

Baltic Sea Festival, bringing together the sport of ocean paddling

It's been a while since more than 300 paddlers met in Eckernförde Bay for the 2nd Baltic Sea Festival. An event that connects, fun and serious, entry-level, youth and professional sports, SUP, surfski, outrigger and Vaá. All in one place, at the same time and with the same thought! "Fun with friends, the coolest sport in the world, ocean sports".



In the last 25 years, ocean sports in Germany have developed strongly. Two of the outstanding disciplines are definitely SUP and surfski. Both communities are growing steadily and showed their potential in the starting field. 45 SUP and 111 Surfski 1er and 2er conquered Eckernförde Bay. Even if the number of boats certainly seems a bit smaller, the boats driven with outriggers (Ama) were hardly inferior to the current trend paddle types in terms of paddlers. With 109 paddlers and thus 51 boats in OC1, OC2, Vaá1 and Vaá6, this ocean sports section was also an eye-catcher.

For the organizers, the Sportclub Berlin Grünau, the alignment continued to be difficult in the third Corona year, so some of the 316 paddlers who finally registered had to cancel at the last moment, so that in the end 278 paddlers were on the water. It is also still difficult to approve a paddling event, since the environmental compatibility of the sport carried out is not understandable for some. It is very difficult to understand that we move almost silently using only muscle power, playing with the forces of nature. But here, too, the success was on the organizers' side, so that it was possible to carry out the event. A big thank you to the Touristik Eckernförde, the municipality of Strande and the LKV Schleswig-Holstein.

Since the event lasts three days and is one of the safest events in Germany, it is a must for everyone who loves paddling and wants to learn to love it. If you have the time, you can already ride a secured downwind on Friday and this is also possible on Sunday. The scheduled race day on Saturday also gives

those who cannot simply hope for a three-day race window the chance to take part in the race. The two race distances are also an optional decision for every athlete. You can check your level of fitness and experience and then decide on the 13km or 27km distance. Last but not least, the junior race provides the opportunity to give youngsters a chance in ocean sports. The field was still very small here, but there were at least a few brave ones at the start and even showed the experienced athletes "where the frog has the curls".



At this point, a huge thank you to the DLRG, which coordinated everything perfectly. Special thanks, and he must pass them on, to operations manager Sebastian Beck!

The location and thus the basis for this event is the "Grönwohld campsite". Here the operator Micha keeps all accommodations reserved only for the paddlers, which gives the Baltic Sea Festival a uniqueness of community. The majority of all athletes are on site, which enables an open exchange of experiences on ocean sports, paddling technique and other skills. The opportunity to get to know and test all the material is also unique. Exhibitors from the likes of Vajda, Nordic Kayaks, Makaio, Nelo, Hody, Stellar and Liteventure made this possible. Here the idea is clear, everyone should find the right material for themselves and that with a lot of professional competence of the individual exhibitors. It should be mentioned here that the individual protagonists contribute a large part to the organization of this event. Thanks a lot for this!

Now for the sporty part. After everyone was able to warm up paddling and surfing on Friday due to the freshening wind and the resulting waves. On Saturday, Eckernförde Bay showed why it is also a sailing and surfing hotspot. The conditions were announced through the wind apps. Many athletes preferred to change their registration again, because great conditions were announced and one or the other did not feel comfortable with them. Here, too, one has to say that the location is perfect for surfing. The waves form evenly and are rarely very difficult to read. So you can also ride a big wave very well and in a controlled manner. With waves averaging 0.7m and peaks of no doubt 1.3m, real surfing fun developed. The statements went from "It was the best downwind ever, ever...", to "I can't say if I've ever surfed faster!", to "Just awesome". The conditions could certainly have been easier for the big sixes, because these 13.20m long boats were sometimes in three waves at the same time, which made steering very difficult. However, this also showed that the six is a very demanding boat class and that the Baltic Sea can undoubtedly be an even more demanding paddling area. While all the small boats, one and two, were blessed with a lot of surf, the big boats had to fight a little more with the forces of nature. So in the end it wasn't very surprising, since the best time of the day was not experienced by a six but by a surf ski. In a driving time of 1 hour 48 minutes and 21 seconds, Michael Dobler covered the distance at an average speed of 14.95 km/h. But it should also be mentioned here that the last 3.5 km had to be completed with a strong headwind and that one or the other average time has certainly worsened. The Swede Jenny Larsson won the women's competition with a time of 2 hours 7 minutes and 51 seconds. In OC1, Marton Buday saw the finish after 2 hours 4 minutes and 10 seconds, really fast considering that the outriggers always lose a little more time in headwinds. For the reasons mentioned, the girls preferred to rely on the 13km route. It will definitely be different next year! Rico Gierschmann/Eckart Dietrichkeit won the outrigger twos. The SUP Challenge was claimed by Matrin Teichmann, who was outstanding in 2 hours 44 minutes and 1 second, especially if you look at the last 3.5 km. The fastest SUP woman crossed the finish line less than half an hour after the winner of the men's competition. It should be said, 27km can be very long! Tanja Ecker's time of 3 hours, 13 minutes and 42 seconds seems more than respectable. In the surf ski and outrigger twos, the field was not that

large, but the individual boats still had a lot of fun. They should be mentioned here over the 13km, here the canoe club Charlottenburg started with two junior boats and pushed them over the finish line with a clear lead.

As mentioned, the six had to struggle, but it is a great achievement, especially by the helmsmen, that 8 of 9 boats reached the finish line. Unfortunately, there were some evaluation errors, which the organizer felt sorry for, but were not recognized in the evening at the award ceremony. The team from the Berlin Canoe Club Borussia won in the V4a 6'er, ahead of the Canoe Club Unterweser and the WSV Niederrhein. The winning boat's time was 2 hours 22 minutes and 31 seconds. They were also only 4 minutes and 22 seconds slower than the winning boat of the men's competition from WSV Buckau Fermersleben.



92 participants drove over the 13km route! The outrigger competition was won by Simone Ahrens and Wilken Detmering. Anna Hoppmann/Annica Bergfeld won in the same discipline twos. The men's field started completely on the long distance. With the surf skis, the canoe club in Charlottenburg shows that they are at the forefront when it comes to youth work. Tanne von Bahder won the junior race and Lilly Waldau the women's competition. The question here is what would have happened if Lilly had driven the long distance!? She was at the finish line after 53 minutes and 5 seconds. With that, she gave the men's surfski winner, Benny Paries, a smack on the back of his neck as he finished 1min 20s ahead of her.

In the SUP's, the junior race was won by Lasse-Niklas Sauerteig in 1 hour 7 minutes and 52 seconds. Skadi Langbein finished a little later as the only junior. Hauke Schneider must also be mentioned, because he was the youngest participant of the event, at 15 years old. The men and women competition remains entirely in the hands of the Sach family. Noelani Sach took first place, as did her brother Maui Sach, who got his board surfing in 1 hour 1 minute and 12 seconds.



The conclusion, a hammer event, which was certainly not quite perfect, but is unparalleled. We have found that one can also overlook minor defects with a lot of joy. We realize that it is still possible to improve things and we will do so. Therefore, as the organizer, you are welcome to contact us if something does not fit. We will try to change it! In 2023 we will start taking the time, we would like to do it externally and more precisely. We will also check whether there is the possibility of a personal shuttle. And we will give clear rules for the rules on the water, because we have mentioned it several times, so that no one is disadvantaged. This also includes the buoys on the water, which are getting bigger and will also have a different color scheme. Finally, quite simply, it was a lot of fun, we are looking forward to next year (2-4.6.2023), the campsite is blocked, THANK YOU and see you soon on the Baltic Sea!

Your organization team Daniel and Robert, as well as all helpers from the Sportclub Berlin Grünau