



**Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) leads the way in developing the next wave of Adaptive Surfers at the Switchfoot BRO-AM Event**

***Challenged Athlete Competitive Surf Team Competes for the First Time in the 13th Annual Switchfoot BRO-AM Team Surf Contest***

**SAN DIEGO, June 21, 2017** – For the first time in the event’s history, Team CAF adaptive surfers will be competing in the same team contest as able-bodied pro and amateur surfers at the Switchfoot BRO-AM, presented by Hurley and iHeartMedia at Moonlight Beach on Saturday, June 24, 2017. This team of four will participate against 12 other teams in 25-minute heats with a 30-minute final heat if they qualify. Team CAF Surfers are:

- *Alana Nichols*, paralyzed in a snowboard accident, she is a 3-time Paralympic Gold Medalist, 4-time Paralympic participant and Hurley sponsored surfer who paddles the waves in a sit wave ski,
- *Dani Burt*, lost her right leg in a motorcycle accident, she recently placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in for USA Adaptive Surf Team to represent the US for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row at the ISA World Adaptive Surfing Championships later this year.
- *Mike Coots*, from Kauai lost his right leg in a shark attack, he is an accomplished surfer and silver medalist from Team Hawaii at 2016 ISA World Adaptive Surfing Championships,
- *Ryan Gambrell*, was born with dwarfism and is a competitive surfer that has represented USA Adaptive Surf Team for the past 2 years at ISA World Adaptive Surfing Championships and is Little People of America ambassador.

“Our goal has always been to celebrate surfing and to give back to organizations having a direct impact in the sport that we love,” said Jon Foreman, lead singer of Switchfoot and founder of the Switchfoot BRO-AM surf contest. “Because of this, we’ll have Team CAF, four skilled and competitive adaptive surfers compete in the BRO-AM contest – same waves and same audience. Adaptive surfers continue to drive our sport forward and ensure our event can lead the way for sporting events around the world to create a culture of inclusion.”

In addition to surfing in the contest, these Team CAF Athletes will be coaching and mentoring at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Junior Seau Foundation Youth Adaptive Surf Camp*, presented by CAF on Thursday 6/22 and Friday 6/23 at Del Mar State Beach.

The *Junior Seau Foundation Adaptive Surf Program* presented by CAF will host our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual youth surf camp for physically challenged kids from June 22-24, 2017 in Del Mar, CA.

In its second year, this program will introduce, instruct and develop the next wave of adaptive surfers who want to learn to surf and enjoy the water like every other kid. They will compete in their own 25-minute contest at 1:10pm on Saturday, June 24, 2017 where there will be medals awarded for first, second and third place. This will be a good time to showcase the skills and techniques they have learned over the first two days of camp.

Last year, in April 2016, the Junior Seau Foundation presented a \$250,000 check to CAF to launch the program that will provide universal access to surfing for kids with physical challenges, while continuing a meaningful legacy for Junior Seau. This partnership supports CAF's mission to give people with physical challenges the opportunity to pursue an active lifestyle through physical fitness and competitive athletics, in this case, surfing.

CAF Board of Directors Chairman and Co-Founding Member, Jeffrey Essakow said, "We are very grateful to the Junior Seau Foundation for the incredible gift and providing CAF the funding to be a leader in developing the next generation of adaptive surfers. The kids are going to have an amazing time surfing all weekend long, while the CAF mission is directly put into action."

Funds raised at the Switchfoot Bro-Am benefit a number of local charities that help deserving local youth, including CAF. As part of the day's festivities, the adaptive surf camp participants will get to surf alongside surfing stars like Rob Machado and members of GRAMMY® award-winning band Switchfoot during the *Junior Seau Foundation Adaptive Surf Program presented by CAF* Expression Session. The kids will be allotted a 30-minute period where they will be the spotlight of the event and enjoy catching waves in front of thousands of spectators.

CAF is proud to continue partnerships with Hurley and the City of Del Mar Lifeguards in the *Junior Seau Foundation Adaptive Surf Program presented by CAF*.

[Photos for approved use:](#)

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/toia3eoxewa1zja/AABghzkbpDHXIAsA9XzXr1Hma?dl=0>

#### **About the Challenged Athletes Foundation**

*The Challenged Athletes Foundation® (CAF) is a world leader in helping people with physical challenges lead active, healthy lifestyles. CAF believes that participation in physical activity at any level increases self-esteem, encourages independence and enhances quality of life. Since 1994, more than \$76 million has been raised and over 13,000 funding requests from people with physical challenges in all 50 states and dozens of countries have been satisfied. Additionally, CAF's outreach efforts reach another 60,000 individuals each year. Whether it's a \$2,500 grant for a handcycle, helping underwrite a carbon fiber running foot not covered by insurance, or arranging enthusiastic encouragement from a mentor who has triumphed over a similar challenge, CAF's mission is clear: give opportunities and support to those with the desire to live active, athletic lifestyles To learn more, visit [challengedathletes.org](http://challengedathletes.org) or call 858-866-0959.*

#### **About Junior Seau Foundation**

*Junior Seau established the Junior Seau Foundation in 1992 to raise money and resources for programs that inspire young people to face life's challenges with enthusiasm, hope and dignity. The Foundation assists programs and activities that educate and empower young people, including through the support of child abuse prevention efforts, drug and alcohol awareness, anti-juvenile delinquency programs, and*

*youth oriented educational programs. The Junior Seau Foundation has donated over \$4 million to local youth organizations and other such worthy causes in San Diego County since its inception.*

**About Bro-Am**

*BRO-AM is an annual celebration that gives back to the San Diego community by hosting a free concert on the beach, a team Surf Contest, the Rob Machado Bro Junior Surf Contest and numerous vendor booths. The event has grown in both impact and size raising over \$1.4 million dollars and gathering over 15,000 attendees to the beach festivities. Funds raised at a pre-event benefit party as well as sponsorships for the event support San Diego-based youth charities. The members of Switchfoot founded BRO-AM as a way to give back to their community that supported them as surfers and musicians. With the belief that every kid deserves a chance at a thriving future, funds are granted to nonprofit organizations that provide direct services to underprivileged and disadvantaged youth, with a special focus on programs related to music, art and surfing.*

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