

RESCUE OF THE MONTH.

MAY 2020

Club: Thirroul SLSC

Lifesavers and Lifeguards involved: Kyle Mathiesen

An off-duty surf lifesaver, who was hailed as a hero after saving the life of a 16-year-old boy at Coledale Beach, Illawarra, in May, has won the SLSNSW Rescue of the Month Award.

The 16-year-old boy had jumped into the surf off the rocks at North Coledale beach at 4.45pm on Tuesday 26 May to go surfing with a friend. However, he forgot to attach his body-board leash and quickly got into trouble in the large swell and strong current and was separated from his board.

Fortuitously, off-duty surf lifesaver Kyle Mathiesen, from Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club, was alerted to the situation when he heard members of the public screaming for help to rescue the boy and was first to respond. A local resident who had been walking near the beach phoned Triple-Zero after noticing the boy in trouble in the large swell, being dragged by the current close to the rock platform.

Kyle quickly assessed the surf conditions before stripping down to board shorts, grabbing a board and swim fins and running down to the beach. He paddled out to the boy who had been thrown his board for buoyancy by an onlooker. He was just metres from the rock platform, struggling to swim against the strong current and nearing exhaustion. He had been in the water for 25 minutes.

Kyle reached the boy and provided reassurance while he paddled him away from the rocks. He waited until there was a break in the waves to paddle the boy back through the

break to the safety of the shore. The rescue took more than 10 minutes due to the size of the swell and rough conditions.

The boy's father, Phil Campbell, who watched the rescue unfold from the beach, was very relieved when his son was returned safely. He thanked Kyle for saving his son's life in such treacherous conditions. He also thanked Surf Life Saving NSW Duty Officer Anthony Turner, the Coledale SLSC callout team and the other emergency service teams, including police and ambulance paramedics, who responded to the call to Triple-Zero. The Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter was also tasked to the incident.

A Hazardous Surf Warning had been issued by the Bureau of Meteorology for the Illawarra region at the time of the incident.

Surf Life Saving NSW President George Shales OAM commended Kyle Mathiesen on his award-winning rescue.

"We're tremendously impressed with Kyle Mathiesen's fast assessment of the situation and his response. Had it not been for Kyle's quick thinking, after seeing the boy in trouble in the surf, there may have been a very different outcome," said George Shales.

"It's testament to Kyle's surf lifesaving training and his commitment to keeping his skills up-to-date that he was able to respond in such a measured way and execute the rescue he did. He is a very deserving recipient of the Rescue of the Month Award," he said.



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES



A handwritten signature in white ink.

Joel Wiseman
Director of Lifesaving
Surf Life Saving NSW

A handwritten signature in white ink.

George Shales
President
Surf Life Saving NSW