

2x2 Relay Meets Aussie Icons

With teams representing everything from Budgy smugglers to Vegemite, this 2x2 relay was a true Aussie icon. The first spring relay introduced a brand-new course featuring an upstream section, which was met with some initial challenges for paddlers.

True to the Aussie spirit, the event had all the flavours of a “laid-back” culture that could only be described as iconic. Two out of the ten teams didn’t even make it to the water for their start time. Half the teams probably didn’t bother to read the course instructions, leading to scenes of paddlers zigzagging up and down the start line. Some were paddling upstream, some downstream, and others seemed to be following the Sydney Harbour Ferry lines. Paddlers were confused as a roo in headlights and the German timekeeper re-considering her life choices. At one point, Caroline was spotted clutching a Caramello Koala, holding onto her last shred of sanity. Grace, the official therapy dog, provided some much-needed support.

Don, paddling as part of the *Budgy Smugglers*, took the team spirit to a whole new level by rocking up in a pair of actual Budgy Smugglers. While most people would have opted for more subtlety, Don clearly thought: “Why not give the crowd what they want?” Thankfully, he spared everyone by wearing pants underneath (photo: classified material). Scott and Eli were paddling in their fierce-looking black double Sonic. The timekeeper couldn’t help but admire the dynamic duo.

Team CCs, Cassie and Chris D, brought some further crisp to the race. Whether their performance was fuelled by Canadian Club, Coca Cola, C.C. lemon (a true Aussie classic) or corn chips, we will never know. Steve and little Lachie cheered for mum from the pontoon.



Then there were the *Jolly Swagmen* (Andrew P and Tim McN), who lived up to their name by Andrew wandering around the start line, not knowing if upstream or downstream next. Tim, in his Aussie hat and "Pinch Me" shirt, won the unofficial "Best Dressed" award, though his outfit raised more questions than answers.



The *Barnacles* with Matt S and Duncan J, named themselves in honour of everyone's favourite crustacean, Richard Barnes.

Duncan even adorned his boat with actual barnacles, proving his commitment to the themed relay. Thank you Duncan!



Further we had the *Skips*, with Alanna and Tony and *Happy Little Vegemite*, Pauline, who took on the long-distance course preparing for the "Myall Classic" next week. Pauline got away with skipping a few turns but luckily the timekeeper did enough mistakes to ruin the times for everyone anyway. Also in the vegemite spirit, strong and salty, were Elke & Jeff.

Justin Paine and Derek Simmonds, as the *ANZACs*, soldiered on, proving that sometimes it's not about the destination—it's about the mateship along the way. Justin has just been awarded for his long service in paddling.

The *Matildas* made a triumphant return to the water after a longer break from paddling, and shaking off the cobwebs like true champions. They paddled with the kind of determination that would make Australia's national soccer team proud. Finally, *The Surfers*, with Mike T and Wade, absolutely nailed their changeovers. Their transitions were nothing short of immaculate.

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