

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: **GSFAF 2004.02.26**

DATE: Thursday February 26, 2004

LOCATION: The incident took place at a beach known to locals as South Beach or Back Beach near Karitane, north of Dunedin, South Island, New Zealand.

NAME: Chris Blair

DESCRIPTION: The surfer is a 15-year-old male from Dunedin.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, February 28, 2004

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 metres

TIME: 19h00 [7 p.m.]

NARRATIVE: Chris Blair was straddling his surf board when he felt something bite his upper leg. "At first I thought it was a seal and punched it, but then I saw the big fin come out of the water and then the big tail," said Blair. The surfer fell into the water, got back on his board and put his legs up on the board. According to the surfer, the shark swam below his board again. He yelled to his friends who were only metres away and they helped him to shore.

FIRST AID: By the time the surfer got to shore, his leg was bleeding through his ripped wetsuit. His friends drove him to his nearby family home and raised the alarm. Father Graham Blair said his son arrived home and began yelling for help. "I ran downstairs and he was standing at the front door holding his leg. He said, 'I've been bitten by a shark'. Mr Blair drove his son to nearby Palmerston to see a doctor.

INJURY: There was a laceration and toothmarks on the surfer's right thigh.

TREATMENT: The teenager's leg required eight stitches. The probable location of treatment is Palmerston Health Centre, 177 District Road, Otago, Tel +64 3 465 1445

SPECIES INVOLVED: University of Otago head of marine science Associate Professor Mike Barker said although Chris believed the shark was a seven-gill shark, two metres in length, it was more likely that a mako shark or small white shark was involved in the incident. Blair was unsure of the size of the shark, but said the fin stuck out of the water by "about a foot".

SOURCES: More FM Radio, Dunedin; TV1 News, NZ; Otago Daily Times; New Zealand Herald.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Richard Weeks, Global Shark Accident File

