

Press Release

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Forty-seven kilometers in the Pacific at night

Nathalie Pohl the First German Woman to Complete the Kaiwi Channel

No one will be repeating this feat for a while: As the first German woman to do so, Nathalie Pohl completed the nearly 29-mile distance between the Hawaiian islands of Molokai and Oahu on August 17 (UTC-10). An incredible achievement, as the channel is considered one of the toughest open water swims in the world, not to mention the longest. The elite athlete fought through the water for an unbelievable 15:05 hours, or over 50,000 strokes, partly in the pitch black. But it's not just the length of the swim that makes it such a challenge. Hawaii is also known for its dangerous marine life. In addition to sharks, it is home to the Portuguese man o' war, a particularly poisonous jellyfish. Merely brushing against its tentacles, which can be up to 165 feet long, causes extreme pain, skin injuries and severe inflammation, and can lead to breathing difficulties. A real nightmare scenario in the middle of the ocean and one that unfortunately became a real-life encounter for Nathalie Pohl: "I was nearly at the finish so of course my arms and legs were burning with the exertion anyway. But then I experienced an excruciating, piercing pain that truly took my breath away," the 27-year-old swimmer reports. While the tentacles left her body criss-crossed with deep-red welts, she tried to motivate herself: "I haven't come all this way, through the night, just to give up right before the finishing line." So she plowed on. When she finally climbed out of the water at Sandy Beach (Oahu), exhausted but bursting with pride, the seriousness of the encounter became clear for all to see. Her team responded immediately and organized medical care but, despite everything, Nathalie Pohl still had a smile on her face – because no one could take this incredible achievement away from her.

For the extreme swimmer, this crossing was the fifth of seven swims of the Ocean's Seven, the seven most important sea channels in the world. Nathalie Pohl wants to be the first German woman to master this challenge only wearing a bathing suit, swim cap, and goggles. Her longtime coach, Joshua Neuloh, who assists her during each swim from the dinghy, says: "Everything has to be just right to deliver such a performance: from the intensive preparation to the logistics planning and on-site support all the way to supply from the boat." The extreme swimmer trains several hours a day in the water and in the weight room. In the past year alone, she swam over 620 miles. But those who want to persevere in the world's oceans must not only rely on their physical fitness. As a result, Nathalie Pohl has worked for years on her mental strength so she can push herself beyond her limits in the water in extreme situations. It's a skill that helped her overcome her pain barrier during this swim. Her great goal, completing the Ocean's Seven, is now within reach: all that is still missing is crossing the Cook Strait between the North Island and South Island of New Zealand, and the North Channel between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

More information at: www.nathaliepohl.de

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**Nathalie Pohl before and after crossing the Kaiwi Channel:
(Photos: Marc Le Cornu)**



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