



PRESS RELEASE

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Wicklow Ladies Claim Senior Title at Surf Rescue National Championships

In a thrilling competition on Saturday 9th September, Ireland's top life-saving athletes competed for the Water Safety Ireland National Surf Lifesaving Championships in Youghal, Co. Cork. Wicklow Ladies took top spot in the Senior Overall category, taking home the President's Cup. Elsewhere, there were wins for the Wicklow Ladies in the Senior Ladies Openwater event and Clare in the Senior Men's Openwater event respectively.

Over 200 competitors between Senior and Masters levels represented ten counties over the course of the event, with sunshine adding to the sense of occasion. Waterford had a clean sweep in the Masters category, winning both the Masters title as well as the Overall combined Masters competition which included Openwater and Stillwater competitions.

Events are based around core life-saving skills including speed, strength, endurance and equipment handling, while the sport has a following of 4,000 active participants around Ireland including many leading lifeguards. A counterpart championship for the pool rescue staged at the UL Sports Campus every February.

Speaking after the competitions, Simon McGarrigle, Water Safety Ireland Sports Commission Chair commented "The National Surf Lifesaving Championships bring together Ireland's top lifesavers in one place to compete at the highest level and increase their lifesaving skills through sport. Competitors are involved in patrolling beaches and pools in Ireland and abroad all year round, meaning these Championships also have a positive impact on communities nationwide. Well done to all the competitors, coaches, referees and volunteers for making the Championships a huge success and congratulations to our winners".

Ireland's national squad recently returned from the European Junior Lifesaving Championships in Poland with a remarkable haul of 24 medals. Ireland's Senior national squad will be departing towards the end of this week for their chance to match the juniors in the European Senior Lifesaving Championships in Belgium from 16th – 21st September.

The 2024 season begins with the Pool Rescue National Championships at the University of Limerick in mid-February.

Water Safety Ireland welcomes new participants to Lifesaving Sport throughout the year. Those who wish to partake in National Lifesaving Championships are invited to contact their local Water Safety Area Committee to find out more about how they can get involved. Contact details are available at www.watersafety.ie/local-contacts/.

Ends

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COMPETITION DESCRIPTIONS

Water Events

Surf Race: With a running start into the surf from the start line on the beach, competitors swim around the 400 m (280 m for Masters) course designated by buoys, returning to shore to finish between the finish flags on the beach.

Ski Race: Competitors steady their surf skis in line in knee-deep water about 1.5 m apart. Competitors must obey directions from the starter or check starter concerning surf ski alignment at the start. On the starting signal, competitors paddle their surf skis around the course marked by buoys and return to finish when any part of the surf ski crosses the inwater finish line – ridden, gripped, or carried by the competitor.

Ocean Man/Woman: Competitors cover a 1.2 km course that includes a swim leg, a board leg, a surf ski leg, and a beach sprint finish. Conditions of racing of each leg are as generally required for the individual conditions of that discipline including the rules governing the component disciplines: surf ski races, board races, surf races, beach sprints.

Board Race: Competitors stand on or behind the start line on the beach with their boards 1.5 m apart. At the start signal, competitors enter the water, launch their boards, and paddle the course marked by the buoys, return to the beach, and run to cross the finish line.

Beach Events

20m Flags: From a prone starting position on the beach, competitors rise, turn and race approximately 20 m to obtain a baton (beach flag) seated upright in the sand with about two-thirds showing. Since there are always fewer batons than competitors, those who fail to obtain a baton are eliminated.

90m Sprints: Competitors take their positions in their allotted lanes. At the starting signal, competitors race the 90 m (70 m for Masters) course to the finish line. The finish is judged on the competitors' chest (only) crossing the finish line. Competitors must finish the event on their feet in an upright position.

Tube Rescue: Four competitors from each team participate in this event: a "victim," one rescue tube swimmer, and two rescuers. The victim swims approximately 120 m to a designated buoy, signals, and waits to be rescued by the rescue tube swimmer. As they return to shore, the remaining two rescuers enter the water to assist. The event finishes when the first competitor in a team crosses the finish line while in contact with the victim.