtesy Laura Glantz

"I'm honored to have my name on the Carolina Cup trophy in the lobby of Blockade Runner," said Zilg. "I worked there after my college days when I was starting my paddle career; they're a huge part of my name being on that trophy."

In a recent interview, April Zilg talks about her start in paddleboarding and how it changed her life; factors contributing to her success; female participation in the sport and her efforts to increase the numbers; a description of the Carolina Cup Graveyard Race course; key competitors she expects for the women's title in 2022; whether or not she will compete on the APP World tour; her business ventures and the high cost of global competition for athletes; her thoughts about having an East Coast location for global competitions; and, what she thinks about Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina.

[Click here for the complete interview with April Zilg](#)

2022 Carolina Cup Races:

The Graveyard Elite Race – A challenging 13.1-mile ocean and flatwater race for the elite and professional paddleboard racer. The Graveyard Race begins in the ocean surf, circumvents Wrightsville Beach, passes through two inlets, and tests the skills and fitness of each athlete with every surf, ocean, flatwater, wind, tide, and competitive condition of the day – including the best paddlers in the world.

The Graveyard Surfski, Outrigger, and Kayak Race – A 13.1-mile elite race on the Graveyard course, starting and finishing on the sound side and circumventing Wrightsville Beach. Kayak;

surfski (single and double), outrigger canoe (OC-1 and OC-2).

The Technical Sprint – A dynamic short course of fast-paced SUP sprints, into and out of the surf with buoy turns testing the skills and speed of participants. Structured with elimination and repechage formats, sprints provide dramatic action for the athletes and spectators while allowing the best to rise to the top.

The Money Island Open Race – A 10-kilometer inland islands and waterway race with currents and winds, but no ocean swells. Designed to challenge the intermediate to advanced paddler on paddleboard (standup and prone), kayak, surfski, and outrigger canoe (OC-1 and OC-2).

The Harbor Island Recreational Race – A 5-kilometer flatwater race in the inland waterways for first-time to intermediate paddleboarders (standup and prone). There are currents and wind, some boat traffic, no ocean swells, and mostly no-wake zones. A great opportunity to get on a board and enjoy the water.

The Kids Race – A fun event for children 6 to 14, one and two-loop course races on the sound. Everyone is recognized!

“Following the pandemic cancelation in 2020 and a delayed start in 2021, we’re excited to get the Carolina Cup back on our normal springtime schedule,” said race director Mark Schmidt. “We’re also pleased to partner with the ICF this year and have our sprint and distance SUP races double as pre-qualifiers for the International Canoe Federation World Series.” The 2022 Carolina Cup is presented by Kona Brewing Company.

The weekend prior to Carolina Cup, April 22-24, Wrightsville Beach will host the 2022 Carolina Pro-Am SUP Surf, a three-day paddleboard-surfing event drawing the world’s best professional and amateur athletes in the sport.

[Carolina Cup information and registration](#)

[Blockade Runner Accommodations](#)

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#OC6 #Surfski #Kayak #ProneSUP #OutriggerCanoe #CasperSteinfath #DannyChing
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