



Top-ranked West and East Coast Surfers Qualify to Compete in Elite USA Surfing Prime Series

After an epic Hoag USA Surfing Championship presented by Hurley at Lower Trestles, we can't wait to see the nation's best under 18 surfers light up the lineups again in Prime Series jerseys!

The 2025-2026 Prime Series opens at two extra awesome breaks timed to take advantage of peak-season swells. The East Coast season opener is at *Jenette's Pier* in North Carolina's Outer Banks. The West Coast starts at SloCal Morro Bay's iconic "The Rock."

Both locations are *WSL QS stops* and guaranteed to deliver fun and progression.

■ East Coast Prime Series

Oct 18–19 | Jenette's Pier, NC
Jan 31–Feb 1 | Ponce Inlet, FL
Mar 14–15 | Jacksonville, FL

■ West Coast Prime Series

Oct 25–26 | Morro Bay "The Rock" CA
Nov 22–23 | Pismo Beach Pier, CA
Feb 7–8 | Huntington Beach Pier, CA
Mar 7–8 | Oceanside Jetty, CA

To start the season strong, USA Surfing is hosting a Goal Setting + Performance Mindset Session in late September—open to all Prime Series surfers and regional qualifiers from NSSA, NSSA Hawaii, WSA, ESA, and TGSA.

We're bringing together top minds in the game, including mental performance coach Dr. Lenny Wiersma, coach Simmo, and a very special guest—a true Champion in every way who's excited to share what fuels their training, resilience and massive success in and out of the water! Announcement coming soon!

This is an incredible opportunity to kick off the season with purpose, healthy habits, and a plan for real progression. ■ **Stay tuned for the date, location, and RSVP info.**

Q. What is USA Surfing's Prime Series?

A. USA Surfing Prime Series is the highest level of junior (under age 18) surfing in the U.S., drawing talent from up and down the East and West coasts for pro-level competition experiences designed to prepare young surfers for the big leagues of surfing. 2024 Olympic Gold Medalist Caroline Marks and fellow Olympians Griffin Colapinto and Caity Simmers competed in the USA Surfing Prime Series. Caroline still holds the record for the most USA Surfing Championship wins.

Prime Series surfers on both coasts compete in a 7-stop series of competitions to accumulate points throughout the season. Season-ending points determine who qualifies for coveted spots to surf in USA Surfing Championships held at Lower Trestles in June featuring the top qualified surfers from the East and West Coasts, Texas Gulf, and Hawaii.

USA Surfing's Prime Series events use WSL judging panels, announcers, QS-CT-level structure, broadcasts and premier sponsors designed to mirror and prepare for the highest levels of elite surfing.

Q. Who qualifies for the Prime Series? What are the qualifying pathways for the Prime Series?

A. This year 229 surfers from both East Coast and West Coast will receive invitations to surf in the elite USA Surfing Prime Series competition – a bi-coastal tour featuring the top-ranked surfers in the nation.

To compete in USA Surfing's Prime Series competitions, a surfer must receive an invite which indicates they have met the following criteria to qualify:

- **Requalification from existing Prime Series competitors.** The top finishers from the prior Prime Series Season and those competing in USA Surfing Championship. Surfers who age up a division, keep 80% of their points to level set in a new older age division.
- **Regional surfing association qualifiers:**
 - o **WSA** provides qualifiers based on a full season ranking plus WSA Championship results.
 - o **NSSA** draws on final results from their Nationals and breaks any ties by reviewing regional finishes. They do not factor in regular season points.
 - o **ESA** - Top finishers from ESA's three regional competitions.

How do you pick the dates and locations for the Prime Series schedules on East and West Coasts?

To prepare surfers to compete in the bigger leagues of surfing, Prime Series locations are based on WSL QS event locations, wave quality and consistency, parent survey responses requesting more variety in geography, and availability of grants, discounts and amenities for surfers. The dates were chosen to take advantage of optimal daylight hours and seasonal wave conditions to accommodate the number of heats at each event in optimal conditions.

Can you drop an event score to qualify for Champs?

Because there are fewer events this year to bring greater focus to full participation, we wanted to be sure that the ability to drop an event score was fair and mathematically sound. We ran a test on last season's results, using three events for East and four events for West to mirror the current season. Based on what we saw in the data and where rankings shifted, we've landed on the following structure:

East (3 events)

Season ranking = Best 2.5 event scores

With the reduced number of events, surfers take away half of your worst score from the three East Coast Prime Series events. Removing a full event score introduced too much volatility and variance to be reliable. 2.5 is solid.

West (4 events)

Season ranking = Best 3 events

You'll drop your lowest event score from the four events.

This approach rewards consistency and strikes the best balance to protect surfers from unavoidable outliers (illness/injury, travel issues, an interference, etc.) One event won't outweigh a whole season of effort and consistency.

*If an East Coast surfer has to miss an event, there is still an opportunity to qualify for Championship at Lowers if enough points are earned in the events surfed.

Who judges USA Surfing Prime Series events on each coast?

Judges on both coasts are a panel of the nation's most experienced WSL QS/CT judges. Each panel consists of a head judge, a priority judge, four scoring judges, and a spotter/judge in training.

You will continue to see judges in training at events to ensure we have a high-quality pipeline of judges who cover key regions where events are held. Notes from head judges will also continue to be shared on WhatsApp and social media before each event to mirror WSL QS, CS, and CT events.

We encourage surfers, coaches and parents to use the broadcast of events to see real-life examples of how judging criteria is applied. USA Surfing has invested in live broadcasts to provide greater transparency and teachable moments for surfers, parents, fans, and judges themselves.

Are membership and registration fees going up this year?

To keep pace with increasing costs, there is a modest increase in membership and registration fees. It is based on the cost of other organizations and parent survey feedback indicating a willingness to pay more to sustain and improve USA Surfing's service to surfers and our sport. USA Surfing is facing higher costs in event production, Live Heats, and permits. 2025-2026 entry fees are \$170 and annual Prime Competitor membership is \$135.

When can we expect the heat draws to be published for every Prime Series event?

The deadline for registration will close one week before each event with heat draws published the Wednesday before each event. There will be a \$30 late fee charged for any late registrations and if provided too far past the deadline, they may not be accepted.

What is the "surfing up" policy for this season and why did it change?

Surfers are required to surf in their birth-year age division **only**. USA Surfing does not allow surfers to compete in age groups beyond their birth year with the exception outlined in the next paragraph. This policy is based on CT/QS surfers' and parent feedback and coaches' observations of a need to strengthen the maturity and focus required to succeed as surfers and developing teenagers. This policy is consistent with what other powerhouse surf countries like Surfing Australia, New Zealand and South Africa employ to align with International Surfing Association World Championship competition age divisions.

To recognize and motivate the highest achievers, a Prime Series competitor who wins three Prime events in a season will be offered a slot in the next age division up for the 2026 USA Championships at Lowers.

Surfers who want to compete against older competitors may also have opportunities in regional organizations; WSL QS and many other events held in the U.S. and around the world.

How can someone who placed below me in Prime requalify for this season, when I placed above them and am on an alternate list?

Surfers who didn't end last season with enough points to requalify through Prime, can be one of the surfers who qualify for Prime through member organization slots (WSA, NSSA, ESA). Between 1-4 Prime spots in each age division are reserved for member organization qualification. Prime surfers may be given priority on the alternate list.

Can I surf in both East and West Coast Prime Series events, or sign up for one if I have travel plans for some of the locations?

Surfers must qualify through the regional organizations for the Coast in which they will compete. If they qualify for both, they must commit to one (East or West) for the season. This preserves the integrity of our ratings (and qualifying pathways).

How are Prime Series events seeded?

- Event one of the season is based on the qualifying order into the Prime Series with alternates replacing missing surfers receiving the lowest seeds.
- Event two seeding is based on event one results.
- Event three seeding is determined by the combined results of events one and two.
- Event four seeding draws on three event results to determine seed order

Alternates will stay in their original order for the full year. If an alternate surfs in two East or three West events, the surfer's placing at the end of the year will count towards Champs qualification.

How will you fill openings that may come about due to injuries, illness, moving, etc? Is there an alternate list? What if there are last-minute openings on the beach?

Due to large field sizes and limited daylight hours, we may not always fill openings with alternates. USA Surfing's alternate list draws on the next qualified surfers in line that come from:

- Prior season Prime Series season surfers who missed requalification.
- Regional organizations' next-in-line qualifiers.

If there are last-minute openings on the beach, every attempt will be made to contact the alternate surfers who are next in line. To maintain the integrity of the qualifying criteria and pathways, we will not replace openings with surfers who are not on the alternate list.

How do you qualify for USA Surfing Championship at Lowers?

Based on the days/times provided by State Parks, USA Surfing determines the number of heats that can be run each day of Champs at Lowers.

Surfers who finish in the top 50 percent of their age division at the end of the Prime Series season on East and West Coasts earn invites to compete at USA Surfing Championship at Lowers. Space is also made available for each regional association – ESA, WSA, NSSA, HASA, HSA, TGSA, NSSA Hawaii. Historically ESA has been given 3 slots (1 per region), HASA/NSSA Hawaii received 2-5 slots, and WSA/TSGA/NSSA E&W received 2 slots.

If there are remaining spots after drawing from these qualifying pathways, more Prime Series surfers below the 50 percent cut line can be added.

How do you qualify for USA Surfing junior national teams?

The 2025/2026 junior team qualification criteria are posted [here](#).

What is the mid-season call up opportunity for Prime Series surfers to make the junior national team through their performances during the new season?

The mid-year call-ups are based on results from the top two Prime Series events. The competition committee identified surfers at or above the 4,000-point performance threshold, which serves as the mid-season nomination cutoff for both National and Development Team selection. Reaching 4,000 points is the equivalent of two final finishes of 4th or better and/or a major result of 1st-3rd and a semifinal finish. To see the complete Team Selection Criteria published on our website, click [here](#).

What are the Power Your Performance workshops planned for this year?

USA Surfing is finalizing a schedule of Power Your Performance workshops, which give surfers access to top experts in sport performance, training, nutrition, breathwork and safety for bigger-wave hold down conditions, injury prevention and rehab, sports psychology, working with agents, filmmaking, making more of your wavepool sessions, reading wave conditions with Surfline and more. The season will start with a Zoom on goal setting to provide guidance for planning your season and setting yourself up for success in mid-September.

The series of Power Your Performance workshops held throughout the year are designed to help surfers develop their skills and prepare for success in and out of the water. If you have suggestions for a topic or expert presenter, email tracy@usasurfing.org.

Why does USA Surfing allow surfers who represent other countries to compete in the USA Surfing Prime Series and Championships? Isn't it unfair for them to "double dip" and use these events to give other national teams an advantage?

USA Surfing's [Competition Advisory Committee](#) thoughtfully weighed issues around dual citizenship surfers competing for other nations and its impact on USA Surfing's mission to develop the strongest possible pipeline of American surf talent for international competition, including the Olympics.

Here are the key concerns and arguments in favor of not allowing surfers who compete for other countries to participate in USA Surfing events:

- *Protecting the U.S. pipeline:* The Prime Series and Championships are critical stages in developing American surfers. Allowing competitors who will represent other countries can dilute this mission.
- *Preventing subsidization of other countries' teams:* USA Surfing invests significant resources in event infrastructure, judging standards, coaching feedback, trainings, and high-performance programming. Other nations benefit from this development work without contributing to its costs, while our surfers get no equivalent government support.
- *Encouraging loyalty to the U.S. program:* Many surfers forgo dual-citizenship options out of commitment to Team USA. Sharing limited competitive spots with surfers who keep one foot in and one foot out can feel unfair to those who are all-in.
- *Maintaining fairness:* It's a structural disadvantage if U.S. surfers must compete for limited roster spots while others can use dual citizenship to access both our competitive system and their own country's government support.
- *Professional standards:* Many other sports federations have nationality-based eligibility rules for development pathways. Surfing may need to adopt similar standards, especially with the LA28 Olympics approaching.

We also asked hard questions about fairness and community impact:

How would exclusivity have affected the decisions of past and current champions?

Would this make our program stronger in the long run, or damage relationships with families, clubs, and sponsors?

Could there be a transition period to avoid disrupting surfers' young career paths.

There were compelling arguments against exclusivity that ultimately determined the committee's decision:

- *Competitive quality:* Excluding strong surfers may reduce the depth and level of the field. "Iron sharpens iron"—keeping the bar high prepares our surfers better for ISA and Olympic competition.
- *American roots:* Many of these surfers live here full-time, train at our breaks, attend our schools, and are integral to our local communities—even if they choose to honor family heritage by representing another country.

- *Complex identities*: Surfing is a global sport. Families have multinational ties. We should respect surfers' choices without forcing kids to declare absolute loyalty at 12 or 16.
- *Historical pride*: USA Surfing has a legacy of developing world-class surfers, even those who ultimately represent other nations like Tatiana Weston Webb and Kanoa Igarashi. We can take pride in being the center of global surf development.
- *Community relationships*: Excluding these surfers risks alienating families, clubs, sponsors, and local surf communities who see them as part of our own.

After weighing all these perspectives, the committee decided on a balanced approach:

>> USA Surfing will continue to allow surfers who represent other countries to compete in the Prime Series and Championships.

>> An additional “out-of-country” fee will be assessed for those surfers’ to collect from their national federations or governments to pay to compete in USA Surfing events.

This fee is designed to fairly recognize the substantial value of USA Surfing’s development pathway—funded through member fees, parent payments, sponsors, and donors—and ensure that foreign competitors’ organizations that benefit help cover those costs, much like out-of-state tuition in education.

This solution aims to strike the best balance:

- Preserving the highest possible level of competition to sharpen U.S. talent.
- Respecting our inclusive surf culture and honoring surfers’ complex identities.
- Protecting the integrity of our American development pipeline by asking other countries to help fund what they benefit from.
- Ensuring fairness for U.S. families who pay to support the system.

USA Surfing wants to support the strongest, most surfer-centered program possible, recognizing the responsibility we have to develop competitors prepared to proudly wear the USA jersey on the world stage.

What is the code of conduct for surfers?

Visit our website – [Code of Conduct for surfers](#)

What is the code of conduct for parents, coaches and athlete support personnel?

Visit our website – [Code of Conduct](#) Parents, Coaches, Athlete Support Personnel

Are all USA Surfing staff, contractors, coaches, leaders and those in contact with minor surfers Safe Sport certified?

Yes. As a condition of membership in USA Surfing and a condition for participation in any competition or event sanctioned by USA Surfing, each USA Surfing member and each surfer, coach, trainer, agent, surfer support personnel, medical or para-medical personnel, team staff, official and other person who participates in USA Surfing or

USA Surfing events (whether or not a USA Surfing member), agrees to comply with and be bound by the SafeSport rules, policies and procedures of the U.S. Center for SafeSport and to submit, without reservation or condition, to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport for the resolution of any alleged violations of those rules, policies and procedures, as may be amended from time to time.

Who is on USA Surfing's Board of Directors?

Visit our website - [Board of Directors](#)

How are positions on USA Surfing's Board of Directors determined?

USA Surfing maintains a Nominating and Governance Committee that recruits, vets, and fields candidates for the full board to review and vote on as openings occur. If you would like to be considered or nominate someone, email admin@usasurfing.org and put "Nominating and Governance Committee" in the subject line.

How can I help with USA Surfing and the Prime Series?

USA Surfing is always looking for parents to help support our programs with the Fundraising Committee. We'd love local help connecting with hotels, restaurants, trainers, coaches and other businesses to partner with us. If you would like to help email laura@usasurfing.org.

What kind of merchandise is available for purchase to rep USA Surfing?

Get geared out for the season with our Prime Series merchandise on the online store. We have NEW sweatshirts and hats available from the link below.
<https://af968d-e4.myshopify.com>

How do I file a complaint or resolve a dispute?

Visit [Complaints](#) on our website and/or email CEO becky@usasurfing.org.