

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE2232

Burridge, Pam

(1965 -)

Born 26 July, 1965, Sydney New South Wales Australia

Occupation Surfboard Rider

Summary

Pam Burridge was born in Sydney into a sport loving family who were active in the surf living saving movement at Sydney's Bondi Beach. Her mother and sister, Donella, loved to swim, her father was an accomplished distance runner but Pam loved surfing. She was given her first (homemade) surfboard in 1975 at the age of ten, entered her first competition (which she won) in 1977 at the age of twelve, won her first New South Wales State Championship in 1979 aged fourteen and was national champion the following year when she was only fifteen.

At this point, Pam was deemed a professional by virtue of the fact that she had been invited to surf in the elite Hawaiian North Shore events; the strict rules of the governing amateur body offered no leeway. So Pam went on the international circuit when she was sixteen and by the age of seventeen had earned her first of six runner-up finishes in the world championships. She eventually broke through in 1990, winning the world championship by what was then a record margin and becoming the first Australian woman to do so.

The consistency of Pam's performance throughout the years prior to her claiming the title are even more remarkable when one considers what she overcame to achieve them. She spent the better part of the 1980s battling one personal crisis after the next, crises which can, arguably, be attributed to the unique challenges that confronted young women who dared enter the macho world of 1980s surf riding. She faced plummeting self confidence, which led to drug and alcohol abuse and an eating disorder. The fact that she was able to maintain an overall ranking of number two in the world throughout the 1980s, despite never being 'at her best' is testament to her extraordinary talent.

Burridge retired from competition in 1993 made a brief comeback in 1996, retiring again in 1999, ranked eighth in the world. Whilst the result was not one for the record books, Pam was nevertheless satisfied with the result; it proved that she still has it in her to match it with the best in the new world of women's surfing.

Events

1995 - 1995

1997 - 1997

1980 - 1981

1990 - 1990

1979 - 1981

Published resources

Book

Pam Burridge, Stell, Marion, 1992

Site Exhibition

She's Game: Women Making Australian Sporting History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2007,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/sg/sport-home.html>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Northern Beaches Council Library

[Isabel Letham Collection](#)

Author Details

Nikki Henningham

Created 28 December 2006

Last modified 20 November 2018