

Beach Sports

Bringing SUP to the masses

By Michael Hixon

Boyd Jeffery moved to Maui from Manhattan Beach two years ago to retire after building a very successful career in real estate. But he didn't want to see his 5-year-old son think of his father as the "young guy, not working and living the life of the surfer beach



Ultimate SUP Showdown was a combination race within the waves in Waikiki, Hawaii.



Boyd invited the top 64 athletes in the world to compete for \$25,000 in prize money.



was Connor Baxter, one of the top young stand-up paddleboarders in the world. Boyd took lessons from Baxter, who introduced him to other athletes.

“When I get something in my head it doesn’t go away,” Jeffery said. “I rallied up all the athletes ... I made them a simple promise that I would never owe them money and I would never leave them stranded. I was new to the sport. I didn’t have any notion on how events should be done or what the event is even about. So I kind of thought outside the box and put together an event I would personally like to see and hope the rest of the U.S. and the world would want to see.”

guy.” He became a paddleboard aficionado on the island and one day he came up with an idea that one of the fastest-growing sports in the world should be showcased on television.

Jeffery founded the “Ultimate SUP Showdown,” which had its premiere Sunday on CBS Sports Network. He will also host a screening of the show at Waterman’s in Hermosa Beach on Wednesday, Oct. 1, beginning at 7 p.m. Some of the top SUP athletes in the world are expected to show up at the event.

“I think it’s the start of something big,” Jeffery said. “Surfing has been a tough sell for TV ... to regular people it kind of looks all the same. You appreciate it, but after five minutes your attention span moves on. With SUP, racing is super exciting. You can enjoy the surfing and the judging of it and what you really get to enjoy is the showdown. It’s a race like the Winter X Games, it’s like motor cross on water.”

Jeffery had this idea more than a year ago.

“I had this weird vision of an obstacle course in the waves where these guys on their SUP boards go around it while they are getting pounded by 6 to 8 foot surf,” Jeffery said.

Jeffery had answered a Craigslist ad to buy a used paddleboard. It so happened that the salesman





Top World Professional athlete Kai Lenny with event creator Boyd Jeffery.

But to get this vision to come to fruition, he contacted long-time producer Rick Schwartz, who helped him get the TV deal.

"This is a fast-growing sport," Schwartz said. "A lot of it appeals to young athletes, they are good looking, it's a fun, great athlete competition."

The invitation-only event took place on Aug. 17 and 18, and included 64 (48 men and 16 women) competitors. They had to compete in surfing and racing. The waves were a little small for the competition, but Schwartz sees them traveling the world as the sport continues to increase in popularity.

"We hope to go to the North Shore, we hope to go to Australia, Brazil and France, to have much bigger waves," Schwartz said. "As it was, we had all the top SUP athletes in the world."

Schwartz hired Hermosa Beach-based Poor Boyz Productions, action sports filmmakers, to shoot the "Ultimate SUP Showdown."

"It's very difficult to get the right shots and it's very difficult for the announcers to see what's going on but we pulled it off," Schwartz said.

Boyd and CBS are in talks for multiple events in 2015 so he will be putting that "retirement" aside for now.

"I moved to Hawaii to slow down, I was diagnosed with diabetes ... but my son didn't see the work ethic that I had. I didn't want him to think everything came on a silver platter." *B*



Kai Lenny rips a cutback during competition.



Ultimate SUP Showdown from 'a Boyd Event' was sponsored by Honolua Surf Co.



Connor Baxter and Anabel Anderson took 1st place during the awards ceremony at the Moana Surfrider.