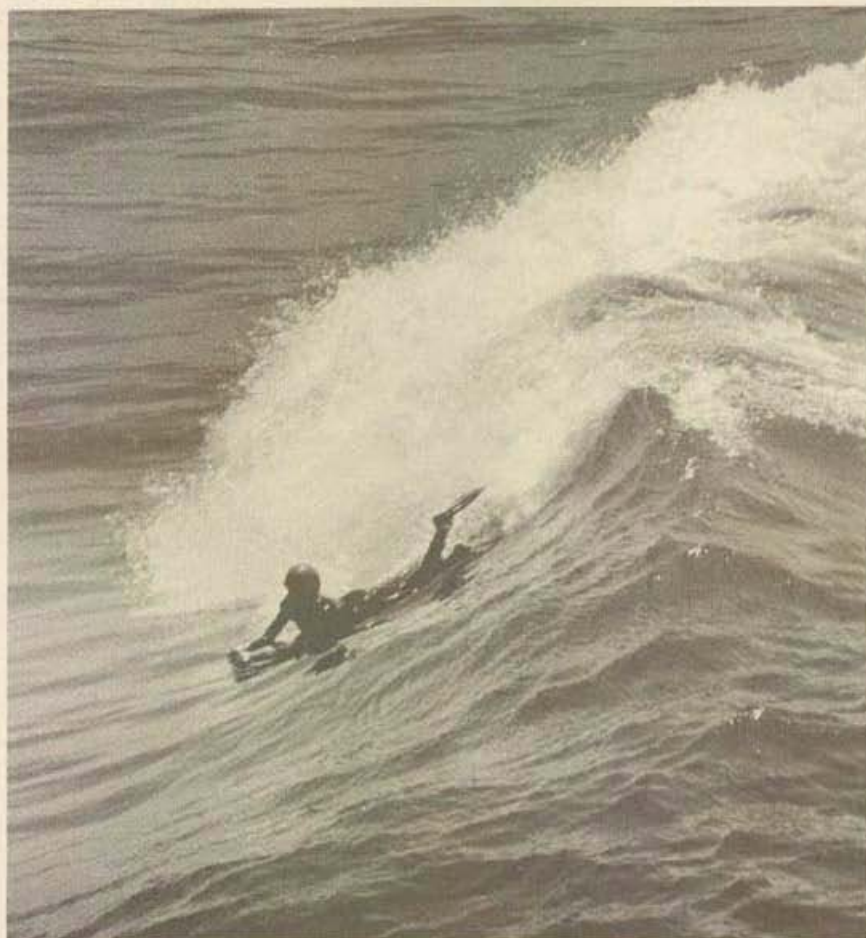


# BELLYBOARDING A SPORT!!!



George Farquhar, veteran bellyboarder from Huntington Beach. Photo by Tony Freeman.

Ask George Farquhar, who hurtles at water level past barnacle-encrusted Huntington Beach pilings or J. R. Waidlich, who's skipped down the face of a 20-foot Waimea Bay wall. They'll tell you bellyboarding is no sissy sport or poor substitute for surfing. They're stoked!

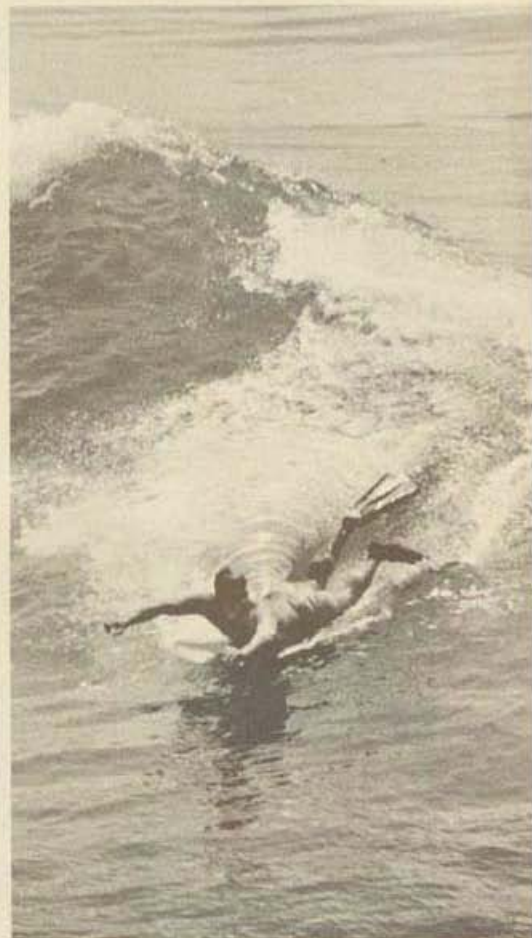
The bellyboard, it's been proven, is faster than a surfboard and to the rider the speed illusion is even greater because of his closeness to the water.

In the Islands it's called paipo boarding. Everywhere else it's bellyboarding. But whatever its name, this increasingly popular side sport of surfing is a lot of fun.

Ron Haworth, an enthusiastic Hawaiian paipo boarder, says:

"Paipo boarding has grown out of the basic love and special thrill of taming a wave. Paipos come in various shapes, sizes and craftsmanship anywhere from beat-up, odd-shaped, discarded plywood to the custom, costly, Johnny-come-lately models. But no matter what the price tag, paipos are becoming more and more popular and offer years of surfing pleasure."

Bellyboarding gets a big boost every summer—not planned, of course—by beach city authorities who restrict the surfing hours to early morning and late evening. Most of these laws don't affect bellyboarding, so surfers who still want to feel a wave under them can paddle out with fins and bellyboard for many more hours of surfing.



Terry Jay eyes the pilings as he skips left at Huntington Pier. Photo by Freeman.

One of the most enthusiastic and experienced bellyboarders on the California coast is George Farquhar, 51, owner and publisher of the Huntington Beach News. Winter and summer, Farquhar has been paddling and kicking out in the surf since he was a 14-year-old gremmie.

"Bellyboarding offers about as many thrills as surfing," said Farquhar, also a surfer. "And a bellyboarder can take off on a more critical angle of the wave."

Farquhar got stoked on bellyboarding while board surfing the old Corona del Mar Jetty. The 55-pound redwood surfboard that he made in wood shop at Huntington Beach High School was pretty heavy for little George—who weighed all of 90 pounds soaking wet. So when he got tired of paddling his big

(opposite page) Poised precariously at the top of a Waimea wall, the bellyboarder draws a bead on Wayne Myata surfing by. Split seconds later he shot by Myata as if he were standing still. Photo by John Severson.



J. R. Waidelich lays into a Portlock wall. Photo by McCullough.

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board, Farquhar would pull on a pair of fins and swim out with his light bellyboard for more waves. Now a trim 140 pounds, the tanned publisher-editor has a bellyboard he says fits him perfectly: 42 by 16 inch quarter-inch marine plywood that is a direct copy from the nose of his surfboard. He keeps the glassed and resined board on a shelf in the newspaper office where it's handy for frequent two-block trips to the surf.

The Huntington Beach surfing law prohibiting surfboards between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. gives Farquhar and other avid bellyboarders an uncrowded ocean most of the day. "But even when the bellyboards and surfboards are out together," Farquhar says, "they get along famously. There is little danger," he said, "as long as the surfer and bellyboarder show a little courtesy and common sense."

Even so, Farquhar always wears a red crash helmet that he considers a must for any surfer or bellyboarder. The helmet has a large dent—a souvenir from a collision with a loose surfboard. The accident, caught in a dramatic photo that ran in *SURFER Magazine* as a *SURFER EXTRA* in the September, 1964 issue, left Farquhar a confirmed believer in the value of wearing a crash helmet.

"Bellyboarders can have a lot of fun just about anywhere the surf is good," says Farquhar. He's bellyboarded on waves up to 12 feet and says his favorite spots are Trestle and his home port of Huntington Beach that offers critical rides through the cement pier pilings.



Completely in the pocket at Portlock, Waidelich captures one of the classic bellyboard rides of his career. Photo by McCullough.

Bellyboarding is getting more popular in just about all the surfing areas of the world. "Particularly in Hawaii," says Ron Haworth, who nominates his own backyard break at Makapuu as the most paipo-surfed beach in the world. Haworth says: "Certainly nothing approaches the miles of paipo board surfing logged at Makapuu. There the social standing of paipo surfers ranges from barefoot beach boy to white collar professional man sneaking in a few slides after work."

The paipo or bellyboard surfers re-

ceived a prestigious boost when several surf movies featured their wild rides at Waimea Bay. Taking the drop they literally free fell some six or eight feet at a time, skipping down the face of the wave. In almost all rides with surfboards, they shot by the boardmen as if the surfboards were standing still.

If you've tried it, you know what we're talking about. If you haven't, you're missing a sport that has speed and thrills as well as ample wave space. Don't sit on the beach this summer when you could be riding a bellyboard.