

# The Down South Down Low

Chris Binns  
Issue #2

DRUG  
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## LET'S TALK TO TYLER WRIGHT, DEFENDING WORLD AND DRUG AWARE PRO CHAMPION

Last year at Surfer's Point eventual world champ Tyler Wright beat Courtney Conlogue to claim the Drug Aware Pro. Nothing unusual there, before 2016 was over the two women would win an incredible seven of 10 events on the tour and square off three times in finals, with Tyler holding a 2-1 advantage. What was noteworthy was the Tyler Wright who graced the stage after her win. For years Tyler had possessed more than enough talent to ensure success, she'd just never seen all that engaged. Post-heat interviews were punctuated with throwaway lines about wanting to have fun regardless of the result, pre-heat routines were more girls night dance-offs than they were warm-up, and while trophies were a given a world title was anything but.



Credit - WSL Peter Joli

Then, on the back of heavy family issues – the well publicised head injury of brother Owen and passing of a beloved uncle – Tyler was forced to step up and get a little serious. She promised Owen a world title, and her life became a dual quest to see him return to full health, and fulfil her vow to her big brother and best friend. A year later both missions are accomplished and Tyler is Australia's new surfing queen.

We caught up with our frank and funny world champ for a chat, in-between heats at the Australian Open. Over two parts, here's what Tyler had to say...

**Congrats on 2016!** Thank you! Thank you very much.

**You made seven finals, had five wins, claimed a first world title. How do you ever top that?** I don't know! Winning and losing doesn't really play into my goals to be honest, it's more the performance and execution of strategy that I care about.

**Would you rather surf a perfect heat and lose than win a scrappy one where you made mistakes then?** I wouldn't go that far! We're dealing with Mother Nature, that's the beauty of surfing, so you know things can go your way, so you're just doing what you can to try and put the odds in your favour.

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**You took Glenn "Micro" Hall on as your coach last year, did that help swing the odds your way?** I think it was pretty well known before last year I never had a game plan or strategy, I just went and surfed, so Micro go on board and just went, "okay, what do we need to do here to improve your performance?" Micro gave me a lot of direction, which is what I was lacking in previous years, and he's helped me a lot as a result.

**It's more than just surfing, right?** Micro's theory is all about balance. It's not his job to crack the whip, it's up to me to be committed, but he'll point things out, and do everything he can to ensure I'm ready to perform at the best of my abilities, but the rest of it is one me. Micro has a lot of knowledge and wisdom, but he's very balanced about it all. He understands what it's like to be a competitor, but he understands the human side too, like he'd never ask me to drop something that I think is important, and I think that's why he's so far ahead of everyone in the coaching field and helped me so much.

**And now you're world champion! Are you ready to get up on stage at the WSL Awards this Saturday to get your trophy and talk in front of a couple of thousand people?** Ah, nope. No. No way. I don't like public speaking, and I've spoken so much the last few months! I just want to surf!

**To be continued... Stay tuned for the second half our chat next week, when Tyler talks all things Margaret River.**

The window for the Quiksilver and Roxy Pros starts on March 14, a few days after Tyler Wright and John John Florence are presented with their 2016 Samsung Galaxy World Tour Championships at the WSL's annual awards night on the Gold Coast. Joining them will be World Junior Champions Ethan Ewing and Macy Callaghan, World Qualifying Series winners Connor O'Leary and Silvana Lima, and a host of other winners.

The Drug Aware Pro is the second World Tour event in 2017, with a window that runs from March 29 to April 9. World Surf League action is back, and the countdown is on for its return to Western Australia. Log on to <http://www.worldsurfleague.com> for all of the action from the Aussie leg, and stay tuned to The Down South Down Low for twice-weekly updates of all things Drug Aware Pro.

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