



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

This week 114 surfers on the East Coast and 120 surfers on the West Coast received invitations to surf in the elite USA Surfing Prime Series competition – a 9-stop bi-coastal tour featuring the top-ranked surfers in the nation.

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.

USA Surfing's Prime Series events mirror the format, and professional judging and staffing of pro-level, elite competitions. The elevated competitive experience is designed to prepare young surfers to compete in the bigger leagues of surfing at an international level.

Prime Series surfers on both coasts compete for points that accumulate throughout the season to earn coveted spots to surf in the "Super Bowl" of under 18 surfing - the USA Surfing Championships held at Lower Trestles in June featuring the top surfers from the East and West Coasts, Texas Gulf, and Hawaii.

The 2024-25 schedule includes the following locations:

East Coast

October 19-20, 2024 – Atlantic City, NJ

February 22-23, 2025 – Ponce Inlet, Fla. (with NSB as back up pending forecast)

March 1-2, 2025 – Jacksonville, Fla.

May 17-18, 2025 – Jenette's Pier, Nags Head, NC

West Coast

October 26-27, 2024 – Oceanside Jetty

November 23-24, 2024 – Pismo Beach Pier

February 1-2, 2025 – Oceanside Pier

March 8-9, 2025 – Steamer Lane, Santa Cruz

April 12-13, 2025 – Huntington Beach Pier

Please see FAQ on how surfers qualify and how the competitions are run.



PRIME SERIES FAQ

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 venues that host WSL QS events, offer strong competition wave conditions, and parent survey responses requesting more variety in geography. The cost of permitting and host city amenities and surf-specific resources also play a role in our decision. The dates were chosen to take advantage of optimal daylight hours and seasonal wave conditions to accommodate the number of heats at each event. Head coach and competition director Ryan Simmons consulted tide charts to identify prime conditions.

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.

This year we will be creating more opportunities for surfers to learn about judging criteria and see real-life examples of how it is applied. You will also see judges in training shadowing events to ensure we have a high-quality pipeline of judges that cover key regions where events are held. With an increasing number of surf events across the nation, we want to ensure we have a strong force of judges available to give surfers the kind of feedback needed to progress and prove themselves. One of the reasons we want to livestream more events is to provide greater transparency and teachable moments for surfers, parents, fans, and judges themselves.

Are membership and registration fees going up this year?

There is a modest increase in membership and registration fees based on parent survey feedback indicating a willingness to pay more to sustain and improve USA Surfing's service to surfers and our sport. 24-25 entry fees are \$160 and annual Prime Competitor membership is \$125.

USA Surfing researched membership and event registration fees for similar organizations and events and set our price point at or below others in the field. There are also active fundraising and sponsorship efforts underway to improve service to surfers and sport without putting the cost of participation out of reach.

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 live scoring system are you using this year? What will change for parents and surfers?

USA Surfing moved to a customized, premium version of Liveheats. The change is based on parent survey responses, upgrades in Liveheats features and customer service, and USA Surfing's future plans to livestream events. Most families will already have a Liveheats account. If not, it is easy to create one and register for events through the link provided in your Prime email invitation. Previous registration platforms charged service fees for athletes. With Liveheats, athletes will only be charged the entry fee.

Liveheats has robust customer service and [online help center](#) and mia@usasurfing.org will help you with any questions.

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

This year surfers will be required to surf in their birth-year age division only (no “surfing up”). The policy is based on coach observations and CT/QS surfers' and parent feedback about the need to strengthen the kind of maturity and focus required to succeed as athletes and developing teens. The 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.

The following opportunity is available for the highest achievers to earn their way into competing in an older age division:

A Prime Series competitor who wins 3 of 5 Prime Series events in their age division on the west coast and 3 of 4 on the east coast, may “surf up” at USA Surfing Champs in June and in the following Prime Series season.

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

What are the qualifying pathways for the Prime Series?

USA Surfing's Prime Series is an elite youth surf competition tour, inviting the top-ranked surfers on each coast to compete in events that mirror the format, and professional judging and staffing of pro-level, elite competitions. The elevated competitive experience is designed to prepare young surfers to compete in the bigger leagues of surfing at an international level.

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:

- The first slots will come from those surfers that requalify from the existing Prime field. To determine the top percentage of surfers' season-ending rank, we age up/out the surfers in each division. For the surfers that age up we keep 80% of their points, then reseed the division based on that calculation and then make the 50% cut line. So if they make the top 50% in U14, and age up to U16 they can still fall below the 50% and not requalify. If surfers are aging out of a division, 80% of their younger-age division end-of-season points are factored among the age division's prior season rankings.
- Upon calculating Prime Series requalifiers for competitors in each age division for the new season, Membership and athlete services specialist Mia Gilkerson and competition director Ryan Simmons determine the space available for the new season's qualifiers, which are drawn from each regional surfing association as follows:
 - o **WSA** qualification is based on the 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** qualifiers this year were taken from the top finishers from their three regional competitions.

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. If only one member org surfer gets in a division then the member orgs may garner the first alternate spot. Otherwise prime surfers are given first 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. IF a competitor doesn't compete in event one, they will retain their original seed just for event two.
- Event three seeding is determined by the combined results of events one and two.
- Event four seeding draws on the best two out of three event results to determine seed order.

- Event five seeding is based on the surfer's best 3 of 4 event results.

if a surfer misses events 1,2 and 3, they will be replaced with the highest ranked alternate for the remainder of the season and will go to the bottom of alternate order. Alternates will stay in their original order for the full year. If an alternate surfs in three 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. Membership and athlete services specialist Mia Gilkerson and competition director Ryan Simmons maintain an alternate list that 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 vacancies with surfers who are not on the alternate list.

How are alternates determined?

The USA Surfing competition committee looked at all available daylight hours during each Prime Series competition and the time needed to run heats with some buffer for fog or other weather delays. Slots were allotted based on the field size of each division to requalify a majority of Prime surfers in each division. Secondly the Member organizations filled between 1-4 slots per division. If any member org slots did not fill up division and there are leftovers, those member orgs surfers will start the alternate list. If all the member org slots are filled in a division then the Prime NON requalifiers will start the alternate list.

How do you qualify for USA Surfing Championship at Lovers?

Based on the days/times provided by State Parks, Membership and athlete services specialist Mia Gilkerson and competition director Ryan Simmons start by determining the number of heats that can be run each day of Champs at Lovers. This determines the allowable number of competitors (building in time for fog and other delays).

Historically, 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 Lovers. Prime surfers must have results for 3 of 4 Prime Series events on the East Coast and 3 of 5 on the West Coast. Qualifying spots are 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 2-7 slots, and WSA/TSGA/NSSA E&W received 2 slots.

How do you qualify for USA Surfing junior national teams?

The 2024 junior team qualification criteria are posted [here](#) .

When will there be a mid-season call up opportunity for Prime Series surfers to make the junior national team through their performances during the new season?

Head coach Ryan Simmons will make a final determination as the season progresses and when the International Surfing Association selects a date for the World Junior Championship event. It will likely be December/January. Upon announcement of the dates and venue for the ISA World Junior Championship, criteria for making the ISA team will be posted.

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 and more. The season will start with a Zoom with Coach Courtney Conlogue providing 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.

What is the code of conduct for surfers?

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

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 athlete, coach, trainer, agent, athlete 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. Live in a stop on our tour? We'd love local help connecting with hotels, restaurants, gyms 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?

More items are being added to USA Surfing's store. Check out the cozy, soft sweatshirt designed by team members to celebrate 2024: <https://www.usasurfing.org/store.html>

How do I file a complaint or resolve a dispute?

Executive director Becky Fleischauer's email is becky@usasurfing.org You can also visit the section on our website - [Complaints](#)