

Oregon surfer punched shark

By Gillian Flaccus
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Joseph Tanner was resting his arms on his surf board, his lower body dangling in the water, when something grabbed his right leg and yanked him under the waves.

In an instant, Tanner knew he was being attacked by a shark in the chilly waters off the northern Oregon coast and he wondered if he would die, he recalled Wednesday, nearly three weeks after the Oct. 10 attack north of Cannon Beach.

The shark had his leg in its jaw — a bite that would later measure 26 inches from his upper thigh to his ankle — and as Tanner struggled to break free, he remembered that he should try to punch the shark in the nose or poke it in the eye.

“I opened my eyes and there were gills in front of me. I can’t reach the nose and I can’t reach the eyeballs, so I just started hitting the gills,” said the 29-year-old.

The shark released him and he screamed a warning to his friends who were surfing about 40 feet away, then began paddling to shore on his board.

He was terrified the shark was following him, tracking him by the blood streaming from his mangled leg.



STEPHANIE YAO LONG/THE OREGONIAN

Joseph Tanner, who survived a shark bite while surfing on the Oregon Coast on Oct. 10 shows his scars while speaking with the media at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland where he is a critical care nurse, Wednesday.

Friends later told him he paddled about 200 yards — a five-minute ordeal — before catching a wave and riding it in for the last 40 yards, he said.

“I just paddled my life away. That was probably the scariest moment, trying to get back to the shore and leaving a trail of blood,” Tanner said. “I couldn’t lift up my arms anymore and I just rolled off my board in six inches of water and people came from all over.”

Directing care

Tanner, a critical care nurse at Legacy Emanuel Hospital’s intensive care unit, immediately began telling his

rescuers what to do.

He directed them to make a tourniquet from a T-shirt and, when that wasn’t tight enough, he told them to make another out of the leash from his board.

Six people used a surfboard like a backboard and carried him up a steep slope and over rocky ground to the parking lot above.

While they waited for help, Tanner had them call the ambulance and provide his blood type in case he needed a transfusion.

He also told them to cut off his wetsuit so paramedics could start an IV when they arrived.

All the while, Tanner could

feel himself getting weaker, he recalled.

“I started getting light-headed and that freaked me out because I know that’s the first sign of shock,” Tanner said.

When paramedics arrived, Tanner insisted that the rescue helicopter fly him to Legacy Emanuel, where he knows the trauma staff.

“I remember being in the trauma bay and two of my co-workers were on either side of me. They were in drapes and lights and they literally looked angelic. It was like a breath of relief to see these familiar faces,” Tanner said.

He required three surgeries and will need physical therapy, but the shark missed his bone and key nerves.

No one got a good look at the shark, but Tanner said he’s been told by several experts that it was likely a great white, based on the jaw mark on his leg.

As he recovers, Tanner hopes other surfers can learn from his experience.

All surfers should know how to tie a tourniquet and know their blood type — and a thick wetsuit doesn’t hurt, he added.

“I wore the thickest wetsuit that they sell,” he said. “That wetsuit quite possibly saved my life.”



REX AMOS/FOR CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

A homeowner is consoled by firefighters after a North Larch Street blaze.

Cannon Beach house fire damages second floor

Cause of fire under investigation

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

A two-story residential house on 632 North Larch St. suffered damages from a fire on Monday at about 1:30 p.m.

The fire damaged the home’s entire second floor, which appears to be a master bedroom, Cannon Beach Fire Chief Matt Benedict said. There is also water and smoke damage throughout the house.

“Initially we got there and it was on the second story,” Benedict said. “We started

with an exterior and defensive attack, spraying water on the exterior, and enough individuals were there to completely put the fire out on the second story.”

The cause is unknown. The Clatsop County Fire Investigation Team and Cannon Beach Fire will investigate the cause of the fire Tuesday morning.

The home was unoccupied when the fire occurred.

A fire ladder truck, fire engine and Medix ambulance were on the scene. The Seaside Fire & Rescue provided mutual aid.

About eight to 10 volunteer firefighters from Cannon Beach and four from Seaside helped out.

CANNON BEACH POLICE LOG

There were multiple instances of unlawful camping warnings and lost or found items.

Oct. 16

1:20 p.m., 200 Block South Hemlock Street: Assisted fire department with elderly fall patient, who refused treatment.

2:05 p.m., 3700 Block Coho Place: Assisted fire department with female with dislocated knee.

Oct. 17

2:08 p.m., 3200 Block South Hemlock Street: Report of a found dog. Officer transported the dog to the kennel. Owner later retrieved the dog.

Oct. 18

7:26 p.m., Highway 101/Sunset Boulevard: DUII

9:31 p.m., 300 Block Elk Creek Road: Domestic disturbance between male and female. Parties had separated prior to arrival. No signs of visible injury, complaint of pain, etc. Male just wanted to obtain motel for the night. Assisted male in obtaining motel room.

Oct. 20

5:33 p.m., 200 Block North Spruce Street: Assist Fire with fall patient. Medix transported to Seaside Providence Hospital.

Oct. 21

8:12 a.m., 100 Block Brailier Street: Suspicious circumstances.

3:04 p.m., Second and Spruce Street: Motor vehicle accident, hit-and-run.

9 p.m., Ecola Inn: Officer responded to a report of a vehicle on the beach. The driver was cited for driving while suspended.

Oct. 22

12:40 a.m., 100 Block West Harrison Street: Officers responded to a report of two male subjects smoking marijuana in public. Officers interviewed people in the area. Subjects were

unable to be located. Officers cleared.

4:53 p.m., 300 Block Elk Creek Road: A citizen was concerned that a man in a white car was selling stolen jackets and phones. Officers made contact with the subject at the RV Resort. Officers determined the items were not stolen, and that the subject was operating a business without a business license. Officers warned the subject for selling merchandise without a business license. Officers cleared.

5:19 p.m., Haystack Lane/Hemlock Street: Officer assisted citizen who backed their vehicle into a ditch. A tow was requested and assisted the

citizen in getting their vehicle out of the ditch.

Oct. 24

10:03 a.m., Hemlock and Third Street: Complaint of a subject leaving gas cans on bench and talking to self. Officer arrived on scene and transported the person and gas cans to fuel pumps for gas, as they had run out of fuel.

10:18 a.m., 100 Block W. Gower Ave.: Eluding a police officer. Charges: Burglary, third-degree theft, reckless driving, elude.

Oct. 27

11:02 a.m., 700 Block First Ave: Canine

assistance.

12:00 p.m., Surfsand Resort and beach: Dead bird on beach. Bird sanctuary did not wish to assist. Bird left to nature.

2:25 p.m., Highway 101/26 junction: Assisted Oregon State Police with single vehicle crash at the junction. Non-injury.

7:14 p.m., 3800 Block South Hemlock Street: Missing person.

Oct. 29

2:01 p.m., 100 Block East Monroe Street: Officer assisted on scene of medical call.

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