



Ben John won the World Waveskiing Championship at Gisborne in New Zealand on Saturday.

Main Picture: peniorphotography.com

Master of waves

John Greco

WHALE BEACH'S Ben John may have become the peninsula's latest world champion on Saturday but it hasn't stopped him heading straight back to work on Sydney's waters.

The 26-year-old was back at the helm of a Sydney Ferry yesterday less than 48 hours after taking out the World Waveskiing Championship at Gisborne in New Zealand.

John picked up the biggest win of his life after dominating the

final to finish just ahead of American Fletcher Burton.

But after spending Sunday night celebrating with friends, it was business as usual yesterday for the ferry captain.

"I was going to chuck a sickie but thought better of it," a still jubilant John told the *Daily* yesterday.

"All my mates were waiting for me when I got back - it was pretty special.

"But it was good to get back to work because skippering is a fantastic job.

"I've always wanted to do it from a young age and actually started on the Palm Beach ferry when I was 19."

Ben's sister, Alexandria, also works on the seas as a Leading Seaman Steward in the navy on the HMAS *Kanimbla*.

"We are a family of sea dogs," John said.

"It just comes from growing up on the northern beaches and being around the water from a young age."

John, who took up the unique sport after a shoulder injury

ended his rugby league career, won the world title after a near flawless display in the final at the beach on New Zealand's north island.

For the record, waveskiing combines kayaking with the manoeuvrability of a surfing with a kayak style paddle used to work through and catch waves.

After taken an early lead in the 20-minute final, John's consistency on the wave helped him hold off a fast-finishing Burton.

"It's a weird feeling," John said

of being labelled a world champion.

"I finished third in Brazil a couple of years ago so I always wanted to give it another go.

"I'm just an ordinary bloke."

John will be hoping to continue his extraordinary form when the new World Wakeskiing Series begins in South Africa in June.

"As a world champion it's exciting to be a part of it.

"I'm in the process of looking for sponsors now and hopefully this (win) will open a few doors for me."