

## 2006 World Waveski

Successful world waveski series for South Africa

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The 2006 World waveski series held in South Africa turned out to be a huge success, with 87 entries in total for the official world titles that was held in Durban, of which 31 was from overseas. Three pre- world champ open events was held in Cape Town, Jeffreys Bay and East London, with most of the overseas waveskiers taking part in all of the events. This provided them the perfect opportunity to experience some of most beautiful parts of the South African coastal region from Cape Town all the way up the east coats to Durban.

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The sea gods was looking well after the waveski organisers throughout the series of events, as each event experienced good surf conditions. The Cape Town event was surfed at Van Riebeeck Strand in Melkbosstrand in solid 3 - 6 foot beach break conditions. The French waveskiers, Matthieu Babarit and Julien Billard indicated that they would be major contenders for final positions with awesome aerial manoeuvres. The 2005 world champion, Neal Decker from Australia, also made his presence felt together with the top South African waveskiers, which included former double world champ, Nikki Carstens. Reigning SA Champ, Malan Calitz (WP) took a serious tumble in the waves and was eliminated for the rest of the series due to injury.

Matthieu Babarit ( France) won the open event in Cape Town, followed by Neal Decker ( Australia), Nikki Carstens (SA) and Julian Billard ( France). Five-time world ladies champion, Caroline Angibaut ( France), won the ladies division.

Jeffreys Bay was surfed in perfect 3- 5 feet offshore conditions at Magna Tubes. Again the French waveskiers demonstrated their ability to surf fast waves. The local surfers in the Eastern Cape did the best for the SA contingent at the event attracted 58 entries. Mathieu Babarit won once again, closely followed by Nikki Carstens, Ian Macloud (EP) and Julian Billard. The ladies was again won by Caroline Angibaut, with Sandra Pienaar (EP) and Coralie Jousset ( France) showing good talent and a fight in the waves.

The first day at the Nahoon Reef leg of the open series had to be cancelled due to strong onshore winds and huge swell that made surfing impossible. The decision by the contest organisers to start a day later paid off, as the final two days was surfed in perfect 5-8 feet offshore conditions. The local riders of Border basically dominated the top ten placing, except for one Frenchman, Julian Billard who lived up to his reputation as a one of the best big wave surfers in the world. Julien won the event, followed by Mike Orsmond, Mike Cowen and Michael Orsmond and Dave Hammond (all from Border).

The main event of the World Series was the official world championships held at New Pier in Durban from July 1 - 9. This is the most prestigious event on the international waveski calendar and this year described as the best showpiece ever for the sport by World Waveski association Secretary, Jackie Dillon from Australia. Eighty seven waveskiers from Australia, France (including Guadeloupe and - Reunion Island), Israel, United Kingdom ( England, Ireland, Scotland) Ireland, New Zealand and South Africa, which was surfed in eight different age/ gender categories took part. A ladies and mens tag team event was also held. Waves ranged from 2 - 4 foot over the 10 day contest with conditions changing constantly from heat to heat and the erratic surf conditions tested the riders' surfing and wave reading ability to the full.

The mens' tag team event of one and a half hours was surfed on day two, and the South African pulled one the most convincing wins in the history of this event, followed by Australia, France and United Kingdom in fourth place. South Africa retained their title that they won in Brazil in 2004 and they are now the most successful waveski tag team to date. For first in history of the world championships, which date back to 1984, a ladies tag team event was surfed. The French team dominated, followed by international invitation team and South Africa third.

The South African and French representatives dominated the finals, and medals standing are as follows:

- South Africa : 14 medals (3 Gold, 4 Silver and 7 Bronze)
- France : 10 medals (4 Gold, 2 Silver, 4 Bronze)
- Australia : 5 medals (1 Gold, 1 Silver, 3 Bronze)
- United Kingdom : 2 medals (1 Silver, 1 Bronze)
- New Zealand : 1 Bronze

Results: Men's tag team

1. South Africa
2. Australia
3. French Guadeloupe
4. France
5. Great Britain Ladies Tag Team

1. France
2. International Invitational
3. South Africa A Team
4. South Africa B Team

Finalists:

Cadets: (Age 13-16):

1. Max Echoff (SA " East London)
2. Gerhardus van Zyl (SA " Cape Town)
3. Andrew Alexander (SA " East London)
4. Jonathan von Mollendorf (SA " East London)

Juniors: (Age 17 " 21)

1. Lionel Angibaut ( France)
2. Andre Burger (SA " East London)
3. Noel Divialle ( Guadeloupe)
4. Boris Nicholas ( Guadeloupe)

New Age (21-30 years)

1. Mathieu Babarit ( France)
2. Julien Billard ( France)
3. Schalk van Wyk (SA " Cape Town)
4. Sylvian Longuet ( Guadeloupe)

Seniors (Age 31 " 40):

1. Grant Kendrick (SA " Cape Town)
2. Nikki Carstens (SA " Cape Town)
3. Chad Hulsen ( Scotland)
4. Blair Moore ( Australia)

Masters (Age 41-50):

1. Neil Decker ( Australia)
2. Kieron Davies ( Great Britain)
3. Brad James ( New Zealand)
4. Naude Kotze (SA " Port Elizabeth)

Veterans (Age 51+):

1. Kola le Roux (SA " East London)
2. Willy Graser (SA " Cape Town)
3. Kevin Marshal ( Australia)
4. Ian Beach (SA " Durban)

Open (open to all regardless of age or gender):

1. Mathieu Babarit ( France)
2. Neil Decker ( Australia)
3. Craig Powell (SA " East London)
4. Blair Moore ( Australia)

Ladies:

1. Caroline Angibaut ( France)
2. Coralie Jousset (Fance)
3. Tracy Sassen (SA â€™ Cape Town)
4. Sandra Pienaar (SA â€™ Port Elizabeth)