



ACTIVITY: Swimming / Playing in the water

CASE: [GSAF 2013.06.25.a](#)

DATE: Tuesday June 25, 2013

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Beachwalker Park, Kiawah Island, Charleston County, South Carolina, USA.

NAME: Joshua Watson

DESCRIPTION: He is a 14-year-old male from Summerville.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was partly cloudy and the air temperature was 81°F and wind direction was NW at one knot.

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 90% of the Moon was illuminated. Full Moon, June 23, 2013.

ENVIRONMENT: Kiawah is a barrier island 15 miles (24 km) south of Charleston. Kiawah Beachwalker Park is located on the west end of Kiawah Island. Lifeguards are on duty seasonally along a designated swimming area.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 80°F and underwater visibility was poor. Surf height was two to three feet but small rideable windswell in the water with SW winds on the surf, mean high tide was at 08h37, mean low tide at 15h34.

TIME: 12h45

NARRATIVE: Watson and his sister were playing in the water, pretending to be sharks, when a shark grabbed his ankle. "I tried to jerk my ankle away and I accidentally punched the shark," said Watson. Delivering a quick punch to the nose, Watson says it was instinct when his karate skills kicked in. (He is a 2nd Degree Black Belt in Karate.) "I think it did scare it," said Watson. The shark swam away.

INJURY: The teen was bitten on the lower right leg above the ankle.

TREATMENT: Lifeguards had the wound dressed by the time the first emergency crews arrived, according to the St. Johns Fire Department. The teen was taken from the beach up to the road where EMS picked him up and transported him to Roper St. Francis in Charleston (a later report said he was recovering at MUSC Children's Hospital for treatment from the bite.) He is expected to make a full recovery.

SPECIES: Watson's family thinks the shark was about four to five feet in length. "Some of the more sharks in the area are Atlantic sharpnose or a sandbar shark, blacktip, blacknose, lemon sharks, bull sharks. We have a wide variety of shark species that could be in the shallows," said Arnold Postell Senior Biologist at the South Carolina Aquarium. "The animal wasn't out hunting humans. He was out possibly feeding though. In low visibility he bumped into something. He might have smelled food from local bait, possibly a fisherman fishing and it was enough cues that he might have just taken a quick bite on something he didn't see."

