

Best of West's tree climbers compete at Boyce

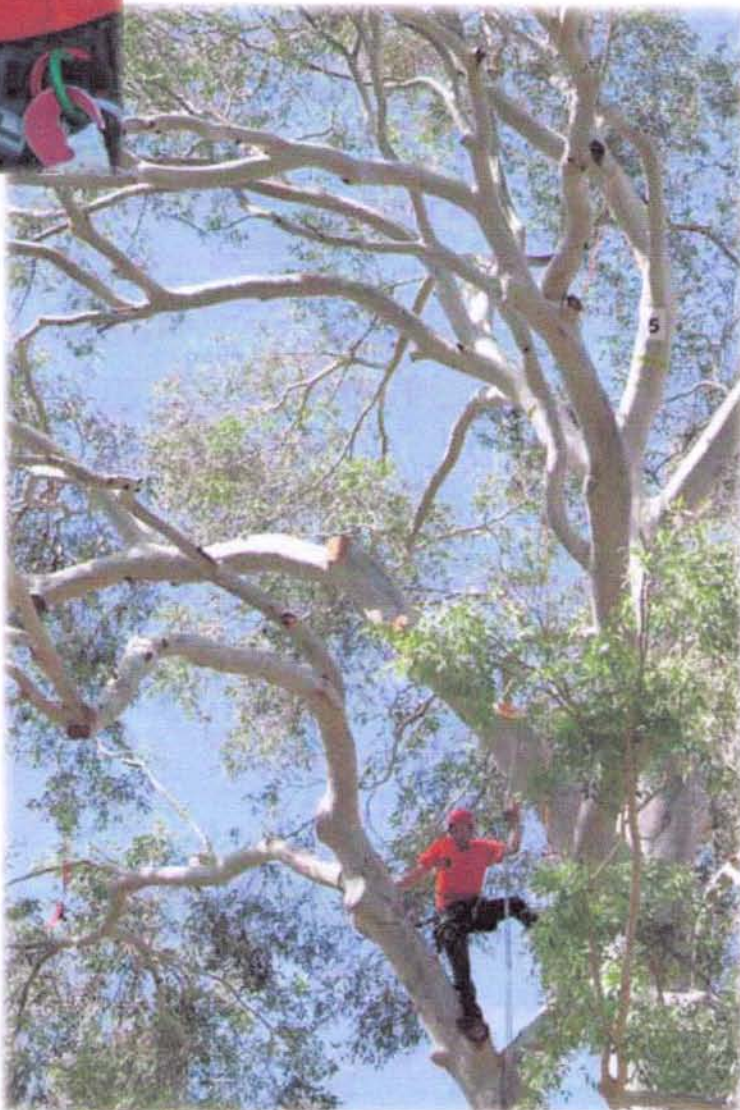


When the leaves had settled the man with local roots was left out on a limb finishing second to the West's best tree climber.

The tree climbing championship was sponsored by the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (WCISA) with 30 of the top competitors from California, Nevada,

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**Into
 the
 Outdoors**



(From top) Daniel Stevens of Mesa gets read, set and up into the huge Australian Eucalyptus tree at Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Stevens had a flawless run, going first in the championship round, but fell just short to Chad Brey.

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Hawaii and Arizona competing in the two-day event.

Chad Brey from Berkeley, Calif. edged Mesa's Daniel Stevens in the final competition on Sunday, May 20.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum's towering grove of 160-foot tall Australian eucalyptus and red gum trees helped lure this event to Arizona from California, where it has been hosted in recent years.

Saturday events included aerial rescue, foot-lock, work climb, throw-ball and belayed speed climb. Competitors are timed and judged in general performance. The top five then competed again on May 20, in the masters challenge. Brey, the WCISA champ, will represent the chapter in the International competition in Hawaii in June.

Competitors in the championship were scored on a number of criteria including knowledge and were required to ring cowbells placed on smaller outer-lying limbs.

History

The International Tree Climbing Championship (ITCC), previously named ISA Tree Trimmer's Jamboree, was initially proposed in 1975 by Dick Alvarez from Atascadero, Calif.

Alvarez began running a number of events in his own company, Arbor Tree Surgery, with the intent to preserve the classic skills that would prepare a climber equipped with nothing more than a rope, to have the ability to save a life in an aerial rescue.

The competition grew as Alvarez invited other companies to attend his annual company picnic. Eventually, it became a chapter sanctioned event and attracted the likes of ISA members.



(Top) Daniel Stevens of Mesa reaches out to ring the bell to score points in the tree climbing championship May 20.




(At left) Jacob Claason perches precariously trying to complete the competition at Boyce Thompson Arboretum. (Above) The championship plaque awaits the top tree climber along with a few prizes.



Jacob Claason from Forestville, Calif. keeps his footing as he tries to ring one of the bells on a branch.


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