

For Manly
- Promoters -

Sat. 3rd Jan '09

Daley kings of the Murray

Andrew Prentice
kayaking

DAMIEN Daley loves pain.

While others spent the time between Christmas and New Year's Eve over-indulging on food or putting their feet up, the school teacher from St Paul's, Manly was clocking up countless kilometres on his racing ski over five consecutive days in Melbourne.

The Freshwater resident was taking part in the longest endurance ski paddle race in the southern hemisphere, the Murray Marathon, which began on December 27.

Daley did more than compete.

He won the annual event, finishing the 404km course in record time. "I decided to enter around October and my sole aim was to finish," he said.

"To win was amazing, it made all the effort worthwhile."

Daley also revealed he didn't specifically train for the event.

"I am on the ski in the surf or the lake six days a week but didn't do any specific training for the race," the 33-year-old said.

"I have been a member of the Queenscliff Surf Lifesaving Club for almost 30 years and also do a bit of work with the Manly



Murray Marathon ski paddle winner Damien Daley (front) with business partner Ben Dibley.

Picture: BRAD HUNTER

Warringah Kayak Club out of Narrabeen Lake. That cross-training came in very handy, it meant I was prepared for all conditions." Daley took to the water in a custom-made ocean racing surf ski, which he built

with Brookvale-based boat designer Ben Dibley. "I started my own business three years ago to keep my mind ticking over from teaching," he said. "Heaps of the other guys in the race used foreign models so it was good to finish in

front of them." His hairiest moment over the five days was gliding past a red bellied black snake mid-stroke.

"That was pretty scary, I know what they can do if you annoy them," he said. "I was never going

to stop though, that would have been pointless. By the last day I knew I had broken the record, which spurred me to keep pushing myself.

"To slash it by three hours was unbelievable, I am already looking forward to the next race."