

Lanzarote has hosted a PWA Freestyle and Super-X event for the last four years, but this season's switch to Freestyle and Slalom was a wise decision considering the range of conditions Las Cucharas Point can throw up. Previous showdowns here have involved everything from mast-high surf and 40-knot accelerated trade winds through to light and fluky thermals...



COSTA TEGUISE

Jose Estredo

PWA COSTA TEGUISE



Jose Estredo



A busy inside gybe in the Slalom

Where?

A desolate rocky point near the purpose-built resort town of Costa Tegui on Lanzarote's east coast. Only package holiday centre-based punters seem to sail here outside of the event period, with most locals choosing the superior Jameos del Agua wave spot up the road, the formidable Famara on the north-western side of the isle, or the many flat-water beaches near the capital Arrecife. Las Cucharas itself – and Los Charcos, just upwind – both offer fat shallow-faced waves with a gusty onshore wind and friendly flat water bays on the inside.

When?

30 June – 7 July.

Prize-money at stake

75K to be split between Men's Race and Men's and Women's Freestyle.

Most to lose?

Antoine Albeau just scraped back into the Slalom Tour lead after the Costa Brava event.

Kevin Pritchard started the Slalom Tour on top but had already slipped to 7th overall – could he reverse the trend here in the Canaries?

Bjorn Dunkerbeck wrestled himself back into contention in Costa Brava, but a poor showing here might cost him dearly.

Daida Moreno was looking to defend her →



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Sarah-Quita Offringa



Sarah-Quita Offringa

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Pressure barometer

The mercury rose highest for the race crew as they struggled to set courses in logo-high surf over the reef after local organisers failed to supply enough heavy-duty anchoring equipment. The PWA crew are as experienced as they come and did their best with the tools given, but at times it was all just too much. However, they did manage to achieve a couple of great days' surf-slalom racing.

The tension mounted for Daida Moreno too after she was controversially beaten by Sarah-Quita Offringa in the Women's Freestyle. The Moreno sisters have done lots of work to promote the →

BRITS ON TOUR

The only freestyler there waving the Jack was Andy Chambers. 'Bubble' has got all the tricks and loads of style but breaking into the top of this fleet is hard. First round heats this season saw tricks only the finalists could make less than a year ago. Anything other than total commitment means you don't even tread water.

Racers

Two Brits won a final each, but not one of them cracked the top 10. It's a shame we haven't got anyone rock-solid in the upper echelons of the racing fleet these days, and it leaves the more successful wavesailors with a heavy load on their shoulders for our more patriotic supporters' hopes.

Ross Williams

Loved the light winds, won a race but still finished down in 14th. That leaves him in 19th overall for the season so far: "I'm super-happy as it's my first PWA final win, plus I won both my qualifying heat and semi-final so it was a great confidence booster – especially as I've underperformed recently, even in my preferred conditions in lighter air."

Robby Swift

Swiftly slipped off the radar somewhat this event and down to 17th. He's left in 12th overall for the year, which is still more than respectable for a debut season.

Dan Ellis

Dan's speed is never in question – his peers rate him as one of the fastest out there. He took a race win too, but delivering regular results just isn't his forte. Dan ended-up 20th and overall he's 14th. "I loved this event" said Dan. "It's rare we get to race so many days within a multi-discipline event and the wind was great from start to finish for Slalom. I just wish I could hold it together better and be more consistent."

Mat Pearch

Pearch kept it steady but was disappointed not to make any finals. Final result 24th overall, year to date 25th.



Dan Ellis ahead of Antoine at the mark

2006 Freestyle crown. Teguise is the opening event of the 2007 Freestyle series and she would be facing stiff opposition from the new-wave of female talent.

Biggest surprises

Dunkerbeck's failure to keep his lead in solid wind conditions, and Albeau's ability to hold down a 78 as his smallest registered sail!

No surprises

Sarah-Quita Offringa setting the pace in the Women's Freestyle.

Best wipe-out

Dan Ellis leading a Slalom heat before catapulting hilariously on one of the inside gybes. Too many to mention in the Freestyle, but the best are when the high shakas get overcooked and the pilots 'drum-rolled' back to the surface. Hard.

Hottest heat

Boring in terms of cut-and-thrust race action, but for a perfect heat you can't beat Dan Ellis's first ever race win. Perfect start, unbeatable speed, perfect completion of the job to bag the bullet.





Andy 'Bubble' Chambers

women's sport, but Daida's no-show at the prize-giving was unsporting and disrespectful to her opponent – even though she was probably just angry with the judges and herself. Opinion on the beach was divided on who'd got the victory,

especially as Moreno stayed near the judges, sailed a complete repertoire, and pulled the moves the crowd favoured. Offringa was downwind and fell more, but on paper she pulled the most technical and highest-scoring tricks. A

5-0 decision in the final round is as unanimous as it gets, and Daida must have hated it. But in Freestyle, especially in the women's sport, the times they are a-changing. Fast.

Time-out

The party factor was high for the French kids and Dutchmen who frequented the low-rent chav-infested resort of Puerto del Carmen, but for most the long days and relentless competition meant low-profile nights slumped on the couch were the norm – especially as competition was run from morning until early evening every single day.

Event summary

Best surf-slalom we've seen in years, and another rung up on the Freestyle performance ladder. Antoine Albeau won the Slalom, followed by Kevin Pritchard and Bjorn Dunkerbeck. Jose Estredo ruled the Men's Freestyle, with Kiri Thode second and Ricardo Campello third. In the Women's Freestyle, Sarah-Quita Offringa took top honours with Daida Moreno second and Laure Treboux third. The PWAs having a great year, but the action on the water and the quality of the Tour itself outshone the sketchy local infrastructure. Rumour has it the local government's seen that this circuit deserves more here, and is expected to throw extra cash at this event next season. c



Surf-slalom