2026 Athlete Director Election

Nomination and election rules for the Athlete Director seat on the USA Surfing Board of Directors · Adopted by the USA Surfing Athletes' Advisory Council under Bylaws §6.6(b) and §9.7 · Final · November 7, 2026

The Board of Directors has amended Bylaws §5.2 and §6.6(b) so that USA Surfing membership is not required to vote in Athlete Director elections, and the Athletes' Advisory Council has opened this seat to candidates who meet the NGB 10 Year+ Athlete definition. Votem, an independent election administrator, runs the election and is the contact for athletes at usasurfing@votem.com.

1. 2026 Election-at-a-glance

USA Surfing's athletes directly elect the Athlete Directors on its Board of Directors. One seat is up this year: the seat held by Brett Simpson, whose term expires December 31, 2026. Brett has indicated that he will seek another term. The athlete elected serves January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2030 as a full voting director, representing and advocating for surfers on the Board of the sport's National Governing Body.

Seat	Athlete Director, USA Surfing Board of Directors (one seat, Brett Simpson's expiring term)
Term	January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2030
Who votes	Athletes who meet the NGB 10 Year Athlete definition, are U.S. citizens and are 18 or older (section 3)
Who may run	NGB 10 Year Athletes and NGB 10 Year+ Athletes who meet the requirements in section 4, by self-nomination
Nominations	Call for nominations emailed by the election administrator on Monday, November 9; nominations close Sunday, November 15, 2026, 5:00 pm PT
Candidates announced	Tuesday, November 17
Voting	Wednesday, November 18, 9:00 am PT – Monday, November 23, 2026, 5:00 pm PT, by secure ballot
Results	Provisional results Tuesday, November 24; certified to the Board December 1; recorded by the Board December 15
Run by	The USA Surfing Athletes' Advisory Council, through an independent election administrator, Votem

Please be advised that two other athlete elections are scheduled in 2027, each with its own call for nominations: the election of the USA Surfing Athletes' Advisory Council in February 2027, and the election of USA Surfing's Alternate to the Team USA Athletes' Commission. Those elections are described in section 10. This November nomination and vote is for the Board athlete representative seat only.

2. The seat

Athlete Directors are the athletes' elected voice on the Board. Under USA Surfing's bylaws at least one-third of the twelve directors are Athlete Directors, all of them elected by athletes: three in elections like this one, and one — USA Surfing's Representative to the Team USA Athletes' Commission — in the separate Team USA Athletes' Commission election, after which the Representative sits on the Board. USA Surfing's bylaws state that the USA Surfing Representative on the Team USA Athletes' Commission is automatically an Athlete

Director on the board. USA Surfing's Alternate on the Team USA Athletes' Commission is an Ex officio director on the Board (with a voice but doesn't vote).

The Board sets strategy and budget, approves selection criteria and the competition program, hires and oversees the CEO, and is accountable to the USOPC for how the sport is governed. Directors attend regular and special Board meetings (virtual, several times a year), serve on committees, complete the USOPC's board training, sign the Conflict of Interest and confidentiality policies each year, and are subject to the USA Surfing Code of Conduct.

3. Who may vote

You are eligible to vote in this election if, as of the record date, October 19, 2026, you:

- **Meet the NGB 10 Year Athlete definition.** Within the previous ten years you either were selected by USA Surfing to represent the United States in a Delegation Event or other international qualifying competition; or competed in one or more of: the WSL Championship Tour, Challenger Series or Longboard Tour; the ISA World Surfing Games, World Longboard Championships, World SUP & Paddleboard Championships or World Para Surfing Championships; or the USA Surfing Championships; or placed in the top three at the ISA World Junior Surfing Championships or the USA Surfing Junior Championships U18 division. Eligibility runs through December 31 of the tenth year after your last qualifying event, so an event in 2016 or later qualifies you for this election. (Appendix A has the full definition.)
- **Are a United States citizen.**
- **Are 18 years of age or older.**

Membership in USA Surfing is not required to vote. Each eligible athlete votes once, in this election only, regardless of any other USA Surfing membership category. 10 Year+ Athletes (last qualifying event 2015 or earlier) do not vote in this election; see section 10 for the elections in which they do.

The voter list

USA Surfing has compiled the list of eligible athletes from competition results and provided it to the election administrator, which emails the call for nominations and, later, the ballot to the address on file. If you believe you are eligible and have not received the call for nominations by Wednesday, November 11, or if your contact details have changed, write to the election administrator at usasurfing@votem.com with your name, qualifying competition and year, date of birth and a confirmation of U.S. citizenship; the administrator passes additions to USA Surfing's Corporate Secretary, who keeps the voter list. Additions and corrections are accepted through the voter-list challenge window, November 16–17; the AAC's non-candidate members decide any question of eligibility, and their decision is final for this election subject to the grievance process in section 7.

4. Who may run

You are eligible to be a candidate if you:

- **Meet the NGB 10 Year Athlete definition or the NGB 10 Year+ Athlete definition** as of the record date, October 19, 2026; the Athletes' Advisory Council has opened this seat to both. An incumbent's eligibility is re-confirmed for this election like any other candidate's. The incumbent stands in this election as a candidate; no vote of retention under Bylaws §6.27 is held.
- **Are a United States citizen and 18 or older.**
- **Are, or become, a USA Surfing member in good standing** by Monday, November 16, when eligibility is confirmed. You may file first and join after. Membership is a requirement for candidates, not for voters; join at usasurfing.org/membership/login.

- **Meet the director qualifications in Bylaws §6.4:** no affiliation with any national surfing federation other than USA Surfing; no felony conviction involving harm to a vulnerable person, sexual abuse or assault, or a hate crime; no period of ineligibility served for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation or a SafeSport Code violation. Any other felony, any misdemeanor, and any suspension or ineligibility from a sport organization must be disclosed and may be considered.
- **Disclose any actual, possible or perceived conflict of interest** under the USA Surfing Conflict of Interest Policy. Disclosures are shared with voters so they may be considered in voting. Failure to disclose is grounds for disqualification or removal.
- **Consent to a background check** and complete SafeSport training before the Board records the result on December 15.

Members of the Nominating and Governance Committee are not eligible. Candidates take no part in any decision about the election or in the vetting of candidates; a sitting Athlete Director who is a candidate is recused from those decisions.

5. How to nominate

Nominations are by self-nomination only. Anyone may encourage an athlete to run, but the athlete files. A nomination is complete when all of the following have been received by

Sunday, November 15, 2026, 5:00 pm Pacific time, through the election administrator's online nomination form, linked from the call for nominations and from usasurfing.org/elections:

1. **Nomination form** — name, contact details, date of birth, citizenship, USA Surfing membership number (if you are already a member), qualifying competition and year.
2. **Statement of intent** — up to 300 words, published to voters as written: why you are running, what you would bring to the Board, and your availability to serve. A headshot is optional.
3. **Answers to the three candidate questions** — up to 150 words each, published to voters with the ballot exactly as written (the questions are below).
4. **Resume or biography** — competitive history and other relevant experience (up to two pages).
5. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure Certification** — answered on-screen in the online form and signed with your typed name; your disclosure is published to voters. (If you cannot use the online form, write to usasurfing@votem.com before the deadline for a printable form.)
6. **Director Candidate Eligibility Disclosure Statement** (Bylaws §6.4) — answered on-screen in the online form and signed with your typed name; confidential to the committees.
7. **Background-check consent** and your SafeSport training certificate, or the date by which you will complete it.

The three candidate questions. (1) What are the most important issues facing USA Surfing's athletes over the next four years, and what would you do about them as a director? (2) How would you stay in touch with, and represent, athletes across all disciplines and regions, including those who did not vote for you? (3) What experience prepares you to govern — a board or committee, an organization or business, a budget, or similar — and what would you need to learn? Answers are the candidate's own words; USA Surfing does not edit them.

The administrator acknowledges each nomination, checks it against the eligible-athlete list, and reports all nominations to USA Surfing's Corporate Secretary at the deadline. Incomplete or late nominations are not accepted. The AAC's non-candidate members and the Nominating and Governance Committee review each nomination for eligibility on November 16; the Ethics Committee screens the disclosures. Nominees are told the outcome the same day. Every eligible nominee is placed on the ballot; the review confirms eligibility and does

not narrow the field. The candidates, their statements, their answers to the three questions and their disclosures are published on usasurfing.org/elections and sent to all eligible voters on November 17.

Nomination materials are confidential within the AAC, the Nominating and Governance Committee, the Ethics Committee and the Corporate Secretary, except for the statement of intent, the answers to the three questions, the biography and the disclosures, which are published for candidates on the ballot.

6. Voting

- **When.** The ballot opens Wednesday, November 18 at 9:00 am PT and closes Monday, November 23 at 5:00 pm PT. The deadline is strictly enforced.
- **How.** Votem, an independent election administrator, emails each eligible voter a unique voting credential (and a text message where a mobile number is on file). Vote online from any device, or by telephone using the number in the voting instructions. One ballot per voter; vote for one candidate. Reminders are sent to voters who have not yet voted. No proxies.
- **Secrecy.** The administrator holds voter identity and ballot content separately. USA Surfing can see who has voted, never how.
- **Help.** Voters who do not receive a credential, or have trouble voting, contact the administrator at usasurfing@votem.com or by the telephone number in the voting instructions.
- **Result.** The candidate receiving the highest number of votes cast is elected. There is no minimum number of ballots required for the election to be valid.
- **Ties.** A tie for the seat is decided by a runoff ballot among the tied candidates, open November 26–30, if the result can be certified by December 1. If it cannot, or if the runoff also ties, the seat is decided by lot drawn by the administrator in the presence of the AAC's non-candidate members.
- **Certification.** The administrator reports the results with a signed certification. Provisional results are posted on November 24. After the challenge window, the AAC certifies the result to the Board on December 1, and the Board records it at its annual meeting on December 15. The term begins January 1, 2027.

7. Challenges and grievances

Voter list. An athlete who believes they were omitted from or included in error on the voter list may write to the election administrator at usasurfing@votem.com during the challenge window, November 16–17, stating the grounds. A challenge is timely if the administrator receives it within the window; the administrator forwards it, time-stamped, to the Corporate Secretary. The AAC's non-candidate members decide before the ballot opens.

Candidate eligibility. A nominee found ineligible may ask the AAC's non-candidate members, in writing to usasurfing@votem.com by November 17, to reconsider, stating the grounds.

Results. A challenge to the provisional results must be in writing to usasurfing@votem.com by 5:00 pm PT on November 26, stating the grounds; the administrator forwards it to the Corporate Secretary at once. The AAC's non-candidate members rule by November 28. Any further grievance, and any complaint about how the election is administered, is brought under the USA Surfing Complaint Resolution Policy (usasurfing.org/governance/complaint-resolution) through USA Surfing's Corporate Secretary, Mia Gilkerson, mia@usasurfing.org.

8. Roles

Who	Does what
USA Surfing Athletes' Advisory Council (non-candidate members: Candice Appleby, Kolohe Andino, Kaleigh Gilchrist)	Adopts these rules and the timetable; confirms the seat's qualification with the Nominating and Governance Committee; decides eligibility, challenges and ties; certifies the result to the Board. Brett Simpson, as a candidate, takes no part in any decision or in vetting. Two of the three non-candidate members are a quorum for election decisions, which are taken by a majority of those present.
Nominating and Governance Committee	Reviews nominee eligibility jointly with the AAC; sets the requirements for fair administration (Bylaws §6.6).
Ethics Committee	Screens candidate disclosures for conflicts of interest and periods of ineligibility.
Corporate Secretary (Mia Gilkerson)	Maintains the voter list and the record; receives the nominations, challenges and inquiries the administrator forwards; sends notices; is the administrator's point of contact.
Election administrator (Votem)	Emails the call for nominations; receives, acknowledges and checks nominations against the eligible-athlete list; builds and tests the ballot; issues credentials; supports voters; sends reminders; tabulates, reports and certifies the result. Is the single contact for athletes at usasurfing@votem.com and forwards eligibility and voter-list matters to the Corporate Secretary the same day; eligibility is decided by USA Surfing.
Board of Directors	Receives and records the certified result on December 15. The Board does not vote on the Athlete Director seat.

9. Key dates

Date	Step
Monday, November 9	Call for nominations emailed to every athlete on the eligible-athlete file; rules and nomination form posted on usasurfing.org/elections; nominations open
Wednesday, November 11	Nomination reminder
Through Saturday, November 14	Eligible athletes who have not received the call update their contact details with the administrator
Sunday, November 15, 5:00 pm PT	Nominations close
Monday, November 16	Eligibility review of nominees; Ethics screen; nominees notified
November 16–17	Voter-list challenge window
Tuesday, November 17	Candidates, statements, answers to the three questions and disclosures published and sent to voters
Wednesday, November 18, 9:00 am PT	Ballot opens; credentials sent
Friday, November 20 and Monday, November 23 (morning)	Reminders to voters who have not voted
Monday, November 23, 5:00 pm PT	Ballot closes
Tuesday, November 24	Provisional results posted; results challenge window opens
Thursday, November 26, 5:00 pm PT	Results challenges due
November 26–30	Runoff ballot, only if needed
Saturday, November 28	Rulings on challenges
Tuesday, December 1	AAC certifies the result to the Board

Date	Step
Tuesday, December 15	Board records the result at its annual meeting
January 1, 2027	Term begins

10. Upcoming 2027 athlete elections

USA Surfing Athletes' Advisory Council. The Council of six to twelve athletes, including USA Surfing's Representative and Alternate to the Team USA Athletes' Commission, is elected by the athletes. An election will take place in February 2027, with its own call for nominations in January. At least 80% of the Council must be NGB 10 Year Athletes; the remaining seats are open to NGB 10 Year+ Athletes, and 10 Year+ Athletes vote in that election.

Team USA Athletes' Commission Alternate. USA Surfing's Alternate to the Team USA Athletes' Commission is elected in a separate special election run by USA Surfing staff under the Team USA Athletes' Commission election toolkit. Eligibility to run and vote in that election is the USOPC's own 10 Year Athlete definition, which counts only selection to Team USA for a Delegation Event or other international qualifying competition and excludes age-restricted events; membership is not required. The Alternate sits on the AAC and ex officio on the Board.

11. Questions

About eligibility, nominations, the voter list, voting credentials or the ballot: the election administrator, usasurfing@votem.com. Eligibility and voter-list questions are passed to USA Surfing's Corporate Secretary, Mia Gilkerson, the same day. About the Athlete Director role: Candice Appleby, Team USA Athletes' Commission Representative, through usasurfing@votem.com. Complaints about how the election is administered: the Corporate Secretary, mia@usasurfing.org.

Appendix A. Definitions

NGB 10 Year Athlete (USOPC Bylaws, as applied by USA Surfing under its exemption approved by the USOPC's NGB Athlete Representation Review Working Group, Decision Record of February 19, 2026): an athlete who, within the previous ten years, either (i) qualifies as a USOPC 10 Year Athlete, or (ii) competed in at least one of the following: WSL Championship Tour; WSL Challenger Series; WSL Longboard Tour; ISA World Surfing Games; ISA World Longboard Championships; ISA World SUP & Paddleboard Championships; ISA World Para Surfing Championships; USA Surfing Championships; or (iii) competed in the ISA World Junior Surfing Championships or the USA Surfing Junior Championships and placed in the top three.

The ten-year clock. Eligibility begins with the qualifying event and ends on December 31 of the tenth year after the athlete's last qualifying event. It is measured at the time of election; an athlete elected as an NGB 10 Year Athlete serves the full term even if the ten years run out during it.

NGB 10 Year+ Athlete: an athlete who qualified under the definition above, but whose last qualifying event was more than ten years ago.

USOPC 10 Year Athlete (used only for the Team USA Athletes' Commission elections): an athlete selected by the NGB to represent the United States in a Delegation Event, such as the Olympic, Paralympic or Pan American Games, or other international qualifying competition recognized by the USOPC, within the previous ten years. Age-restricted events do not count, and the exemption above does not apply.

Delegation Event: an event to which the USOPC sends a Team USA delegation, as defined in the USOPC Bylaws.