

PSSST

"It was so much that he had to work it off by doing commercial appearances for the phone company."

Ricky Ponting recalling Phil Hughes huge phone bill after his first Tour to England.



The big sea and the longboard

FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

LEAPING LARRY'S WEEK

Anglesea's Sam Suendermann is taking on the world on her longboard. Photo: Meg Carruthers



EVE FISHER

In a week where Australia's Stephanie Gilmore claimed the world's biggest prize in womens' surfing, another rising star from Anglesea was making waves in a different category. Sam Suendermann's qualification for the World Longboard Championships in China was so unexpected she phoned her mother to check no one was playing a prank on her.

Earlier this month the 21-year-old was wrapping up a year studying in Suva, Fiji, when she received an email telling her she had qualified based on her ranking in the Longboard Qualifying Series last year.

The Victoria University student was taking a break from surfing, despite choosing Fiji for her student exchange because there are waves, and the world title was the last thing on her mind. Suendermann most recently competed at the national titles in August, 2013, where she was in first place until the last 30 seconds when she was pushed down into third.

"I was disappointed in myself and chose to have a break from competition," she said, despite

winning the Victorian state title the same year. "I haven't been in a competition since and I've been living in Fiji and adjusting to a slower lifestyle."

Suendermann reckons the relaxed approach to her longboarding career may be just the reason luck shone on her.

"You can try really hard and sometimes the universe doesn't deliver," she said. "Other times you can relax and the universe will give you what you want."

Because Suendermann finished fifth in the 2013 series, and qualification for the world titles goes to the top-two ranked surfers, she assumed she was out of contention. That was until she learned one woman dropped out, one earned a wildcard entry and one qualified through another contest, meaning fifth place was high enough for entry to the titles, which start December 4, at Hainan Island.

"It totally came out of the blue," said Suendermann, who has been in Vanuatu training for the past two weeks. Now she is the only Victorian and one of four Australians hoping to make their dreams come true on the world stage. Suendermann's focus has been to get plenty of time in the water, often enjoying three-hour surfs, and relying on the locals to provide a competitive push each day in the busy waves. "It's like you're practising being hassled

in a contest," she said of the busy lineup.

Suendermann says her friends and family are her inspiration "by how caring and generous they are".

"And living in the Pacific, it's such a different lifestyle. "(My host) family and friends have taught me so much. They don't have much but what they give with their hearts is so amazing. They can teach me much more than a celebrity I don't even know."

While Suendermann is excited to be representing Australia, she is also keeping a handle on worrying about the outcome.

'I like to just go in and not think ahead.'

Sam Suendermann

"I like to just go in and not think ahead ... to just kind of live in the moment," she said. "Every now and again I get really excited but then I try to tone it down and not worry about the future."

Suendermann's Fiji adventure followed two months in South America volunteering for children's charity Mission Mexico, where she helped out in an orphanage and taught surfing to the kids. She has also

runs surfing days in Fiji for both children and adults and has a particular passion for getting women involved in surfing.

Because she has been away from Australia and not earning an income, Suendermann has to rely on her family to support her bid for world glory. While she is sponsored by Pieter Surfboards - who provides her boards - and SHE Project, where she is a team rider, everything else comes out of hers and her supporters' pockets.

"It's really hard because we (women longboarders) are bottom of the rank," she said, adding how grateful she was to her sponsors and supporters and without a hint of a whine. Instead she talked about her surfing love affair which, she said, officially began when she was 12 years old, although her mother Kate Sullivan first took her out on a board when she was four.

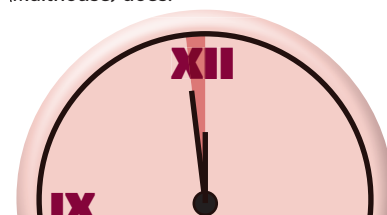
Eight years later, on a memorable day, she finally understood the joy her mother talked about. "It was at Thirteenth Beach (near Barwon Heads) and, before that, I'd never been on really good waves," she said. "It was perfect. The sun was out, the water was clear and, while the waves weren't really big, they were peeling out perfectly."

"Since then, I've always just chased that perfect wave."

THE WATCHMAN

1 minute to midnight for... Carlton draftee Blaine Boekhorst's twitter account

During a bad game against the Magpies the No.19 pick posted: "The whole Carlton team need to go or Mick (Malthouse) does."



LOCAL HERO

Until tragedy strikes, in a sporting sense it's often easy to forget the work done by the nation's paramedics, nurses and doctors. With this week's spotlight on Phillip Hughes' accident, it's worth recalling that the local heroes in our hospitals back up to deal with similar trauma every day of the week.



NUMBERS UP

500 consecutive games on Sunday for Mount Eliza Cricket Club great John Woods.

36 years and 8 weeks is how long it has taken Woods to reach the milestone.

1997 was perhaps Woods' finest moment when he flew 16,000 miles from his wife's side on holidays in Rome so he could continue his unbroken run of appearances. The match was washed out.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH



Steve from Notting Hill noticed Maggie Simpson's long-time nemesis **Gerald Samson** shares a distinct physical trait with one of the "babies" of the NBA: 21-year-old New Orleans Pelican **Anthony "The Brow" Davis**.

Reader feedback

"Saw on the news yesterday that over 100 people became ill after dining at a Sandown greyhound meeting. This is extraordinary news - over 100 people actually turning up to a greyhound race meeting! Now we know where all those fans who deserted the recent Oz v Proteas one-day series went."

IAN KENINS, EMAIL

(Send feedback to: leapso@hotmail.com)