

# WESTERN SURFING ASSOCIATION WSA RULE BOOK

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 8, 2009  
(REV. 9/14/09)



Effective Date 8/8/2009 (revised 9/14/2009) Western Surfing Association Rules of Competition Presented by the WSA Competition Director/Competition Committee

**A. EVENTS (WSA Gatorade Championship Tour)**

The WSA Gatorade Championship Tour is a series of 9 events up and down the California Coast, followed by a West Coast Championship. WSA events are open to everyone willing to pay the entry and membership fee and sign the waiver of liability. Age division events, determined by date of birth as of Jan. 1 of the current competition season (i.e. 2009/2010 age determined as of January 1, 12:01 AM, 2010) (**PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED**)

**B. DIVISIONS**

**1. Girls'/Women's Shortboard**

- Micro Grom Girls/Boys Under 9\*\*\*see \*\*\* footnote
- Boys'/Girls' Shortboard U10 (no adult assist)
- Girls' Shortboard U12\*
- Girls' Shortboard U14\*
- Girls' Shortboard U16\*\*
- Girls' Shortboard U18\*\*
- Jr. Women's Shortboard 18 +\*
- Open Women's Shortboard all ages

**2. Girls'/Women's Longboard**

- Micro Grom Girls/Boys Under 9 Longboard\*\*\*
- Girls' Longboard U14
- Girls' Longboard U18\*
- Open Women's Longboard\*
- Women's Longboard 35+

**3. Boys'/Men's Shortboard**

- Micro Grom Girls/Boys Under 9\*\*\*
- Boys'/Girls' Shortboard U10 (no adult assist)
- Boys' Shortboard U12\*
- Boys' Shortboard U14\*\*
- Boys' Shortboard U16\*\*
- Boys' Shortboard U18\*\*
- Men's Shortboard 18 – 29\*
- Master's Shortboard 30 – 39\*
- Senior Men's Shortboard 40 – 49\*
- Legend's Shortboard 50 & Older\*
- Open Men's Shortboard all ages

**4. Boys'/Men's Longboard**

- Micro Grom Girls/Boys Under 9 Longboard\*\*\*
- Boys' Longboard U14
- Junior's Longboard U18\*
- Open Men's Longboard all ages\* (only participants 18 and over are eligible for USA Championships)
- Sr. Men's Longboard 40 & older\*

**\*Denotes Surfing America USA Championships Divisions** - Top surfers in these divisions will be invited to represent the WSA in the Surfing America USA Championships at the Huntington Beach Pier, June 16 – 19, 2010 with finals at Lower Trestles on June 22, 2010. Top positions will be determined by totaling the best 5 regular season event scores with the West Coast Championship scores. Slot allotments per division are determined by Surfing America.

**\*\* Denotes a Surfing America Prime qualifying divisions** - Top surfers in these divisions will be invited to surf the Surfing America Prime series in 2010/2011 to qualify for the Surfing America USA Championships and USA Surf Team. Top positions will be determined by totaling the best 5 regular season event scores with the West Coast Championship scores. Top surfers in these divisions of WSA will receive periodic invitations to fill open slots as alternates in Surfing America Prime based on their WSA ratings at the time of the opening slots. Slot allotments per division into Surfing America Prime for 2010/2011 are as follows – Boys U18 and Boys U16 – 8 slots each. Boys U14, Girls U18 and Girls U16 – 4 slots each. Surfers in this division will not earn slots into the Surfing America USA Championships. All slots for these divisions into the USA Championships are through Surfing America Prime.

**Surfing America Prime Surfer's Eligibility For Regular WSA** – There are no longer restrictions on Surfing America Prime surfers surfing in regular WSA. Surfing America Prime surfers only hold onto their slots in Prime if they finish in the top half of the ratings. If they are not comfortable with their position they need to make sure they re-qualify through regular WSA or NSSA. This way there are always a set number of slots for WSA surfers to advance into Prime, and the very best surfers in Prime won't feel it is necessary to surf in WSA or NSSA to re-qualify. This is similar to the ASP model with the Championship Tour surfers surfing the World Qualifying Series events to make sure they re-qualify for the Championship Tour if they are on the bubble in the CT ratings.

**\*\*\* Denotes a Micro Grom Division** - Micro Grom Divisions allow adult assistance and push-ins. Surfers will be scored the same whether they catch the wave on their own or are pushed in. Surfers that can consistently catch waves on their own without adult assistance are encouraged to surf up in U10 or U12 divisions. Adult assistants may wear fins, but may not use their own surfboard or any other flotation device. This division is designed to be a fun learning experience. Surfers are encouraged to paddle as much as they can and adult assistant should only help punch through waves and catch waves.

### **C. WEST COAST CHAMPIONSHIPS (WCC) ELIGIBILITY**

All ages are determined as of January 1st of the year of the WCC. Every contestant must have competed in at least 5 WSA championship tour events in order to be eligible for the WCC. You must have surfed 7 (seven) WSA Championship Tour events, plus the WCC, to be eligible for West Coast Champion Titles. Competitors must surf at least five WSA Championship Tour events and the West Coast Championships to be eligible for Surfing America USA Surfing Championships. Top surfers in Boy U14, Boys U16, Boys U18, Girls U16 and Girls U18 are eligible to surf Surfing America Prime Surf Series next season. Some Boys U12 and Girls U14 and U12 may also receive

invitations to surf in Surfing America Prime, but will also be eligible to surf the USA Surfing Championships.

**D. WSA COMPETITION RULEBOOK**

The WSA Competition rules will be posted on the WSA website. You can download and print a copy from the website. A copy of the Rule Book will also be available for review at each event.

**E. EQUIPMENT** (All boards are measured from end to end, using a straight edge).

1. In shortboard age division events, surfboards shall not exceed 18 (eighteen) inches above the competitor's height.
2. Long boards must be a minimum of 9 ft. in length. Boys and Girls Longboard Divisions Under 18 will be at least 3 ft. above the competitor's height.
3. It is recommended and encouraged that all competitors in Surfing America USA Surfing Championship/Surfing America Prime qualifying shortboard divisions surf on modern, high performance equipment.
4. Additional equipment, such as leashes and helmets may be used.

**F. JUDGING AND SCORING,**

1. The subjective judging system will be used (0-10 points using .1 integrals). There will be an active judging panel of three scoring judges and one rotating judge. A Head Judge may be used to oversee the judging panel. One of the 4 scoring judges may be deemed head judge for each panel of judges.
2. When judging surfing, a ride will begin to be scored when a surfer's hands leave the rails of their surfboard.
3. **The judging criteria shall be:**
  - **Shortboarding:** A surfer must perform radical controlled maneuvers in the critical sections of a wave with Speed, Power and Flow to maximize scoring potential. Innovative/ Progressive surfing as well as Variety of Repertoire (maneuvers) will be taken into account when rewarding points for waves ridden. The surfer who executes these criteria with the maximum Degree of Difficulty and Commitment on the waves shall be rewarded with the higher scores.
  - **Longboarding:** A surfer must perform radical controlled maneuvers in the critical sections of a wave with Speed, Power and Flow to maximize scoring potential. Traditional surfing as well as a variety of modern maneuvers will be taken into account when rewarding points for waves ridden. The surfer who executes these criteria with the maximum Degree of Difficulty and Commitment on the waves shall be rewarded with the higher scores.
  - **Fundamental Surfing (Micro Grom, Boys U10, and U12 Divisions):**
    - i. In amateur competition, competitors do not always perform maneuvers. WSA judges are trained to score fundamental surfing. For example: surfers who paddle out and catch open-faced waves will always be scored higher than surfers who catch

- whitewater (waves that have already broken and do not reform into open faced waves).
- ii. The surfer that catches an open faced wave and travels right or left will score higher than a surfer that catches an open face wave and goes neither right or left.
  - iii. The surfer that catches an open-faced wave and performs a maneuver will be scored higher than a surfer that rides an open faced wave right or left but does not perform a maneuver.
  - iv. The surfer that catches an open face wave and travels right or left and attempts to perform a maneuver, but fails by not completing the maneuver at 100 percent (maneuvers must be completed at 100 percent) will normally score higher than the surfer that travels right or left on an open face wave without attempting to perform a maneuver.
  - v. Surfers who perform maneuvers in whitewater will only score higher than surfers who ride whitewater without performing maneuvers. The natural progression of a novice surfer is to catch inside whitewater with assistance, then to catch whitewater without assistance. The next step is to catch waves that have not yet broken (open faced waves). The natural progression of learning to surf is the basis of the criteria for judging fundamental surfing.
4. The individual judge's scores should be consistent with one another. If a judge is consistently inconsistent, he/she may be replaced. Please refer to the ASP Judges Handbook for detailed policy, instructions and guidelines for judging.
  5. The HEAD JUDGE shall oversee and be responsible for:
    - Determining consistency on rides scored
    - Determining wave possession
    - Maintaining an accurate wave count
    - Notifying judges of missed rides
    - Assisting judges in making accurate scores for the missed rides.
  6. The Head Judge cannot call an interference or a paddling interference for the panel as a unit but can do so on his own wave count sheet. The Head Judge can call: an up after the commencement of the next heat penalty and for the removal of jersey penalty.
  7. All missed rides should be indicated by the letter "M" in the appropriate box to be averaged by the Head Judge according to the individual's scoring scale (interpolation). This should be done at or before the end of the heat, as time allows. Judges, who are consistently missing rides, may be replaced.
  8. Wave counts to be used for tabulation of results are 2 highest waves per heat. The Contest Director after consultation with the head judge shall determine the number of high waves per heat to be tabulated and this shall be posted and announced prior to the start of the contest. Upon receipt of the completed judges sheets, the tabulators will immediately check to see if:
    - All judges' sheets have been turned in.
    - The correct number of waves has been scored on each sheet.

- Identify interference or other penalty calls, if any.
  - If a ride has been missed, an attempt will be made to identify the missing rides by referring to the other judge's sheets. If the ride is identified to the satisfaction of the head judge, a score will be given the missed ride by: AVERAGING THE MISSED WAVE ACCORDING TO THE SCORING LEVEL THAT THE JUDGE IN QUESTION USES (INTERPOLATION).
9. Upon completion of these formalities, the judge's sheets may be totaled. The scoring waves shall be circled, totaled, and interference penalties deducted. The total shall be placed in the total column. The heat places are then calculated and entered on the judge's sheet. The competitor with the highest score will receive first place, the second highest will receive second place and so on. If a judge ties two or more competitors, the places awarded to each of the tied competitors will be the average of the affected placing points added together. EXAMPLE: If 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> are tied, add 2, 3, and 4 together (9) and divide by 3 = 3<sup>rd</sup> place for each tied competitor. **PLEASE NOTE:** The head judge, along with a majority of the judges will determine the "official" wave count. When no further calculations are required on the judge's sheets, the results are transcribed on the tally sheet, which is completed in the following manner:
- The competitor's names are entered.
  - The judge's names and or initials are entered on the tally sheet.
  - Places are copied in a row next to each judge.
  - The places are totaled and entered.
  - The competitor who receives the lowest point place total in the final point place column places 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and so on.
10. If, at this point, a tie situation occurs, the tabulator will proceed to break the tie as follows:
- i. Compare the relative position of the tied competitor's on the tabulator sheet using the plus/minus system. If not broken, then see F.10.ii
  - ii. Tabulate the one highest wave on the **TIED** judge's sheet **ONLY**. If the tie still exists see F.10.iii.
  - iii. Go to the second, third, fourth, etc. on the **TIED** judges sheet **ONLY** until the tie is broken.
  - iv. If the tie is not broken by these methods, go back to top 2 waves and repeat the process on **ALL** judge's sheets.
  - v. In the case of three or more athletes tied, repeat this procedure with the goal of deriving one individual who will be the highest placing tied athlete. Once this individual has therefore been eliminated from the procedure, repeat the formulae for the remaining athletes a clear order of finish for the heat is obtained. If the tie is still not broken by these methods, there will be a ten-minute surf off (top 2 waves). The surf off will only take place to determine an advancing surfer.
11. Competitors may check the results for errors for each heat up to twenty minutes after those results are made public. This applies to all heats, including finals. If an error is found, the contest director should

be notified to have the error corrected. Unless there is an unresolved protest, all results become final after the twenty- minute time period.

**G. WAVE POSSESSION, INTERFERENCE AND PENALTIES**

1. **Right of Way** - Wave possession or right of way in these situations will vary slightly under the following categories as determined by the nature of the contest venue. Basically it is the responsibility of the judge to determine which surfer has the inside position based on whether the wave is a superior right or left, but never on which surfer is first to their feet. If at the initial point of take-off neither the right nor left can be deemed superior, then the right of way will go to the first surfer who makes a definite turn in their chosen direction.
2. **Point Break** - When there is only one available direction on any given wave, the surfer on the inside shall have unconditional right of way for the entire duration of that wave.
3. **Reef or Beach Break**
  - i. **One Peak Situation** - If there is a single well defined peak with both a left and a right available, at the initial point of take-off and neither the right or left can be deemed superior then the right of way will go to the first competitor who makes a definite turn in their chosen direction (by making an obvious right or left turn). A second surfer may go in the opposite direction on the same wave without incurring a penalty, providing they do not interfere with the first surfer who has established right of way (i.e. they may not cross the path of first surfer in order to gain the opposite side of the peak unless they do so without possibly hindering, in the majority of judges opinion, the inside surfer).
  - ii. **Multiple Peak Situations**
    1. With multiple random peaks wave possession may vary slightly according to the nature of an individual wave:
    2. With two peaks, there will be cases where one swell will have two separate, defined peaks far apart that eventually meet at some point. Although two surfers may each have inside position on those respective peaks, the surfer who is first to their feet shall be deemed to have wave possession and the second surfer must give way by cutting back or kicking out before hindering the right of way surfer. Two surfers stand at the same time on two separate peaks that eventually meet, then:
    3. If they both give way by cutting back or kicking out, so that neither is hindered, there will be no penalty.
    4. If they cross paths and collide or hinder one another, the judges will penalize the surfer who has been the aggressor at the point of contact.
    5. If neither surfer gives way, by cutting back or kicking out, and both share responsibility for the confrontation, then a double interference will be called.

**4. SNAKING**

The surfer who is farthest inside at the initial point of take-off and has established wave possession is entitled to that wave for the duration of their

ride, even though another surfer may subsequently take off behind them. The judges will not penalize the surfer because they have right of way even though they are in front. The second surfer has not hindered the original surfer with right of way, then the judges may choose not to penalize them and will score both surfers' rides. If, in the opinion of the judges, the second surfer has interfered with (snaked) the original surfer with right of way, by causing them to pull out or lose the wave, then interference may be called on the second surfer, even though they were behind the first when the penalty was called.

#### **5. PADDLING INTERFERENCE**

Another surfer paddling for the same wave should not excessively hinder a surfer who has inside position. A paddling interference may be called if:

- i. The offending surfer makes contact with or forces the inside surfer to change their line while paddling to catch the wave causing possible loss of scoring potential.
- ii. The offending surfer obviously causes a section to break down in front of the inside surfer which would not normally have done so causing loss of scoring potential.
- iii. When a surfer is put in a position while paddling out that they cannot get out of the way and a collision happens due to this, it is up to a majority of the judges to call interference based on whether it is felt to be accidental or not.

#### **6. INTERFERENCE PENALTY**

If a majority of judges call interference, then that wave will count in the final tally as a zero score. This applies to a riding interference or a paddling interference. A majority of judges must call the interference for it to count. Interference will be shown as a triangle on each judge's scorecard, (the triangle placed around their score if caused by riding, above their score if they ride a wave but cause interference while paddling for that wave ridden, or between scores if caused by paddling for that ride) with an arrow drawn to the rider's score who was interfered on.

- i. **Under 2 best waves, the interfering surfer will be penalized with a loss of 50% of his second best scoring wave. The wave that the interference was called on by the majority of the judges will count in the final tally as a zero. If this surfer incurs another interference penalty during the same heat his best wave score will be halved also.**
- ii. Any interfering surfer must be penalized and a drop-in decision once made is irrevocable. All discussion about an interference call must be directly with the Head Judge, if he wishes to discuss the situation. The rider who is interfered with will be allowed an additional wave beyond their wave maximum, within the prescribed time limit. Exception to this is a double interference where neither surfer gets an extra wave. An extra wave or heat delay as decided by the Head Judge at the time will also apply to interference from water photographers, water security personnel or other outside interference. Where any surfer incurs two or more interference penalties they must immediately leave the competition area. Failure to do so may result in banishment from future WSA events.

## H. HEAT PREPARATION AND STRUCTURE

1. All contestants must report to the ready area 15 minutes prior to the start of their heat to be checked in and receive their instructions. When possible, the competition area will be defined by the use of flags, barriers, points, piers, jetty's and/or buoys. In the event a competitor does not check in by the 5-minute warning, their position will be given to the first alternate. There will be no refunds of entry fees for missed heats. Any contestant arriving late for their heat may compete in the remainder of their heat if space available. Posted heat times are subject to change. It is the surfer's responsibility to remain on the beach in the contest area so they are aware of changes. Heats will only be rerun under extreme circumstances and only if all judges and participants agree to the rerun. All heats will be 15 minutes. Administration's time clock will be deemed the "official time," regardless. A 'buffer' delay between heats ending and heats starting of no more than 5 seconds is highly recommended. This helps alleviate the possibility of an 'up after' penalty. All heats will start and stop with 2 blasts of the horn. One horn will signify 5 minutes remaining in the heat in progress.
2. Heats will consist of a 4-person or 6-person format. There will be 50% advancement from each heat. (2 of 4, 3 of 5, etc.)
3. If a contestant misses their 1st round heat, they will not be allowed to enter in a second round heat, even if space is available. There will be no refunds of entry fees for missed heats.
4. **WATER START** - All heats will begin with two blasts of the horn and/or the raising of the green flag or change of color of the competition 'disc or sign' to green. The raising of the yellow flag, or change to yellow on the disc/sign and one blast of the horn will indicate the five-minute warning. At the five-minute warning, the next heat of competitors may start paddling to the designated standby area, being careful not to interfere with the heat in progress. When the horn sounds ending the heat in progress, the standby heat may paddle into the take off zone, but not catch any waves until the horn sounds starting their heat. Surfers up before or after the start of their heat or the next heat may be penalized.
5. **BEACH START** - All competitors in the "on deck" heat may gather at the waters edge anytime between the five-minute warning for the "heat in progress" (raising of the yellow flag/change to yellow on the disc) and the start of their heat. Competitors must go no further than ankle deep water before the start of the heat. The "heat in progress" will end with two horn blasts. The "on deck" heat will begin with two horn blasts and/or the raising of the green flag/change to green on the disc.
6. **BUOY START** - In the instance of exceptionally large surf or an extremely long or difficult paddle to the line up, a buoy technique may be employed with the competitors "on deck" using a marker buoy, located some distance from the line up, instead of the water's edge for a starting point for their heat. The flag, horn and timing system are the same as used in other types of starts.
7. **END OF HEAT** - When the heat has ended with two blasts of the

horn, competitors are required to paddle, ride prone, or on their knees, (WITH NO MANEUVERS) to the beach when the signal is given that their heat has ended. All heats end with two blasts from the horn and the change of the flag or disc from yellow to green. The count-down clock is provided as a convenience. It is up to the individual competitor to keep track of time remaining in their heat with their own watch or by watching the flag or disc.

8. **DANGER OR PROBLEM** - In the event of danger or a problem, there shall be multiple blasts from the horn and/ or the red flag or disc will be raised. All competitors must leave the water immediately under this condition. If a competitor starts a scoreable ride after their heat ends, they must return to the non-scoreable position before the start of the next heat or risk being penalized.
9. **JERSEYS** - All jerseys are to be worn back to the beach where it was received, and returned in a sportsmanlike manner by all competitors. Jerseys must be worn with the imprint clearly showing. (Must not be worn inside out) Any competitor who removes their competition jersey while still in the water may be subject to a 2.5-point penalty.
10. **UP AFTER HORN** - Any competitor who starts surfing after the horns and flag is presented to start the following heat, may be penalized 2.5 points on all judge's sheets. A majority of the judges including the head judge must call the up after. Any wave surfed beyond the wave limit in a heat will not be scored. Every effort will be made to inform the competitor that they have exceeded their wave limit and should return to the beach immediately
11. **COMPETITORS PRACTICING IN COMPETITION AREA** - Any competitors practicing in the competition area or demonstrating unsportsmanlike conduct will be disqualified from the event, loss of points/standing in the event and a possible disqualification for the next event.

**I. SPORTSMANSHIP CLAUSE:** No official of an event, in any capacity, shall at any time be subjected to unsportsmanlike conduct in either word or deed. Any display of poor sportsmanship by either a competitor or, in the case of a minor, the competitor's parent, shall be cause for automatic dismissal of the competitor from the contest. This also applies to unsportsmanlike conduct directed to another competitor by any WSA competitor. A second infraction will result in dismissal for the remainder of the season.

**J. AWARDS:** Awards will be presented to all finalists.

**K. COMPLAINTS AND PROTESTS:** Complaints and protests by competitors shall be in writing and handed to the WSA Competition Director/Contest Director before action can be taken. All written protests must be received within 20 minutes of the heat results being made public. The WSA Competition Director, Contest Director, and/or The HEAD JUDGE will handle all written protests. **THEIR DECISION WILL BE FINAL.** Videotape of the wave(s) will not be watched or considered by the judges. No heat that involves a competitor whose advancement is under protest will take place prior to the resolution of the protest.

**L. JUDGES CODE OF ETHICS** - Judging schedule will be posted by the Head Judge each morning with heat schedule. Failure of any judge to fulfill

his/her obligation will lead to immediate dismissal and forfeiture of any payment due. This would include, but not be limited to: tardiness, excessive low percentages, inability to score accurately, failure to consistently call interference calls, discussion outside panel of competitor's scores, interference calls, quality of administration and performance of the event. Each judge may be required to submit a reference sheet, a letter of recommendation, and sign a contract with the competition director and/or judging coordinator (head judge). It is recommended that judges selected to premier and post season competitions be the highest qualified experienced individuals that can be obtained by utilizing a performance formulae based on previous experience, deportment, and adherence to the ASP judges course, without regard to geographical location.

1. **Head Judge Position of the WSA:** Acts, when at all possible as Head Judge to premier and post season events. The Competition Director or Contest Director of the WSA assigns this position.

**M. WSA Surfing America USA Championships Slots:**

1. **Slots Available:** As the official West Coast member association of Surfing America, WSA will receive a large percentage of the slots allocated for the Surfing America USA Championships. Slots in Surfing America USA Championships available to WSA surfers will be determined by Surfing America at their spring board meeting. The slots will be awarded per section M.2.i.1 below.
2. **Slot Allocation to WSA Competitors:** Slots will be given to the competitors in each division with the highest season points total based on their top 5 events plus their West Coast Championship points with the exception of Surfing America Prime divisions:
  - Boys U18
  - Boys U16
  - Boys U14
  - Girls U18
  - Girls U16
3. **Surfing America USA Championships Eligibility:** Competitors must surf at least five WSA Championship Tour events and the West Coast Championships to be eligible for Surfing America USA Surfing Championships.
4. **Slot Allocation to WSA Competitors in Surfing America Prime Divisions -** Top competitors in these divisions:
  - Boys U18
  - Boys U16
  - Boys U14
  - Girls U18
  - Girls U16

will fill open slots in Surfing America Prime for the following season. . Slot allotments per division into Surfing America Prime for 2010/2011 are as follows – Boys U18 and Boys U16 – 8 slots each. Boys U14, Girls U18 and Girls U16 – 4 slots each. WSA surfers in these divisions cannot advance directly to the USA Championships. The only invitations to USA Championships in these divisions go to surfers in Surfing America Prime.