

**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2001.08.18.c](#)

**DATE:** Saturday August 18, 2001

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean about a half-mile south of Ponce de Leon Inlet at New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, Florida, USA. 29°N, 81°W

**NAME:** Jeff White

**DESCRIPTION:** The surfer is a 20-year-old male.

### BACKGROUND

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Crescent, 1% of the moon was illuminated. New Moon, August 18, 2001.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The recent heavy rains poured silt into the water resulting in poor underwater visibility.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Surfers in the National Scholastic Surf Association (NSSA) event reported seeing blacktip sharks up to six feet in length and eight-foot bull sharks, according to NSSA director Leon Johnston. "Smaller sharks were also seen within two to three feet of shore, causing contestants to run around or jump over them as they headed out to their heats," he said. There were large concentrations of baitfish at the inlet on which the sharks may have been feeding.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 200 yards

**DEPTH OF WATER:** 10 to 12 feet

**TIME:** 12h30



*Jeff White*

**NARRATIVE:** Jeff White was competing in the NSSA event. "I was on my board, and I caught a wave, and I jumped or fell off the board," he said. "I think the shark was swimming underneath me and saw the splash. I pulled myself up onto my board, but by then [the shark] had already grabbed my foot. I went into shore."

**INJURY:** There were five to six three-inch lacerations on the dorsum of the surfer's right foot, and several puncture wounds on the sole.

**FIRST AID:** "I started running up and down the beach kind of looking for some help. And a couple of lifeguards were right there to help me out. They bandaged me up and then I was on my way to the hospital," said the surfer.

**TREATMENT:** The injury was not serious; he was treated in the emergency room at Bert Fish Medical Center and released. A few days later, however, the wound became infected and he subsequently required IV antibiotic treatment. "I think I am very blessed because now I have survived both a lightning strike and a shark bite," said White in a radio interview two days later, "so maybe God has got some big plans for me."

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** No species identification was made.

**NOTE:** After White was bitten, Beach Patrol offers closed about a mile of beach to bathers and surfers from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. NSSA moved their event south to the Beachway Avenue beach approach and continued the contest.

**SOURCES:** Orlando Sentinel, August 20, 2001, page B1; Daytona Beach News Journal, August 20, 2001, page 1A

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Captain Scott Petersohn