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Hawaii Tribune-Herald

## Surfing: Big Island Pro Am Surfing Trials



DAVID PRAGER photo

Diesel Storm Butts shreds a wave at the Big Island Pro Am Surfing Trials. The 12-year-old won his division on Saturday at Honolii Beach Park.

# Watch out for the Storm

*Butts captures junior men's division; Bishaw claims women's division*

By **RICHARD COUCH**  
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

Under overcast skies with intermittent rain, occasional sun and a rising tide, Diesel Storm Butts thundered to victory Saturday in the junior men's division of the Big Island Pro Am Surfing Trials at Honolii Beach Park.

The 12-year-old surfer from Hilo won his division for the first time in three tries at the Pro Am and was one of 10 Hawaii Island surfers who earned round-trip airfare to Oahu and entry fees into upcoming contests.

Sponsored by Quiksilver, Big Island Toyota, Orchid Land Surfboards and others, the Pro Am was blessed with an east, northeast swell that produced waves with 6- to 8-foot faces and a



DAVID PRAGER photo

Malaika Bishaw, from Puna, rides a wave at the Big Island Pro Am Surfing Trials. The 15-year-old seized the women's division.

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## Good news about local people: Hilo tennis

Kunimoto, Oda, Hamano represent upswing

A long time ago in a land that seems far away, there was no internet, people didn't carry around phones, smart ones or dumb ones. Television news was brief back then, 30 minutes around the dinner hour. There was no such thing as cable news, or even cable television.

Most people got their news in the pages of the morning or afternoon newspaper and one of the things you always heard was that they liked to turn to the sports section to read some good news, or at least news about people achieving or aspiring to improve.

Today, absent a time machine, we are fulfilling that obligation of supplying good news about local people.

Not just good news, but for the Hilo tennis community, it is — take your pick — the golden age, or maybe the salad days for the sport on the east side of the Big Island.



WRIGHT ON ...

BART WRIGHT

than ever before. "We've never had this many kids ranked so high in the state. We have always had a couple players who can compete with the best (in the state), but we've never had a group as large as this."

At the end of the month, a number of local players will be headed to various zone competitions on the mainland, and for all of them, the experience will be tantamount to an audition for a college scholarship. The zonal tournaments are the

"It's unheard of," said Randy Kunimoto, a local tennis coach who says there are more Hilo youth players ranked in the Top 5 of state-level competition



HOLLYN JOHNSON/Tribune-Herald

Waiakea's Keilyn and Anna Oda and Hilo's Luke Hamano will play in the West Zone Team Championships in Utah.

second-highest level in the nation, including six players from each age group in each state. At the highest level, only two qualify from each state, but because of the larger numbers, these Level II competitions are more fun

for most young players.

They travel in small groups with friends, supporting and encouraging each other at every step along the way. You aren't alone,

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## Commentary

# Passing on UFC smart

By **FERD LEWIS**  
Tribune News Service

There were a lot of reasons — beginning with the exorbitant \$6 million price tag — why the Ultimate Fighting Championship's proposal to bring an event to Aloha Stadium next month didn't make sense for the state.

One of them was the potential peril of the Hawaii Tourism Authority putting so much of an investment on the back of any one fighter, even hometown world featherweight champion Max Holloway.

The proposed Aug. 4 card was to have been largely built around Holloway as the main attraction, with other Hawaii fighters playing supporting roles.

Given the way UFC cards had been disintegrating over the previous year, there was, correctly as it turns out, legitimate concern over what would happen if something caused the cancellation of Holloway's bout.

And, if what befell both Holloway and Makaha's Yancy Medeiros as main and semi-main event figures in UFC 226, had taken place on the HTA's dime, the value of any sizable investment by the state would have dropped precipitously.

Medeiros (15-5) had been scheduled to fight Mike Perry in a welterweight match on the card before suffering an injury in training last month.

I mean, who had any inkling back on Jan. 23, when UFC officials met with HTA and Aloha Stadium officials in Las Vegas, that the heretofore durable Holloway would get scratched off three shows, UFC 222, 223 and 226, in a bizarre five-month period?

After decking Jose Aldo for the title on Dec. 2, Holloway seemed set to expand his 12-bout winning streak in 2018. Instead, he was sidelined by an ankle injury preparing for UFC 222 in March, pulled off 223 in April over the inability to cut 30 pounds in six days as an 11th-hour replacement fighter for the lightweight championship.

And now, whatever it is that caused the "concussion-like symptoms" — flashing vision, slurred speech, difficulty rising from a nap etc. — led to the cancellation of what was to have been Saturday's title bout with unbeaten Brian Ortega.

While these maladies have come out of the blue to sideline Holloway, the UFC has had an on-going struggle to keep its marquee fighters on the cards for which they have been booked.

This is the fourth consecutive year that UFC's marquee show, this weekend's International Fight Week, has had champions scratched from the card.

Overall this year, nearly 20 bouts have been canceled or had to undergo a switch in opponents necessitated by injuries, failure to make weight or suspension. Even in a tough, punishing business, those kinds of numbers should give the UFC pause for thought.

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