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PETESPACE

This Edition of Pete'space comes to you from the plane ride home after an eventful time at the 'Blowson Surf Slam' and second round of the IFWA World Freeride tour.

Jack Shelly, owner of Australian company WORX Racing decided that it would be positive if there was Aussie presence at this years event, as he was a naming sponsor and a proud supporter. He helped me financially to make it to the event along with Craig Maudsley from AJSP who came to lend me a hand. I shipped my Watson/ WORX Racing Carbon Superjet by airfreight which arrived at Blowson with some minor damage to the rear, but with some help from Mark Matsuda we fixed it up like new and headed down to the event which is two hours from Portland at Pacific City.

The trip down was an event in itself, I was following Craig in a large box van and his GPS navigator sent us the long way through the mountains and on some dirt roads where he was driving like Colin McRae in his Ford focus and I nearly rolled my van.

Starting at the site for practice on Thursday was when the fun began. My bendix gear had seized up as there must have been some water lying in the front cover when I shipped it. We headed to the only small town in existence where we got some local mechanic shop to lend us some tools to change it, and then we snapped the air breather off the tank and had to go to local Napa auto parts store and get some assorted fittings before heading back to the shop to continue. Everyone we met in the USA went out of there way to help us and made us feel welcome which was a great relief. I finally hit the water at around 4pm and had a good first practice session.

That night we headed out to the only two pubs in town for drinks and met some of the riders like Mike Serlin and Eddie Bettencourt and some of the Oceanside crew who helped me a lot during the weekend, not only to destroy my liver but getting my ski to the water and using there beach trolleys etc.

Friday was the first day of heats and let me tell you it was the best day of the whole event,



the weather was good, the waves where clean and the beer was cold.

My heat was against American Darin Anderson who did one the biggest back flips I have ever seen; he is a great surf rider and an all round good guy. After the heat I packed up my ski and headed to the beer tent to watch the upcoming carnage, the swell was well over 10 feet and washed right up through the beer tent and under the Rockstar energy van which was now stuck. The water also reached my rental van which was now up to the doors in water, leaving us no option but to tow it out before returning to the beer garden to watch some of the amateur heats. The day was postponed due to the rising water and surf so there was nothing more to do but go to the bar for one of several nights I won't forget...or will!

Saturday was 15 degrees, the waves where huge and I had a headache. I came up against Marc Sickerling which was exciting, I progressed through due to my wave riding skills which was key to the whole event as tricks where hard to complete and people where sinking skis. I then returned to the tray of my ski for a well earned sleep after the first round. Again, the day was

called off due to the dangerous conditions in the afternoon.

Sunday was finals day and first I rode up against Jerry Brandon who I beat, moving on through to the 1/8 finals which saw me head to head with Mike Serlin who was making the surf riding look easy. It was a close heat and I could nearly have made it through but I blew a back flip by losing the bars and crashed. This along with less surf riding meant my campaign had ended with a 5th place; Mike went on to take 2nd behind Ross Champion 1st and Pierre Maixent in 3rd.

Some big names like Federico Bufacci where knocked out, but not before doing the biggest no hander barrel roll and double barrel roll I have seen.

My next plan of attack is to try and compete in the Brazil Freeride tour round in October if I can get the sponsorship together. This trip was a great experience and I don't think it will be my last major event, I will never forget it and I don't believe the people I met will ever forget me either.

To see some pics visit www.ozfreeride.com