

ACTIVITY: Kitesurfing

CASE: [GSAF 2012.02.26](#)

DATE: Sunday February 26, 2012

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Palm Beach Inlet off Singer Island, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA.



Palm Beach Inlet

NAME: Jason Lasser

DESCRIPTION: He is a male from Aspen, Colorado. The one-time Aspen City Council candidate and Historic Preservation Commission board member took up the sport, a combination of wakeboarding, windsurfing, surfing and paragliding, in 2008.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 13h53, West Palm Beach recorded overcast skies and visibility of 10 miles. The air temperature was 73.9°F, dew point 64°F, humidity 71%, sea level pressure 30.23 inches and wind direction was East at 13.8 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 20% of the Moon was illuminated. First Quarter, February 29, 2012.

TIME: 14h00

NARRATIVE: Lasser and a handful of buddies drove to a spot on the Florida coast, left a vehicle there, and then drove up the coast to another site that would allow them 20 miles of kitesurfing. After the group took off from the Singer Island area, Lasser said he looked down at one point to see 20 or so sharks below him.

Palm Beach Inlet has a lot of fish coming in and out, making it prime hunting ground for large predators according to the kitesurfer. "I don't worry about them at all," Lasser said of sharks. "They don't bug you."

Crossing the inlet near Lake Worth, he touched down on a choice wave. Lasser believes his kiteboard went underneath the shark and that his foot scrapped its teeth as he went by. "It wasn't a bite wound per se," he said, as there weren't marks from the shark's upper and lower jaws. "I hit him right in the head and teeth" at around 20 mph. Lasser said he never felt any pain, but with the earlier sighting of the plethora of sharks, he added, "I didn't want to be bleeding in the water."

A surfer nearby helped him land his kiteboard.

INJURY: Lacerations to right foot that severed tendons and ligaments.

TREATMENT: His father took him to the Emergency Room at JFK Medical Center in West Palm Beach where his wound was repaired with 26 stitches.

Prior to the surgery he was given an electrocardiogram which indicated he had Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome, characterized by episodes of rapid heartbeat. Two days later (Tuesday) he underwent heart surgery during which Dr. Robert Fishel successfully corrected the condition. "I'm just so thankful," Lasser said. "That shark hooked me up."

SPECIES: Lasser believes the incident involved a spinner shark.

SOURCES: Aspen Daily News, Wednesday, February 29, 2012, aspendailynews.com
Beachhunter, March 2, 2012, <http://www.blogthebeach.com/>

NOTE: If Lasser hit the shark, this was a provoked accident.





Jason has his foot next to the strap that it was in when the injury occurred. He was riding "goofy foot," which means his right foot was forward. So in this photo, his direction of travel was to the right. Note the irony of the shark images on the kiteboard.

Jason places his forefinger and thumb where the shark's teeth clipped his foot straps. Just below his thumb is where the injury to his foot occurred.



Another view of the damage to the kiteboard foot strap done by the shark's teeth.