

# ***62-year old surfer wins Mavericks Surf Contest***

By MARK LANDLER 1:46 PM ET

Against all odds, a 62-year old man has pulled off the unimaginable: Winning the Mavericks Surf Contest in Half Moon Bay, California. Due to the fickle nature of West Coast surf, the contest had to be delayed to its latest date ever, March 30<sup>th</sup>. But Mother Nature did not disappoint in the end -- an incoming storm system brought in huge swells that produced monster waves topping 45 feet in height. And the oldest competitor ever to qualify for the contest, riding a hand-shaped 11-foot balsawood longboard, bested the young professional surfers to emerge from the waves victorious.

Michael Mulkey, 62, walked away from the beach with a trophy and \$20,000 in prize money, as proof that he had seriously schooled the young bucks. Mulkey was incredulous: "Are you kidding me? At my age just showing up at the starting line is an achievement." But no one doubted that the former software industry executive deserved the prize. He distinguished himself by catching what many thought was one of the largest waves of the day, a nearly 50-foot monster that most surfers would find to be the stuff of nightmares. Mulkey was up on his board in a flash and reached speeds of at least 40 MPH flying down the nearly vertical face. As the wave curled and, despite its monstrous size, became tubular, the crowd feared that all was lost as Mulkey disappeared behind the leading edge. But a cheer erupted ten seconds later as they caught sight of him emerging from the collapsing tube in fine form, hanging ten and giving a "hang loose" hand signal. As the wave ran out into turbulent white foam, he offered up a headstand on the board.

Mulkey was nearly a complete unknown in the surfing world until this season, though he has been "kicking ass and taking names" in running races for over four decades, according to amateur athletes. He is expected to win his division in next month's Boston Marathon. "Mike is an inspiring guy," noted

longtime friend Lewis Deetz. “He can paddle through anything. And he even got me to run a marathon once. Boy, that was a mistake.” Mulkey has not gone completely unnoticed by high-profile surfers though. Legendary wave rider Laird Hamilton commented, “I knew Mike had it in him. He taught me everything I know, not just about surfing, but about life.” And “Soul Surfer” Bethany Hamilton joked, “I’d give my other arm to surf as well as Mike!”

Mulkey has proven to be something of a Maverick himself, a prankster with a penchant for noisemakers and fireworks. The tabloids are now linking the sexagenarian romantically to both actress Charlize Theron and mixed-martial arts champion Ronda Rousey. But longtime acquaintances note that he has in fact been happily married for over 25 years.

When asked to comment on whether he can keep up with the Kenyans at Boston in a few weeks, Mulkey replied, “You are killing me.” But some sports pundits feel that an overall first-place finish is not out of the question for the surprising late bloomer.