



2nd - RESCUE OF THE MONTH

Recognising Outstanding Rescues

FEBRUARY: Papamoa SLSC



DATE: 12 February, 2019

LOCATION: Papamoa Beach

SURF LIFEGUARDS: Liam Porter, Andrew Callaway, Ariana Moffat, Michelle Dykes, Lynda Hitchfield, Jack Hitchfield, Billy Bury, Alex Padfield, Liam Moffat, Leon Castle

At approximately 5pm on the 12th of February, Liam Porter and Andrew Callaway were preparing for IRB training. It was a very hot afternoon with solid surf conditions and a heavy sea swell of 3+ meters.

As they approached the beach, a member of the public ran up to nearby Oceans Athletes coaches Ariana Moffat and Michelle Dykes saying that they had seen someone in dire need of assistance in the water. Liam and Andrew were waved down and responded immediately by driving approximately 200 metres down the beach to where the patient was located. The patient was still in the water about chest deep when Andrew, with the assistance of two members of the public, dragged him to a safer dry area of sand.

Andrew and Liam immediately started assessing the patient and determined that the patient was semi-responsive but his heart rate was dropping rapidly and he was falling in and out of consciousness, so oxygen was immediately delivered. Ariana and Michelle had run down the beach followed by fellow lifeguards Billy Bury, Jack Hitchfield, Lynda Hitchfield, and Alex Padfield to assist. At this point it was discovered that the patient had suffered a serious spinal injury while body surfing and had no feeling from the upper chest area (C3) down, changing the rescue from precarious to critical.

As a precaution, a defibrillator was prepped while the patient was stabilised and the airway kept clear. After understanding the severity of the patient's condition they requested an air ambulance be dispatched. Unfortunately, there were none available at the time so the situation was becoming a life and death event.

Alex had taken over contact with the ambulance from a member of the public but the phone reception was limited on the beach so Liam made the decision to take him back to the club where contact could be made from a landline phone. This trip was also needed to pick up the spinal board so the patient could be secured and moved while other lifeguards stayed on scene to continue treatment of the patient. Once Liam arrived back at the scene with the spinal board all lifeguards assisted with getting the patient onto the board. The decision was then made to move the patient as the tide was coming in to a grassed area beside the car park for easier ambulance access.

Continual suction, oxygen, and monitoring of the patient was performed as the danger of the airway becoming blocked remained high. The patient had also swallowed a lot of seawater so was monitored for signs of a drowning injury. Lifeguards Liam Moffat and Leon Castle arrived to provide any additional assistance a while Papamoa Club Administrator, Celeste Moffat who was assisting with communications, informed the lifeguards that the ambulance was in the Papamoa Beach area. That meant that Ariana and Alex started clearing the carpark and getting ready to guide the ambulance to the location.

Two ambulances and five paramedics arrived on the scene and immediately gave assistance to the patient. The Intensive Care Paramedic recommended that the patient should be helicoptered out of the scene due to his deteriorating condition but due to lack of available helicopters the patient was loaded into the ambulance and taken to Tauranga Hospital.

The ambulance crew had very high praise for the lifeguards at the scene and without the quick thinking and actions of those involved, the potential for it to end as a fatality was very high. All the lifeguards involved showed incredible maturity in dealing with a serious injury and once again demonstrated their capabilities beyond the water.



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW ZEALAND

In it for life