

Extracted from Northern Beaches Weekender 18/10/07

Club President completes iconic Coolangatta Gold ironman.



Long Reef Surf Club President Doug Lucas is used to success after taking his club to being one of the most highly regarded in the state winning the 2004 and 2005 NSW Club of the Year. Doug was also the first person in history to win back-to-back NSW Lifesaver of the Year awards in 2003 and 2004 and the prestigious Australian Surf Life Saver of the Year award in March, 2005.

But Doug as always looking for new challenges and decided on Sunday 14th October, 2007 to line up with a handful of other ironmen from around Australia taking part in the 2007 NIB Coolangatta Gold on the Gold Coast.

Doug is more renowned for this incredible dedication and his lifesaving resume on patrol however saw this event as a great challenge and one that he just had to complete to become the first from Long Reef to complete the event. Doug trained throughout winter with another group of 5 from Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club pushing each other through some gruelling and practically cold sessions to ensure they were adequately prepared for the race. One session included paddling a board on Jindabyne Lake in the snowy mountains at 2 degrees, others in rough, windy and cold surf.

Doug's philosophy is that anything is possible and you need to follow your dreams, however noted he had a great deal of respect for the professional athletes who train at such an intensity day in and day out to ensure their success.

On race day Doug and his Narrabeen comrades paddled the opening 23 km ski leg into a southerly headwind before the return journey from Coolangatta back to Surfers. This included a heart breaking 650 metre sand run, 3.5 km ocean swim, 4 km soft sand run, 5.5 km board paddle in nasty choppy easterly wind and swell followed by a 10 km sand run back to Surfer's.

Due to the unpredictable nature of the race and the weather factors Doug's initial goal was just to complete the race having never actually previously done even a short course ironman or ocean swim event. Doug's previous back-ground in Surf Sports being as a rower for a number of seasons as well as surf boat sweep. Doug said, *'I am very self motivated and I knew that before the race I had done the hard work and hard training so in my mind there was never any doubt about me not finishing the race.'*

Doug acknowledged that he was not an elite athlete but for him it was about being involved and completing the iconic event. Doug certainly didn't put himself to shame managing 14th overall in the 30-39th age category.

For now Doug will head back to surf patrols and his role of Club President however has stated that he will be making a number of appearances throughout the summer at various carnivals and after enjoying the Gold experience so much is a serious contender to again line up for next years event.