

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 1998.08.01.b

DATE: Saturday August 1, 1998

LOCATION: Buffalo Bay near Knysna,
Western Cape Province, South Africa.
34°04'S, 22°59'E

NAME: Ross Taylor

DESCRIPTION: He is a 19-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, July 31, 1998

ENVIRONMENT: Fellow surfer Martin Hatchuel noted there were huge numbers of chokka [squid] fishing boats in the area.



Knysna

NARRATIVE: "I was going for the wave, but I did not catch it," said Ross. "All of sudden, the shark came from underneath, from my left side. I just felt a slicing pain in both my legs. It kept on clutching me with its teeth and shook me around before throwing me into the water. I struggled with it underwater as I tried to resurface. I managed to come above the water and then I poked it in the eye several times and that is when it let go."

"I paddled for about 20 metres before I got a wave. I then started shouting for help as I was getting tired and weak. My board had already been washed away," said Ross.

"We were all in the water, the four of us, me, Richard Henley, Dave Klinkscales and Ross," said Antony Cornah. "I saw Ross' board going sideways and suddenly he disappeared into the water. I heard him shouting, saying: 'I have been chowed', and suddenly, there was blood all over. I went for him and lifted him onto my board and paddled out, but it was difficult because of the rips [rip currents]. We managed to get him out of the water and rushed him in Richard's to hospital."

"You cannot explain it. I am lucky to be alive. I was just a sitting duck. I did not see it coming, it just took me out. I am lucky to still have both my legs," said Ross.

INJURY: The surfer's legs were lacerated.

TREATMENT: He was admitted to Knysna Private Hospital.

SPECIES INVOLVED: According to Mike Elliot, National Sea Rescue Institute station commander at Knysna, the incident involved a four-metre white shark. Hatchuel said that doctors later found part of a shark's tooth embedded in the Ross' wounds.

SOURCE: Daily Record (Glasgow, Scotland), August 3, 1998 edition