

SAY HELLO TO:
SASHA STOCKER.

The success of our surfers rests largely on the shoulders of Sasha.

It is the unsung hero of Australian surfing: no magazine coverage, Sports Tonight footage, newspaper reporting. Nudda.

Yet Surfing Australia's High Performance Centre (HPC) is the engine room behind our sustained success. Sure, there's more natural surfing talent Down Under than skanks in California, but flair only gets you so far in the professional era. Specialised tuition and training for beginner and elite surfers is vital.

Meet Sasha Stocker, Surfing Australia's HPC Head Coach and the man with all the responsibility. "I believe that Surfing Australia is one of the most important factors for the continued success of Australian surfing," Stocker says from Casuarina Beach, NSW, the head office and home of Surfing Australia. "The network of programs that Surfing Australia provides supports surfers from entry level to professional careers."

Such programs include: 73 accredited surf schools; 196 affiliated boardriders clubs; seven state surfing branches; an elite competition structure; and alternative surf-related career pathways including coaching, judging and marketing.

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WHO IS SASHA?

Age: 32
Last comp: 2001, Sasha competed in events on the WQS and WCT.
Best results: (as a surfer) 1994 ISA World Champ, 2000 8th on the WQS; (as a coach) 2003, 2004, 2006 ISA Teams Champions.

"The HPC is Australia's only sports centre that focuses on providing a scientific approach to elite surfer-athlete training programs," Sasha imparts.

A little lost? In a nutshell these guys aim to produce future world champions. Mat Wilkinson, Jutan Wilson, Owen Wright... heard of 'em? Yep these groms won a collection of junior world titles in recent years, and Sasha and the HPC have been training and guiding these shredders along the way.

"We work annually with around 50 of Australia's top juniors," Sasha continues. "The results are excellent. In the past four years of World ISA Junior Championships, Australians have won eight world titles out of the 12 on offer and three team gold medals."

Indeed, many HPC athletes have made the transition onto the WQS and WCT - Bede Durbidge, Ben Dunn, Leigh Sedley and Steph Gilmore. But no matter how much professional help is provided it all comes down to attitude. "We provide information to assist smooth career transitions, but it is the athlete's attitude toward this information that makes the difference in the end."

BY ROGHAN

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FRANKIE
 Yep, Sam's only has his new Porpoise Frankie on his got to surf (pictured as well). Same old that gets in your waves with your chaps, check out on page 100.

SLASH
 James's wharfing Stradella's infection completely scores a 100 your slushy www.waves.com

PHOTO
 The east well built were looking you turned a rogue wave show down scores a 100 (page 100) www.waves.com