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BIG WAVE RISK ASSESSMENT GROUP (BWRAG) BRINGS SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOR FIRST TIME, GREG LONG AND DANILO COUTO WILL LEAD SUMMIT

Collaboration with Positive Vibe Warriors will enable selected young surfers to attend free of charge

[Haleiwa, Oahu, May 16, 2018] On June 15 and 16, the Big Wave Risk Assessment Group (BWRAG) will bring its big-wave safety training program to Southern California for the first time. The 2018 Southern California Safety Summit will be held in Oceanside, California, led by BWRAG director/instructor Danilo Couto and instructor Greg Long.

The two-day course, which is open to all surfers interested in gaining experience in waves of consequence, will include both classroom and in-water training.

“We are very thrilled to come do this training in Southern California, as we continue our mission to share this precious knowledge, first taught by our master Brian Keaulana,” says Couto.

Friday’s session will begin with a mindfulness/breathholding clinic led by yoga instructor and breathing coach Rafael Kroff, followed by a classroom lesson led by Couto and Long reviewing high-surf risk management and past case studies, and small-group simulations of worst-case scenarios.

Following the recent XXL Cloudbreak swell, classroom instruction will also include an in-depth analysis of Cloudbreak and will break down specific risk scenarios that transpired during the biggest swell to hit Fiji since 2012.

Ryan Hargrave, who was part of the safety team during the Cloudbreak swell, as well as Couto, who surfed and assisted in arranging safety, will share their experiences responding to heavy wipeouts and injuries. Local surfers who also participated at Cloudbreak, like Jojo Roper, will share insights.

“Looking back at this last big-wave session at Cloudbreak, from a safety perspective, it seems like most of the surfers are taking lifesaving seriously,” says Couto. “We had a gold-standard team running water safety in Ryan Hargrave, Kai Garcia and Abe Lerner. It’s very rewarding to see how much we have come together as a group, especially on the communication between travel groups.”

Saturday’s morning session will be led by local firefighter/paramedic Chad Cox and local big-wave surfer/paramedic Ricky Whitlock at the Oceanside Fire Department and will cover emergency medical interventions and CPR/AED training. In the afternoon, Couto, Long and other rescue specialists will lead in-water training, covering jet ski and surfboard pickups and open-ocean first responder tactics.

In an effort to ensure the safety of the next generation of big-wave surfers, BWRAG is also partnering with Gudauskas brothers nonprofit [Positive Vibe Warriors](#) to invite selected young surfers to the summit as a scholarship free of charge.

“My brothers and I have been a part of BWRAG classes the last couple of years in Hawaii and they have taught us so much that we have actually put to real-life use helping to save friends and fellow big wave surfers,” says Tanner Gudauskas. “It’s such an honor to be able to work in conjunction with BWRAG and help the next generation of young kids who are looking to get involved with water safety in ocean conditions.”

Couto, originally from Bahia, Brazil, and a resident of Hawaii for the last 20 years, is the executive director of BWRAG and along with Marcio Freire and Yuri Soledade was the first to paddle into Jaws at a respectable size. He won the 2011 XXL Awards Ride of the Year with the first bomb paddle-in ride at Jaws.

Long, who is from San Clemente, CA, has won multiple XXL awards including Biggest Wave, Ride of the Year and Performance of the Year. He is the only surfer to win all three of the sport’s premier big-wave competitions, including “The Eddie,” and was 2013 Big Wave World Tour Champion.

BWRAG was founded in 2011 in honor of the late Sion Milosky who died surfing Mavericks. After Milosky’s death, big-wave surfers Danilo Couto, Kohl Christensen and Mark Healey sought ways to better train and unite the big-wave surfing community to prevent future tragedies.

The first BWRAG summit was held in a barn on Christensen’s property on the North Shore of Oahu. Since then, BWRAG summits have evolved into multi-day seminars held on the North Shore every December, where male and female big-wave surfers from around the world convene to refine their safety knowledge, learn CPR and basic life saving, conduct in-water training and discuss issues affecting safety in the big-wave arena.

Today, BWRAG is expanding this training around the globe, partnering with local organizations and safety experts. In March, BWRAG summits were held in County Clare, Ireland, with the Irish

Rescue Tow Surf Club and in Nazare, Portugal. In May, Long led the first summit at Punta de Lobos in Chile.

BWRAG also offers a “2-20 ft. Ocean Survival” class for surfers of all ability levels.

BWRAG courses are a prerequisite for purchasing the Patagonia PSI Vest. A certificate of completion is given to each participant and can be presented to purchase the vest.

Registration for the 2018 Southern California BWRAG Summit (\$400) is open until June 15 and can be done through the [BWRAG website](#).

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PHOTO GUIDE: SEE ATTACHED PHOTOS



Couto demonstrates medical response tactics with big-wave surfers Kyle Thiermann and Kelta O'Rourke. Photo: BWRAG/Gabriela Aoun



Danilo Couto demonstrates tourniquet implementation with big-wave surfer Kyle Thiermann. Photo: BWRAG/Gabriela Aoun



In-water training at the first BWRAG summit in Pichilemu, Chile, in May 2018. Photo: BWRAG/Lukas Mekis



Breath hold training at the first BWRAG summit in Pichilemu, Chile, in May 2018. Photo: BWRAG/Lukas Mekis



BWRAG sponsored the first women's big-wave safety summit in October 2017. Photo: BWRAG/Gabriela Aoun



Ramon Navarro at Cloudbreak. Photo: Fred Pompermayer



Water safety responded after Caio Vaz sustained a bad wipeout and ruptured his hamstring at the recent Cloudbreak swell. Photo: Fred Pompermayer



Kelly Slater catches a ride from water safety in Fiji. Photo: Fred Pompermayer



Couto at the recent Cloudbreak swell. Photo: Fred Pompermayer