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## Surfers shoot for world record in Carlsbad

By: Alexandra DeLuca - For the North County Times

CARLSBAD ---- Forty people surfed their way into history at South Carlsbad State Beach on Wednesday afternoon, hoping to land a place in the Guinness Book of Records.

The surfers appeared to set a record for the world's biggest "party wave," surfer jargon for a group standing on their own surfboards and riding the same wave simultaneously.

San Diego Surfing Academy sponsored the event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the first surfing lesson given by the academy, and to raise money for Special Olympics North San Diego.

"I wanted to do something special and meaningful to celebrate our 10-year anniversary," said Pat Weber, 44, founder, owner and head coach of the surfing academy. "I tried to think big. I tried to think of surfing records we could break."

Weber decided on attempting to break the world record for the biggest party wave, set in December 2002 at Manley Beach, Australia, with 38 surfers.

"I thought, I could do that just with my staff," said Weber.

Weber contacted the Guinness Book of Records to get information about the existing record ---- as well as precise instructions on the requirements necessary to break it. He then set June 29 as the date for the event and started spreading the word.Y

He enlisted the help of SDSA staff members, friends and other groups such as the Encinitas-based Swami Surfing Association to participate, and solicited corporate sponsorships and individual pledges to raise funds for Special Olympics North San Diego.

On Wednesday, surfers began trickling down the stairs to South Carlsbad State Beach around 11 a.m. When the official team photo was taken, there were only about 27 surfers, much less than the 100 or so that Weber had anticipated.

"That was the most stressful part ---- not having that many people," Weber said. "We didn't have as many surfers as we thought we would."

Weber and other SDSA employees quickly began recruiting other surfers who happened to be in the area.

"We plucked them out of the campgrounds and off the beach," said Weber.



*Founder and head coach of the San Diego Surfing Academy Pat Weber screams `party wave` as he rides in after he and 39 other surfers broke the world record for the most surfers on one wave at South Carlsbad State Beach*

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By 11:30 a.m., a coalition of about four dozen surfers ---- male and female, ranging in age from 11 to 60 ---- hit the water as Weber shouted instructions over a megaphone from a lifeguard jeep parked on the shore.

"Ready ... ready ... ready ... party wave!" Weber shouted each time he spotted a good wave.

The first few attempts came close: 30 surfers got up on a wave, then 34, then 37, then 35. After about 20 minutes, Weber called the surfers back to shore for a pep talk.

"I'm so proud of every single one of you," Weber told them. "We can do this."

Weber told the surfers who had brought short boards to run up to the surf camp and exchange them for long boards, which would enable the surfers to stay up longer.

"You need a lot of float to stay up there for five seconds," Weber explained.

As several surfers ran up to trade in their boards, Weber decided to take matters into his own hands. He handed over the wave calling duties to Harmony Reynolds and ran off to get his own board.

A few minutes later, Weber and the other surfers were paddling out to sea, but more difficulties ensued: the waves had died down a bit, and the surfers were having trouble hearing the calls. Then Reynolds handed the megaphone over to a lifeguard, and the tide literally changed.

About 10 minutes after noon, the magic moment arrived.

"Party wave!" came the call from a lifeguard as 40 surfers stood up simultaneously for about five seconds and rode a gently breaking wave back to shore.

The judges conferred, compared their counts and confirmed that it appeared that a world record had been set. The crowd on the shore cheered, and there were high-fives and hugs all around as the surfers came ashore.

"Dude, I'm so euphoric," said Weber as he embraced a fellow surfer. "It was pretty dramatic. You couldn't have written a better script."

Grant Lee, 23, of Oceanside, said he was certain from the start that he and his fellow surfers would break the record.

"I knew it was gonna happen, I just didn't know how many," he said.

Lee said he had a feeling they did it when he got up on the final wave. "It set up perfectly," he said.

Weber said he was so focused on staying in his lane and avoiding a collision with the other surfers that he wasn't even thinking about the record.

"I wasn't even aware until we heard from the judges that we did it," said Weber.

Pro-surfing judges John Reinhardt, George Beard and Tim Carter attended the event and are expected to sign affidavits stating the veracity of the record. A DVD comprising video footage of the event and paperwork will be sent back to Guinness, and Weber said he hopes to receive confirmation of the record within the next several weeks.

Lee said it was an experience he will never forget. "It's just such a good cause, and to be a part of a world record is awesome."

Weber said about \$10,000 had been raised for Special Olympics North County and he planned to present a check to the group at a reception at the Encinitas Elks Lodge later Wednesday afternoon.

"It's a pretty special day," Weber said. "I'm buzzing right now. This is so cool."

For more information on the San Diego Surfing Academy, visit [www.surfingacademy.com](http://www.surfingacademy.com) or call (800) 447-SURF.