



BELLY BOARDS

The season is in — belly boards, not to be confused with Paipo board, are also in. These boards which have amazing speed and manoeuvrability are popular with the youngsters.

They are cheaper than the conventional surfboard and combine the thrills of both body, and to a degree, surfboard riding.

Belly boards are made of laminated wood or foam. The size is usually 2 ft. x 3 ft. and they have two skegs.

The boards are manoeuvred by leg and arm action and at times are lifted completely out of the water.

Boys who follow this segment of surfing are in good physical condition.

“Bozo” Griffith has become a top belly board rider and has given up his surfboard to concentrate on mastering this art.

He rides a larger than usual board, which enables him to set further inside the wave and his take-off point is made much further back than is normally the case. “Bozo” is quite a character and is well known for his rough-house tactics when he thinks nothing of elbowing anyone from the wave which he considers rightly belongs to him.

The Paipo board is at times called the belly board, but this is incorrect. The Paipo is an entirely different type of board.

Saucer-shaped, sometimes made of ply or balsa covered with fibreglass, the name Paipo is derived from the Hawaiian word “Paepae” which means in a slapping manner.

Belly boards or Paipo’s simply mean a body-planing board. Any type of surf is acceptable to the riders of these boards.



Above: Face contorted with concentration, this rider comes down the face of the wave — his board obscured by the foam.



Left: The thrill of belly boarding can be seen on the expressions of these two young lads as they speed down a mountainous wave face.

At Waimea, Hawaii, on some of the big-wave days, these boardriders can be seen free falling so fast that they skip down the face of the wave in the manner of a stone ricocheting across a pond.

To be a successful belly board rider, one must be a strong swimmer and in top physical condition. It really takes stamina to be a belly board rider.

In the not too distant future, these boys who excel in belly board riding will form into clubs and enter competition with and against the recognised surfboard riders. **Surfabout** feels this could be quite a departure from accepted procedure, and would appreciate readers' views on this subject, belly board riders v. surfboard riders — why not? Nothing but good can come out of joining forces and exploring the different facets that are open to all in the field of surfing.

Girls, too, are taking kindly to mat riding — one notable fem in the sport is Candy Calhoun, of America, who has become an expert in this phase of surfing.

So, it's out with belly boards, boys and high tail it to the nearest big wave centre.



Above: Belly boarding is not strictly for the boys as this lass shows. A fin can be seen on her right hand as she skims down the wall.

Right: Thrilling is the word for this sport as this youngster, complete with fins, shoots down on his belly board.

Bottom Right: A swirl of spray, a crashing wave, a belly board — man, that's really living.



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VIC.: P.O. LIST 14, SOUTH MELBOURNE.

N.S.W.: HON SECRETARY,
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