



ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2010.02.11

DATE: Thursday February 11, 2010

LOCATION: The accident took place in Basin Bay, Mona Vale in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

NAME: Paul Welsh

DESCRIPTION: He is a 46-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was very clear.

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 8% of the Moon is Illuminated

DEPTH OF WATER: One metre

TIME: 08h00



NARRATIVE: Paul Welsh was surfing with his 10-year-old son, Saxon, when the accident took place. "I was pushing my son onto waves and it just belted me from behind," Paul said. "I grabbed on to the pinnacle of a rock and held on as it tried to drag me out.... and I won."

A witness, Michael Brown, who works for the local surf patrol, was also swimming with his son about 30m (100ft) in front of Paul and witnessed the incident. He said he saw the shark come up from underneath Paul. "And it looks like - I'm not sure exactly if it was a great white - but this shark has come in from underneath the guy. It's launched straight up into him, knocked him out of the water and then latched onto his leg. And luckily, he had a chance to grab on to a rock and the shark's actually thrashing, trying to drag him back into the water." Paul made his own way back to the beach.

Local Surf Life Saving Club members immediately closed the beach, while water police began searching for the shark. A rescue helicopter also conducted an aerial patrol, but the shark was not found.

INJURY: Minor injury. The surfer sustained lacerations to his left leg.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: On the beach, locals helped dress his leg, which had at least one shark's tooth still embedded in the skin. His wife then took him to Mona Vale Hospital where he was treated and released at midday.

SPECIES: A tooth fragment recovered from the surfer's leg confirmed that the incident involved 1.6 metre (four foot) wobbegong shark.



Saxon Welsh holds the shark's tooth that was found in his father's leg.