

Day 2 King of the Harbour Press Release:

The second day of the 2007 King of the Harbour saw the northeast breeze that had blown up during Day 1 become more established overnight, building in strength to 15 knots. The resulting 3 foot northeasterly wind swell pushing into the Hauraki Gulf proved to be perfect for racing around Rangitoto Island anticlockwise, generating tail wind conditions for the final return leg to Takapuna Beach.

Following Day 1 Kiwi Mike Walker had trailed South African Dawid Mocke by less than one minute, so it was no surprise to see the 2006 title holder make the early pace in the 26km Day 2 event. Mocke was well of Walker's plan, and he swiftly moved together with Day 1 3rd place holder Oscar Chalupsky to haul down Walker before he could do any real damage. The trio were still together as the field reached the southern coastline of Rangitoto, and were being chased by the other two South Africans, Bevan Manson and Daryl Bartho, with a big group trailing further behind.

Mocke, Walker and Chalupsky maintained their lead to the geographical halfway point of the race, the narrow stream flowing between Rangitoto and Motutapu islands. Behind them however, NZ Olympic medallist Ben Fouhy was making the most of the flatter conditions in the lea of the island, catching Manson and Bartho as he powered along.

The next leg around the northeastern aspect of Rangitoto was the most technically difficult part of the race, so it was not surprising to see Mocke attempt to make a move. The Cape Town paddler soon had a few boat lengths on the other two, as all three paddlers began to line up with the wind swells for the surf home. Chalupsky was keen to work with Walker to chase down Mocke, but the determined Kiwi brushed aside the 11 time Molokai World Champ's helpful suggestions and put his head down in pursuit of Mocke.

Mocke continued to race brilliantly, the 2004 and 2005 King of the Harbour champ reading the wind and outgoing tide conditions perfectly, easily opening up a 500m gap on Walker. In the meantime Chalupsky had slipped back further, the 44 year old surfski legend unable to pull back the super-fit local boy even in his preferred downwind racing conditions. Mocke eventually won comfortably, having easily done enough to maintain his lead from Day 1 and have the fastest combined time over both days. In finishing second and third respectively Walker and Chalupsky had also done enough to maintain their overall placings.

The race for the next three placings was far more intense, with Manson just holding out countryman Bartho, with Fouhy just a few ski lengths back and having his best ever race in following seas. He will be hoping for dead calm water come Beijing 2008. First female paddler home was Katie Pocock in 15th place overall. Team South Africa took out the overall team points.

The one-man outrigger race also attracted a classy field, with Rotorua paddler Bernt Sommers too classy on the day, opening up a huge lead on the final surfing leg. Kingi Gilbert continues to be the big improver in the sport, holding on for second place, with the Roozendaal brothers Lance and Paul taking 3rd and 4th places respectively for both Day2 and the entire weekends racing.

See www.surfski.co.nz for full details