

Media Release

Friday 12 March 2010

Sunny Garcia bundled out of Burton Toyota Pro

(Merewether, Newcastle, NSW, Australia, 12 March, 2010)

TWICE in as many days, a former world surfing champion has been bundled out of the Burton Toyota Pro in their first heat.

Today it was Sunny Garcia's turn to join yesterday's casualty Mark Occhilupo in exiting the 4-star \$US85000 contest at Merewether beach.

The Hawaiian was repeatedly stung by blue bottles in the last heat of the day and was reticent to paddle around and find waves.

"Those blue bottles sting and you just don't want to paddle around. They got me on the arms and legs and even on my head," Garcia said.

Garcia said he was also affected by the news from Hawaii that his older sister had a stroke earlier today.

"My mind's at home right now. I'm thinking about my sister and right now I just want to go home."

Garcia is scheduled to surf in next week's Drug Aware Pro in Western Australia.

One surfer who doesn't want to go anywhere is 20-year-old Aussie Chris "Crittter" Salisbury.

But the Newport surfer, who started in the opening round of 112 here last Tuesday and has now surfed through six rounds to make the quarters after accounting for Garcia today, is due to fly to Tahiti on Sunday morning at 8am to contest the next event of the Australasian Pro Junior tour.

"This is my last year as a junior and I'm committed to the Pro Junior tour.

'I have to be on that plane regardless of how I go tomorrow," Salisbury said.

Salisbury was thrilled after defeating Garcia.

"I've never beaten a world champ before. I surfed against Mick (Fanning) on the Goldy a couple of weeks ago and he smoked me."

"Sunny's a legend but I was just thinking about what I had to do," he said before being handed a phone with a proud and excited Mum waiting on the line.

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Action commenced today with the women's round of 24, and defending champion Philippa Anderson was a surprise elimination.

The local surfer scored the same as Kirby Wright (8.90), but was given her marching orders courtesy of a countback.

The Burton Toyota Pro then commenced with the round of 48, where four-man heats were re-introduced after round 64 consisted of man-on-man heats.

Standouts included lanky Queenslander Blake Wilson, who racked up the day's only score over nine and topped the heat sheet with a 15.47.

Others to impress include Aussie Heath Joske and South African Brandon Jackson.

Tomorrow's remaining 12 heats in the man-on-man round of 32 will see the runner-up from last Sunday's Chiko Pro Junior final Davey Cathels and former Surfest winner Dayyan Neve hit the water.

Internationals still in contention include Japanese duo Naoto Takanashi and Yujiaro Tsuji, Kiwi Jay Quinn, Mexican Angelo Lozano and South African Damien Fahrenfort.

The only local surfers left in contention are Merewether's Ryan Callinan, who received a wildcard into the round of 32, and Michael Spencer from Lake Munmorah.

Organisers received good news today when the NSW Minister for Tourism and Minister for the Hunter, the Hon Jodi McKay, announced the event would receive \$150 000 from Events NSW to help ensure it will remain Newcastle's premier international event next year.

In addition, the Newcastle City Council Lord Mayor John Tate announced the Council would provide a grant of \$22 000 to also assist the event in 2011.

Action in the Burton Toyota Pro is scheduled to continue tomorrow with the round of 32 set to continue at 7.30am.

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