



Taking Turns—One competitor shreds a lip (left), while another (above) contemplates heading out at the Pistol River Wave Bash. (photos Dana Miller)

Pistol Fires Once Again

By Dana Miller

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It may be some small measure of the success of the 2010 Pistol River Wave Bash, held at Pistol River Stae Park in Gold Beach, OR, June 17-20, that there are already plans to do it again next year and even make a tour of it. (Waddell May 5th through the 8th. Pistol June 16th through the 19th. San Carlos will probably have a one month period where everybody will be on call then look for a Maui event in November sometime.) And if the quality of the sailing brought by more than 70 contestants literally from all over the planet didn't scream success, perhaps seeing something like half a million dollars worth of windsurfing gear laying around the beach was fairly impressive too. I'd never seen so many ultra-sweet-looking variations on the quad-fin concept in one place, and there were a lot of fresh 2011 sails as well.

As for the **most impressive sailing** out of so much incredibly impressive sailing, I would offer my humble estimation that Francisco Goya continues to be the man. I'm admittedly quite biased though, as I not only totally love the way he rides the wave but have a deep appreciation for the way he carries himself on the beach as well. Humble and approachable, he's a shining example to us all. And it's always an honor to get to see him sail.

The risk in choosing "the most" or a "best" is that it all too often diminishes the contributions of everybody else that came to test themselves. For all were ripping. Keith Teboul, who stepped in to judge, found time to get out for some sesh on some incredibly-dialed gear with his incredibly-dialed riding style. Robby Naish wasn't entered, but put in an appearance and threw down heavily. Kevin Pritchard, Nat Gill, Nathan Mershon and Kai Katchadourian and all the

rest of the pros brought their strong fluid moves and vertical wave attack. The groms came from far and wide to sail with heart and courage. The ladies brought style, grace and strong sailing. Anyone that still thinks windsurfing has been canceled needs to meet one of the youngest entrants in the contest, Fiona Wylde. At all of thirteen, her stoke and dedication is already completely evident. I wish we had tape of the cheer that went up on Friday when she made it out after brave effort and much swimming in conditions that may well have rightly turned many of you away. And you'd think she'd won the entire event to see her beaming face on the beach after.

The **most totally stoked** award, though hotly contested by Fiona, should probably go to Samantha Bittner, the stoke machine who committed to reviving an event that had been looking as if it had been canceled for the last decade. Stoked enough to pretty much let it rule her life for the seven months leading up to the event. Stoked enough to want to do it again and even bigger. I'd like to think I speak for all of windsurfing when I say how stoked I am that she's so stoked. And if that doesn't earn her burly status in your eyes as well, she sailed the Rock in a short sleeve suit the first day

she was there because it was all she had. (I wouldn't have let her go out in 50 degree water like that, but didn't find out till she was coming back out with blue lips—from a distance, the black long-sleeved rash guard made it look like she had a full suit on.) Way burly. And stoked.

The biggest props to the **most unsung hero** of the 2010 Bash have to be for Russ Faurot. As the significant other of the event promoter, I'm quite sure he's done much more than we will ever know to help pull this off. And DaKine was on it huge as well. Not just nine large boxes of schwag and a pile of cash to help make the expenses, but they sent two of their main people to help with the event: Bill Morrissey, who stepped in to be the beach marshal, and Chris Gilbert was in the house, helping out large. And a large Mahalo to all the other sponsors that committed cash, prizes, stoke, t-shirts, cookies, their time and all the other things it takes to pull something like this off. It was a beautiful thing to see so much love flowing toward having this event again.

The **heartfelt gratitude** award goes out to a handful of my very best friends who did so much to support me in my efforts to contribute something to this project and also helped me get past being so stressed about all



Top Two—First and second-place finishers Kevin Pritchard and Francisco Goya were willing to get their feet dirty, and wear lots of neoprene and winter jackets for the opportunity to compete at Pistol River in June. (photo Dana Miller)

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Max Headroom—Whit Poor puts the ShadowBox GPS through its paces in the windy days before the contest. (photo Tigi)

the missed opportunities. It was probably even for the best that I sailed so badly in my heats, as it would have certainly been poor form to do well in an event I seem to have been widely perceived as having far more to do with than I did.

Speaking of poor form, it would probably be the height of poor form to give an award for it, but if you were going to, wouldn't it have to go to anyone who spent the months before the event complaining on line and on the beach about how they would somehow be inconvenienced by it, yet still shown up at the very event they had been complaining about to enjoy the show? And then went to the closing party and had more complaints about the beer that was provided at no cost to them. "Full Sail" by the keg, I might add. Now I suppose this is just more of my personal bias coming through but I really love Full Sail and am nothing but grateful the Hood River-based brewery hooked us up so fully.

The "it's all too ironic" award might have to be that those two 3.7 days right before the event didn't come several days later to coincide with the finals. Isn't that

how it so often goes though? The conditions were still pretty good for a contest. Not large, but fairly solid Rock conditions with waves breaking overhead in the sets most days and plenty of wind to sail them with. Yes, what a gift to get three-and-a-half days of wind and waves out of four for the event. And windy waves ten days straight before the contest for those who wanted to show up early and get a feel for the place. Whit and Tyson Poor were on some of that and totally threw down impressive shows on those 3.7 days. Whit logged a 47-foot jump on his ShadowBox (a new three-dimensional GPS that measures, among many other things, height gained to the inch) the first day, and a 54-footer the next. While he didn't land that one, I did see them both land some huge stuff those days. Fearless flying for sure.

Everyone I've talked to seems to be fully stoked and already looking forward to next year. As am I. Though I'm going to try to delegate better next year and maybe even take a couple days off sailing before the event to heal up and be more ready for

that.

What else did I learn? A lot really. Always do. It's just too bad I tend to forget so much of it and then proceed to make so many of the same mistakes again. Ahhhhhhh yes, contests have taught me so much, yet I still haven't learned.

Pistol River Wave Bash 2010 sponsors included DaKine, Starboard, Severne, Neil Pryde, JP Australia, Ezzy, RRD, Naish, ProMotion, O'Neill, Maui Sails, Maui Ultra Fins, Big Winds, Chinook, Pritchard Windsurfing, NoLimitz, RealWind, Windance,

Windsurfing Magazine, Iwindsurf.com, Windsport, Inn of the Beachcomber, and ShadowBox. You'll find a few more rants, results, updates and photos in the summer issue of boardheadinternational.com. 🌊

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Just Warming Up—Dana Miller throwing down some great moves. Unfortunately it is not during one of his heats. (photo Tigi)

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