

SURFIN' USA

Highly-competitive surfer, Eduardo Galindo Van Zeller carries over his success and passion for surfing from Portugal to the US.

Waxing board and strapping on the leash, senior **Eduardo Galindo Van Zeller** stood on the Portugal shoreline readying for a vigorous battle between man and nature. It is May 26, 2018. The Regional Surf Competition has begun. Heavy, monstrous sets pull in at the coast of Nazaré. Galindo paddled out, duck-diving 15

“**WATCHING EDUARDO IS LIKE WATCHING A PRO. HE RIDES THE LONGEST WAVES I’VE EVER SEEN AND HE DOES THE COOLEST TRICKS ON THE WAVE. I REMEMBER ONE DAY HE CAUGHT A WAVE AND THEN SOMEHOW LAUNCHED HIMSELF LIKE 10 FEET IN THE AIR.**”

JOSEPH MARMALEJO, 12

foot waves with ease. Hordes of people gathered around the beach to watch this special event. Through the chaos and danger, Galindo thought to himself, “What a good day to go surfing.” He spotted his wave and pulled himself into position with cold, salty water passing through his fingers. Each stroke counted, and he felt the power of the wave sucking him up the face. In a split second he pushed up, and dropped. Whipping and slashing through the wave, he pumped his board to gain speed and momentum to carve the belly of the beast. He exclaimed afterwards, “seconds felt like minutes,” as he bent his knees and watched the wave quickly collapse around him. He tucked into the barrel, knowing one false move could suck him back and around like a rag-doll by the sheer exploding force of the wave. The crowd went quiet with suspense. A second passed, and another, then all of a sudden Galindo shot out of the wave with an explosion of mist trailing behind him. The beastly wave spit him out -- and an unexplainable thrill of accomplishment screened across his face. He knew he had just won the Regional Title of Portugal and earned the crowd’s roar of applause behind him.

Now one of six foreign exchange students enrolling at PRHS for 2021-2022, he has arrived from Portugal into the famed surfer-state of California. He’s only a half hour’s drive away from the Rock -- Morro Bay’s landmark break. Since the 2018 first place, he has placed 8th overall in Portugal’s National Competition, and 1st in the 2021 Morro Bay Scholastic Surf Series -- as well as other competitions -- it is evident that Galindo

doesn’t mess around when it comes to surfing competitively.

Born and raised around the beaches of Lisbon, Portugal, Galindo’s father introduced him to the surfing world at six years old. Visiting the beach everyday with his dad and growing up with his older brother **Luis Galindo Van Zeller** -- who won the National Title for kite surfing in 2020 -- he knew “surfing was meant for him” and he wanted to compete for the title someday.

“When I was a kid my dad always brought me with him to Lisbon (his local beach). I remember I would watch him surf for hours and hours,” Galindo said. “I knew it was something I wanted to do eventually, and I felt I had a strong connection with the ocean.”

At nine years old, Galindo joined the Professional Academy of Surf (APS), where he had three personal surf coaches train him rigorously for the next nine years. Galindo practiced five days a week for hours of perfecting surf turns, tube riding, airs, and speed. In the academy he started as an intermediate and made his way up to competing in high level competitions.

He will always remember watching 11-time World Champion Kelly Slater during a surfing championship with his older brother. “I saw him do things that seemed impossible and unreal,” Galindo said.

“After he won his heat I saw him get out of the water with his eyes open wide with happiness as everyone was shouting and cheering him on. I knew I wanted to feel what he felt someday.”

During a surf competition, surfers are given 20-30 minutes to paddle out and catch the best waves and rides possible. With factors such as the wind, type of wave, current, swell, and tide, surf contests are known to be a dice game. Surfers must have the endurance to paddle out through big wave surges, change in position, and perform quick varieties of maneuvers to earn a good score from judges. The waves aren’t always

the same, and surfers must choose them wisely as judges score the quality of a ride over the quantity.

When Galindo turned 14, his surf coaches entered him into his country’s biggest surf competitions: the Regionals of 2018. Held at the beaches of Pico da Mota, Santa Cruz, and Nazaré (known globally for the sheer danger and size of its waves), Galindo went into Regional Competition with a mindset of giving this contest “100 percent.” Heat-by-heat, he battled against 35 highly competitive surfers like himself. Galindo ripped and carved his way through the competition placing 3rd, 1st, and 4th across several days, which earned him the 1st place surfer in his region. Later he competed for Portugal’s 2018 National Title against the best 32 surfers of his entire country for the 12-16 age groups.

Galindo began to train up to 8 hours a week, perfecting his style, speed, and technique for this premier competition. Galindo’s final heat for the National Comp was hosted at Praia de São Pedro, where he ended up placing the 8th best in all of Portugal.

“I thought I could have done better,” Galindo said, itching to get back out there.

Although Galindo didn’t win the National title, he has brought his passion to California. His host parents, **Geoff and Kirsten Dewhurst** helped Eduardo join the Morro Bay Surf Team last 2021 September where he practices up to eight hours a week at Morro Bay Rock every weekend and Monday before school. Earning the nickname “SharkBait” from his host parents,

“**EVERYTHING IN MY LIFE IS CONNECTED TO SURFING. IT’S A LIFESTYLE FOR ME, IT’S A PART OF ME, AND I DON’T KNOW WHAT I’D DO WITHOUT IT.**”
EDUARDO GALINDO, 12

Galindo holds two major sponsorships from Xhapeland Surfboard Company and Prego Gourmet, a local restaurant in Portugal.

“The level of coaching, commitment, and way Eduardo competes is very intense and different from the average competitive surfer. At practice, he’s usually by himself in his own world and the rest of the team is all bunched together talking,” Geoff Dewhurst, said. “Out of the water he’s the nicest guy, but in the water he’s an animal and wants to beat everyone. He’s like a shark in the water.”

Galindo’s surf team entered into the Scholastic Surf Series Oct. 24, 2021 hosted at Morro Bay Rock. A Portuguese foreigner at an all-American competition, Galindo competed against 40 surfers in five different heats containing eight competitors each. He moved from quarterfinals to semifinals, where he scored a 9.9-10, the highest score of the competition. In the Finals, Galindo scored a 8.5 and a 7 for his last two waves, enough for 1st Place. The moment proved to Galindo that all his practices and resolute commitment was worth it.

Galindo continues to surf in high-level competitions and plans to travel with his host parents to surf some of the world’s popular surf spots such as Banzai Pipeline, Trestles, and Santa Cruz. He hopes to pursue his passion for surfing in the future by making the University of Santa Barbara’s Surf Team and further his education. “Surfing to me is everything. I made all my friends from surfing, and I’ve learned many great things such as being independent,” Galindo said with great pride.

Dec. 20th, 2019 at Beliche beach

One of the 12 surfboards Galindo uses in competition

