Patti Paniccia

Professional Surfer

Paniccia was a co-founder of the Hawai'i Women's Surfing Hui, a group of women surfers formed in 1974 that sought recognition for female athletes and equality in surfing competitions.[3][4][5] As the Hui's Pro Competition Director, she worked with Fred Hemmings to create an improved rating and invitation system for women and ran the first open qualifying contest for women seeking invitations to pro contests. [6]

Paniccia is a co-founder of professional surfing.[7][8] In 1976 she joined with Hemmings and Randy Rarick to form International Professional Surfing in order to launch the first world tour. Paniccia was Director of the Women's Division.[9][10][11]

She is recognized as one of the early women who professionally surfed Hawaii's big waves.[12] In 1976 she qualified for the first Lancer's Women's World Cup held in on the North Shore of Oahu, which was the first women's event broadcast on a national sports program.[13] She took 7th place.[14] The contest, held January 7, 1976, was broadcast May 9, 1976 on CBS Sports Spectacular.[15]

She was one of six women who competed on the first women's world pro surfing circuit in 1976, which included six contests in Hawaii, Brazil and South Africa.[16] [17] [18] [19] IPS declined to give official rankings or name a women's world champion until the following year, at which point Paniccia retired from competition to continue working with IPS to expand the women's tour to include California and Australia.[20]

Working with other women surfers in the Hui, Paniccia helped to create the North Shore Haleiwa Menehune Surf Contest in 1977 for children ages 3-12.[21]

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Here is a one-hour BBC World Service radio broadcast about Patti's surfing history:

Broadcast version: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct4m0z
Podcast version: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0dqqknp

Great job Patti!