

How do you think competitive surfing changed the evolution of surfboard design?

Banks: "Come to think of it competitive surfing has probably contributed more to board design than anything else. So in that sense, it's been fantastic because it's really pushed the limits. Whether that would have happened without competition is speculation, I mean without competition, surfboard design is revolving anyway...so who knows they may have evolved just as fast...they may have evolved faster, and more diversely. I think the competitive thing really made people hone in on... this amount of rocker...this amount of thickness...that sort of rail... this type of concave...that sort of plan shape to get to this level of performance."

Nat Young: "I think that competition was a pretty good yardstick as far as proving your point to a lot of people who didn't think there was any validity to it."

Greenough: "That's a real hard... I suppose they designed surfboards for what the judges wanted to see. Everybody has got the Kelly Slater models now. They are basically built along that line. It was Tommy Curren before that, basically the sharp pointy nose thruster. You know, it looks aggro out in the water. It looks aggressive. That's what the people want, that's the look the judges want. Despite that, it would surf better if they cut the pointed end off of it...because they'd get rid of the extra swing weight, and the extra wind resistance."

Van Straalen: "It stagnated it. It stagnated it completely, it did. They all had to ride the same things because it's a system and they made them do that. I saw that in the first stubbies, when Michael Ho went out on this little board, and he was just going everywhere. They were just going Jesus, and they didn't know how to judge him. He was doing three turns down the face, and they were calling them wiggles instead of turns. He got robbed, most phenomenal surfing I've ever seen. It was so advanced for the time. (That was a Brewer). Michael and I went in and we made him a bunch of boards that went really good. That was the best thing about the stubbies, international people that were open. Today I find, because the nature of surfing has changed so much and all these people are getting paid so much. To get in there, you have got to pay 'em, to ride your boards. They are not riding boards because they like riding them; they are riding boards because they are getting paid to ride them. It's like endorsing products."

PT: "Oh it's been critical to surfboard design. ALL of the major changes, you know in the last 40 years have come as a result of competition...I mean we wouldn't have the thruster if it wasn't for Simon trying to figure out how to beat MR! I mean that's the bottom line on it."



MP riding a contemporary thruster outline.. Circa 1977

Mactavish: "It's got it down to a very narrow strict discipline; the average 6'2" thruster is a very refined piece of equipment. It is the most advanced piece of equipment without a doubt. It can do more on a wave than any other product, but they are all so similar. There is no room for an extra square inch of fat. They are trimmed to be the leanest, meanest most efficient piece of machinery. Which, I think is wonderful. But it's just one way of surfing... it's the most popular way of surfing."

Rabbit: "It's an innate competitiveness. It's like the race to Mt Everest. It's just there so it has to be conquered. The quest for the perfect surfboard, the quest for speed to get an edge in a competitive environment, to master these beautiful waves that we are blessed with, it's brought out a very deep-rooted competitiveness."

Brocky: "Everyone's always after something different. I remember in the days when we were riding the nose, big logs, pre-64, and pre-65, before that. How exciting would it be to go all over the wave? That was the dream then. That's what has been achieved now; the guys are going all over the wave almost to the point where they dunno what to do next! But in the long run, the go is to make the wave. So what you do along the way...that's what you get the thrill out of anyway, making the wave. Not fucking up halfway down the line. I look at it as a dance, and something that is keeping me fit, keeping me at one with nature. It's a dance. When I teach surfing...as soon as the arms come up...a style appears!!!... A style is born."



'it was more of an artform in the seventies...now it's slash. bang. crash. see you next time.' [MP]