

# **NSSA Rule Book 2026-27**

## **(some revisions are in progress)**

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### **NATIONAL SCHOLASTIC SURFING ASSOCIATION**

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#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The NSSA is a non profit organization whose mission is to encourage and assist its members in their interest to learn and develop the fundamentals and skills of surfing competition while competing in structured and quality events. The NSSA promotes the qualities of discipline and competitive excellence while supporting the merits of academic achievement to young surfers. The NSSA will strive to provide a fun surfing experience for all of its members.

The NSSA is one of the few national youth sports organizations that require its participants to maintain academic standards in order to compete. Since 1978, the NSSA program philosophy has been that athletics and scholastics go hand in hand.

#### **Association Structure**

1. The National Scholastic Surfing Association is a non-profit corporation, incorporated in California.
2. The purpose of the NSSA is to promote the sport of surfing; provide top quality, structured events and encourage the merits of academic achievement for the benefit of its members.
3. All organizational aspects of the Association are set from within the Bylaws/Constitution of the Association. The Association is governed by the terms of the bylaws.
4. The day-to-day operations of the NSSA in conformity with the Bylaws/Constitution and policies set by the Board of Directors, will be managed by an Executive Director. The Executive Director will supervise and regulate the affairs of the National Office, NSSA Staff, Regional Conferences, NSSA promotions, sponsorship program, the National Championships, West Coast Championships, East Coast Championships, Hawaiian Championships and the NSSA JR. Championships.
5. NSSA corporate procedure and program inquiries can be directed to Janice Aragon, Executive Director, NSSA National Office Headquarters (714) 906-7423.
6. Use of NSSA Logo
  - a. NSSA official logo may be used only to promote a NSSA National or Conference event. Use by NSSA sponsors are subject to sponsor agreements. Other usage must be approved by the NSSA Executive Director.

#### **NSSA NATIONAL AGE DIVISIONS - Ages as of 1/1/27**

- a. Open Season: Mens all ages, Juniors U16, Boys U14, Mini Groms Boys U12, U10 Boys, Women all ages, Girls U16, Super Girls U14, Mini Grom Girls U12, U10 Girls, Longboard all ages. Mens, Juniors and Boys, Mini Grom, U10 Boys divisions are open to male competitors only. Womens, Girls, Super Girls, Mini Grom Girls, U10 Girls is open to female competitors only. Longboard are open to male and female competitors.

b. Explorer Season: Men all ages, Juniors U18 (17&under), Boys U15 (14&under), Menehuene U13 (12&under), Super Groms U11 (10&under), Women all ages, Girls U15 (14&under), Super Girls U13 (12&under), Masters 25 & up, Seniors 35 & up, Super Seniors 45 & up, Duke 55 & up, Longboard all ages, Womens Longboard all ages, SUP all ages. Mens, Juniors, Boys, Menehuene, Masters, Seniors and Super Seniors are open to male competitors only. Womens, Girls, Super Girls and Womens Longboard are open to female competitors only. Super Grom, Duke, Longboard and SUP is open to male and female competitors.

c. Competitors may surf up into more competitive age divisions (ie. Open Juniors may surf up into Open Mens, etc.).

### **Conference Structure**

#### **1. Conference Set Up**

a. Conferences can only be set up directly through the NSSA National Office.

b. Conferences may run and sanction NSSA events only, unless obtaining approval from the NSSA Executive Director.

c. NSSA National Office owns all rights with respect to all NSSA Conferences and Conference events. Regional Conference sponsorship and event rights may be acquired and must be approved by the NSSA Executive Director.

d. Conference Director - Shall be responsible for the overall day to day operation of the conference and it's events. This includes event coordination, staffing, schedules and competitor's ratings. Reports directly to the NSSA Executive Director.

e. Event Signage - NSSA sponsors to be prominently displayed at all NSSA National and Regional Conference events with regards to contractual agreements.

#### **2. Event Staffing**

a. Contest Director - Is responsible to ensure the surfing aspect of the event runs on schedule and according to the rules and that the staff is not making any errors. The contest director is the only person who can give the exact schedule of events however information provided by the Beach Marshal and the contest heat board will be considered official. If any other employee or official of the event is asked and wrong information is received, subsequently missing a heat or some other problem, then the competitor has no form of protest. If the Contest Director gives wrong information and a competitor subsequently misses a heat, then a re-surf must occur. The Contest Director reports to the NSSA Conference Director.

b. Head Judge - Shall be in charge of the staff of judges for each event. Is responsible for keeping number of waves caught by each competitor, calls colors of competitors catching waves, keeps the judging panel alert, quiet, orderly and attentive to each competitors ride. Is responsible for enforcing NSSA National competition rules. Reports directly to the Contest Director.

c. Judge - Reports directly to Head Judge. Is responsible for scoring each contestant's rides in accordance with the NSSA competition rules. Shall make interference calls in accordance with the NSSA Competition rules. Is also responsible for correct wave counts.

d. Beach Marshal - Is responsible for calling up heats (unless there is an announcer) and checking in competitors before their heat. Will hand out contest jerseys and will ensure each competitor has correct color. Will be present to brief contestants if they inquire about any special instructions. Will ensure all alternates are correctly entered into heats where available. Will take in all protests and deliver them to the Head Judge. Will announce results of each heat. Is ultimately responsible for the correct timing of each heat and will ensure the flag is properly changed.

e. Tabulator - Is responsible for tabulation of each heat and advancements. Will update the heat board within a reasonable time. Will ensure tabulated heat sheets are turned into the Beach Marshal after every heat. In team events, will also maintain team points.

#### **3. Seeding Rules**

a. The seeding order for the first round is determined by current ratings points.

b. Second round seeding will be determined from round one placings. Third round seeding will be determined from round two placings, etc.

c. The seeding order for round one of the NSSA Regional Championships will be determined by conference season ending ratings points. Seeding after round one will be determined as per rule b. above.

d. The seeding order for round one of the NSSA National Championships will be determined by combining the conference season ending ratings points with the Regional Championships points. Seeding after round one will be determined as per rule b. above.

e. Seeding for the first event of the upcoming season in each conference including all disciplines - Open, Explorer and College will use the prior season's season ending points which will include the Regional Championship/ and or State Championship points from that year. National Championship results are not used for seeding purposes for the first event of the upcoming season's conference season opener in any disciplines (Open, Explorer and College).

#### 4. Ratings Points

a. Conferences will decide the amount of events that will count in determining the year end ratings for each competitor.

b. Points Allocation to determine ratings points for the regular season is as follows: "3000" points from the points rankings established in the WSL Rule Book.

c. NSSA Regional Championships will be "WSL Challenger Series" points rated. Points allocated from the points rankings established in the WSL Rule Book.

d. From round one, a competitor may check in and receive ratings points. If a competitor intends to check in for his heat but not surf, he may receive ratings points but he can be replaced by the next eligible surfer. Check in procedures to collect ratings points for non attendance, injury, non participation, etc may vary in different conferences so competitor must get required check in rules from the conference director for regular season events. Check with conference director for ratings point allotment for non attendance, injury, non participation, etc. The NSSA National Office and conferences have the right to grant ratings points for non attendance when member is attending an official NSSA authorized event (must be authorized through the National Office). The NSSA National Office has the right to grant ratings points for non attendance of the Regional Championships when member is enduring a serious medical condition which would make traveling an extremely difficult hardship or an extreme circumstance which results in non attendance. Member must get approval from the Executive Director for non-attendance of the Regional Championships prior to the actual event.

e. Any competitor once eliminated can not reenter the event for any reason unless there is less than 50% advancement in a heat due to non participation. Only event directors have the authority to advance a high 3rd place (in a 4-man format) or a high 4th place (in a 6-man format) from a prior heat into the next round. This is applicable for a division's first round heats only. This is not applicable or permitted in any interscholastic team events or any NSSA Championships Events.

f. The following season ratings for the first event of the season will be based on the prior season conference ratings. The National Championships do not go towards conference ratings points.

#### **Competitor Obligations to Events**

##### 1. MEMBERSHIP FEE/FORM REQUIREMENT

a. All competitors and participants are required to become current members of NSSA prior to competing in any NSSA event. Competitor and participant must pay annual NSSA membership fee in accordance with the conference/region they wish to compete in. Applicable membership fees must be paid to the NSSA National Office.

b. Competitor will not be allowed to compete in any NSSA event until their membership is paid and current. If a competitor is found non-compliant with membership registration, he/she will be suspended from NSSA competition until rectified. In the case of Interscholastic Team Surfing events (College/High School/Middle School), the team is responsible for the payment of all membership violations. The team will not be allowed to participate in any future event until the membership has been paid of non NSSA members and the membership violations have been rectified.

c. NSSA membership and/or entry forms must contain a waiver for the NSSA's protection. It is the conference director's responsibility to make sure the waiver is signed before the surfer competes.

d. It is a member's responsibility to enter events they wish to compete in before the contest deadline dates. Conference directors may have to limit contest entries due to beach permit regulations and/or may have to close contest entries due to participation numbers.

## 2. ENTRY FEE REQUIREMENT

- a. Entry fees are set yearly by each conference according to its operational budget.
- b. Competitors must be current members in good standing.
- c. There are no entry fee refunds or transfers unless a doctor's note is presented.
- d. Phone entries will not be accepted.
- e. You must pay correct fees before being entered into a heat.
- f. Once your entry has reached the office, you are considered entered into that event.
- g. If you miss your heat, you will have to repay the entry fee to be put into another heat.
- h. Bounced checks will require payment for amount plus twenty five dollars before member is allowed to participate in any NSSA event. Payment must be made by cash or money order. Checks will not be accepted by anyone who has previously bounced a check.
- i. Upon entering any event including the NSSA East Coast, West Coast, Hawaii and/or National Championships, if a competitor chooses not to compete for any reason other than serious injury or illness, he will not receive a refund or transfer. A doctor's note is required for refund or transfer.
- j. If you are seriously injured or ill and have turned in a doctor's note, you may do one of the following:
  - i. Receive a refund
  - ii. Receive points for the event (ratings point allotment for non attendance can vary in each conference due to division size, etc. Check with Conference Director regarding ratings point allotment for non attendance).
  - iii. Transfer your entry to another event
- k. Competitors who have been assessed with any fine will be required to pay amount before being allowed to participate in any future NSSA event.
- l. Competitors are responsible for picking up or making arrangements for pick up of any trophies given out at all NSSA events and championships. Trophies may not be stored so competitors must pick up trophies at any events or championships they compete in.

## 3. NSSA ACADEMIC RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

### a. *NSSA OPEN SEASON* (College, High School, Middle/Jr. High, Elementary), *NSSA INTERSCHOLASTIC SEASON*

- i. Full time student each semester, trimester or quarter in good standing (minimum of three courses in high school or two academic courses in college per grading period in the academic year (fall, winter and spring quarter defines the academic year). Students in their last year of instruction must submit a letter on official letterhead from the school if they are taking under the three course minimum (two course for college) for completion of graduation requirement.
- ii. A minimum 2.0 term GPA in the most recently completed grading period. (ie. if your school is on the quarter system and your fourth quarter grade report has not been completed you would submit the third quarter grade report. If your school is on the semester system and the second semester has not been completed, you submit the first semester grade report. The NSSA will honor Physical Education in the grade point average only if the school counts it.)

### b. *NSSA EXPLORER SEASON REQUIREMENTS*

- i. 18 & under-Full time student in good standing (minimum of three courses in high school, middle/jr. high, or elementary per grading period and carrying a minimum 2.0 cumulative G.P.A. or completion of high school (diploma or equivalent).)

ii. Over 18-No academic requirements.

*c. PRIVATE SCHOOL, HOME SCHOOL, INDEPENDENT STUDY REQUIREMENTS FOR NSSA OPEN SEASON, EXPLORER SEASON (18 & under) AND NSSA JR.*

i. *Private School* - See Rule 3.a.&b.

ii. *Independent Study, Home School* (through parent, private agency, county/state program, etc.) - Students must be involved in a full time program with a minimum of three courses that include Reading/Writing, Mathematics, and Social Studies/History. Minimum 2.0 G.P.A. required (may include physical education). Non graded programs must indicate a minimum satisfactory progress in Reading/Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies/History. Minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA required (may include physical education if it is computed into your GPA by the agency you work through). NOTE: students involved in home schooling programs based on the "Carnegie Units System" must complete a minimum of 3 carnegie units per semester or grading period in order to be considered a full time student in the NSSA. These courses must lead to the completion of graduation requirements.

d. The NSSA realizes that course and g.p.a. requirements/ calculations may differ from state to state. NSSA members are responsible for meeting the standards set within the state as well as the NSSA's minimum requirements as stated herein.

*e. VERIFICATION OF ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS*

i. Students may be asked to provide a copy of their last completed report card or grade report by the Executive Director or the NSSA Academic Advisor if there is evidence of academic violations. Executive Director will consult with the Academic Advisor for any possible academic requirement violations. Failure to do so upon request will result in suspension of NSSA membership privileges and a total loss of ratings points, event placings and championship participation.

*f. ACADEMIC VERIFICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE NSSA NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC, OPEN, AND EXPLORER CHAMPIONSHIPS.*

i. Public/Private School-All participants must submit their most recently completed official report card or grade report demonstrating all academic requirements as set forth in Rule 3.a.&b. Progress reports are not acceptable. Proper grade report must be turned in by the National Championship deadline date or member will not be eligible to compete.

ii. Independent Study-All participants must submit their most recently completed official grade report demonstrating all academic requirements as set forth in Rule 3.c.ii. Grade report must be on official letterhead and signed by an agency administrator including a phone number for verification. Proper grade report must be turned in by the National Championship deadline date or member will not be eligible to compete.

iii. Home School (by parent or agency)-All participants must submit their most recently completed official grade report demonstrating all academic requirements as set forth in Rule 3.c.ii. Grade report must be on official letterhead and signed by a school/agency official. Parent supervised home study must include a description of the students performance demonstrating all academic requirements as set forth in Rule 3.c.ii. Proper grade report must be turned in by the National Championship deadline date or member will not be eligible to compete.

*g. ACADEMIC PROBATIONS/ACADEMIC VIOLATIONS*

i. If it comes to the attention of the NSSA National Office or conference director that a member's G.P.A. has fallen below the NSSA minimum cumulative 2.0, the member will be placed on academic probation. Member will be required to submit a grade check on formal school letterhead 3-4 weeks subsequent to the disclosure. If the G.P.A. does not return to a minimum cumulative 2.0, the member will be ineligible to compete in any NSSA event, including championships, until G.P.A. reaches the NSSA minimum.

ii. Non compliance of the academic requirements by any NSSA member who has participated in the NSSA Open Explorer, Interscholastic or NSSA Jr. Season will result in a total loss of ratings points, event placings and championship participation.

*h. FALSIFICATION OF ACADEMIC INFORMATION/GRADE REPORTS*

i. Any attempt to falsify/forged academic information and/or grade reports by members, family, friends, etc. will result in immediate suspension of membership privileges of the involved member for a minimum of one year with no refunds of any fees paid to the NSSA including forfeiture of National Championship entry fees. The involved member will be billed for all expenses incurred during verification of information that results in the finding of false/forged academic information and/or grade reports.

#### 4. NSSA ELIGIBILITY RULES (Financial Benefits, Earnings, etc.)

- a. Eligibility for entry in any NSSA event shall not be based on any financial consideration.

#### 5. BEACH RULES

- a. Surfers must clear the contest area prior to the start of the first heat. Any member surfing in the contest area will be fined and also will be subject to removal from the contest in progress and/or any future events as determined by the Contest Director and/or Executive Director.
- b. Competitors are required to check in with the Beach Marshal by the five minute warning or they may be replaced by an alternate.
- c. Alternates will be put in on a first come, first serve basis and re seeding of the division could happen prior to the event in progress.
- d. It is the competitor's responsibility to understand any and all competition rules during the event including wave count, timing, heat start, etc. It is the competitors responsibility to check in with the beach marshal a minimum of five minutes prior to his/her heat regarding all beach rules including any changes made due to extraordinary circumstances.
- e. The NSSA reserves the right to refuse participation of any individual or group whose conduct is not consistent with improving the image of the sport of surfing.

### JUDGING

#### 1. SELECTION OF JUDGES

- a. Attempt shall be made to ensure that no judge has a vested interest.
- b. Judges must make all calls in accordance with the NSSA National competition rulebook or will be subject to removal from the panel.
- c. No judge of a NSSA event may pass comment on a surfer's chances in any event to the public, media or other contestants. If so then that judge may be dismissed from the panel.

#### 2. WAVE SCORING

- a. The wave scoring will be done from 0.1 to 10, broken into decimal increments.

#### 3. CRITERIA

Surfers must perform to the WSL judging key elements to maximize their scoring potential. Judges analyze the following major elements when scoring a Ride:

- Commitment and degree of difficulty
- Innovative and progressive manoeuvres
- Combination of major manoeuvres
- Variety of manoeuvres
- Speed, power and flow

*NOTE:* It's important to note that the emphasis of certain elements is contingent upon the location and the conditions on the day, as well as changes of conditions during the day.

*NOTE:* The following scale may be used to describe a Ride that is scored:

0–1.9 = Poor; 2.0–3.9 = Fair; 4.0–5.9 = Average;

6.0–7.9 = Good; 8.0–10.0 = Excellent

a. 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 this criteria with the maximum degree of difficulty and commitment on the waves shall be rewarded with the higher scores.

#### 4. MISSED WAVE

a. If a judge misses a wave, or part of a wave, he should place an M in the square of the judges sheet, contact the Head Judge immediately and have the wave included into his sheet, by him or the Head Judge on the basis of comparison to the previous rides on the other judges sheets that the Head Judge deems appropriate.

b. If the situation arises where a judge cannot consult with the head judge to compare a missed ride, the tabulator will compare and average the ride in relation to the other judges scores and place a score in the box marked 'M'.

#### 5. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

a. At times errors of special nature occur with respect to judging. This includes but not limited to timing, missed waves, priority errors, etc. The NSSA Head Judge along with the Contest Director may consult with those qualified observers (defined as off-duty judges) who may have witnessed the incident in question.

#### 6. OFFICIALS AND JUDGES BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS

a. No official or judge of an NSSA event may pass comment on a surfer's chances in any event to the public, media or other contestants, or that official or judge may be dismissed from the panel.

b. Only the Head Judge may discuss an interference call with the offending surfer and/or parent.

c. Only the Head Judge may discuss scoring issues with a competitor. The Head Judge has the option to designate another judge to discuss issues regarding wave scores, etc to a competitor and/or parent.

d. Judges and officials are subject to the NSSA Discipline Policy.

e. All judges, officials and event employees are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner and are responsible for their actions before, during and after competitions. Violations of NSSA Rules and/or unsportsmanlike conduct may result in warnings, suspension or expulsion from the NSSA.

f. Judges, officials and event employees are expected to use courtesy, good manners and act responsibly and maturely at event venues.

### 6. COMPETITION RULES

#### 1. FORMAT

a. Competition Rules are governed by the official rules of the World Surf League (WSL) and the NSSA Rules and Regulations which contain those exceptions deemed necessary for a youth surfing program.

b. Advancements in all heats must be at least 50% of the surfers in the heat unless it is a recharge heat.

c. Once you pay the required membership fees and receive a membership card, you are eligible to compete in any and all NSSA conference events.

i. Competitors must pay the required membership fee for the conference he wishes to compete in. If a member wishes to surf in another conference, fees will be applied in accordance with the respective conference's membership requirements.

d. All competitive members must have proof of liability insurance coverage which will be secured through the NSSA National Office.

e. Competitors must wear the competition jersey in the water at all times and not remove jersey until returning to the beach marshal.

f. A maximum of 2 photographers will be allowed in the line-up during a heat. The contest director has the authority to disallow photographers in the line-up if they feel it poses problems to the competitors.

## 2. WAVE COUNT/TIMING

### a. Beach Starts/Water Starts

i. All heats will be started from the beach or the water as directed by the Contest Director.

b. Water Starts including Buoy and Pier starts.

i. Water starts may be utilized under extraordinary circumstances such as large and/or difficult wave or beach conditions.

ii. Water starts may be utilized for NSSA Championships, specialty events and/or where water starts are applicable.

iii. It is the competitor's responsibility to get water start, buoy start and pier start rules from the beach marshal.

iv. If a competitor enters the contest zone early and is deemed to have an unfair advantage, his waves could be counted as a zero and/or he could incur an interference penalty. Only the head judge may call the penalty.

c. Siren or horn blasts must be used to start and finish heats. One or two blasts can be used to start and finish heats depending on the system.

d. An attempt may be made to inform the competitor(s) at the completion of their maximum number of rides, however it is entirely the responsibility of the individual to count his own waves. If more than the maximum number of waves is ridden within the time limit, the surfer shall be penalized with interference for every extra wave.

e. Preliminary heats will be 15 or 20 minutes in duration. Finals will be 20 or 25 minutes in duration unless otherwise indicated by the contest director. Additional time could be allotted where applicable for championship heats and finals.

f. Top 2 waves will be scored in all preliminary heats. Top 2 waves will be scored in all finals unless otherwise indicated by the contest director.

g. Extraordinary wave/beach conditions, NSSA championships and/or specialty events could dictate changes in wave count/timing/flags/horns, etc. Only the Contest Director can direct any changes to be made.

h. During the heat the surfer must be clearly in possession of the wave on the wave face by getting to their feet and hands having left the rails (rail grabs excluded) for the wave to be scored. Surfer's hands must have left the rails prior to the horn signaling the end of the heat for the wave to be scored. Surfer's hands must have left the rails after the horn signaling the start of the heat for the wave to be scored.

i. There will be no time extensions once a heat has entered the water. If a heat is interrupted for any reason (ie: fog, lightning, etc.) it will be stopped by the contest director or head judge and will be resumed with all surfers in the line up at the time it was stopped and will run for the originally set period. Exception is if the head judge feels the entire heat should be rerun because altered conditions made it impossible for the judges to score fairly.

## 3. TABULATION

a. To decide a winner (five man panel), top two waves (top two waves in final) on each judge's sheet will be tabulated and placings then given on each judge's sheet. The placings are then transposed to a master sheet with all five judge's placings. The high and low judge for each surfer is crossed off and the three remaining places added. The lowest total is first, next lowest second, etc.

b. To decide a winner (three man panel), top two waves (top two waves in final) on each judge's sheet will be tabulated and placings then given on each judge's sheet. The placings are then transposed to a master sheet with all three judge's placings and then added. The lowest total is first, next lowest second, etc.

c. If there is a tie on the master sheet, the high placing will receive a plus and the lower placing will receive a minus. The surfer with the most plus' will get the higher placing. If it is still tied after the plus/minus has been completed and there is tied sheet(s), the tied sheet(s) will be added with the top one wave, then up to three

waves, etc. until the tie is broken. If it is still tied, then all of the judges sheets will be added with top one wave, etc. and the process on the master sheet is repeated.

d. Only unbreakable ties will be resurf. Re-surf time duration, wave count, etc to be determined by the contest director. If it is in the opinion of the head judge that surfers in the heat deliberately did not catch a wave advancing to the next round will go as per higher seeding.

e. For interference tabulation see INTERFERENCE RULES AND PENALTIES; #7 INTERFERENCE PENALTY.

f. Where a tie occurs and a surfer has an interference penalty this surfer has already had one or more waves deducted so any count backs will result in this surfer winning as they would be deducting 50% score or a zero score.

g. Where the WSL computer tabulation is available, the high and low judges scores are eliminated for each wave to give an average score out of 10.

#### 4. EVENT SCHEDULES

a. The Contest Director and/or Beach Marshal are the only people who can give the exact schedule of events. If any other employee of the event is asked and wrong information is received, subsequently missing a heat or some other problem, then they have no form of protest.

b. If the Contest Director and/or Beach Marshal gives the wrong information and a surfer subsequently misses a heat then a resurf can occur.

#### 5. PROTESTS

a. Protests must be written. The protest shall contain all pertinent facts and rules involved and must be signed by the pertaining surfer or the pertaining surfer's parent.

b. The process for lodging a protest with the NSSA Head Judge is as follows: 1. Fill out a protest sheet available at the Beach Marshall. 2. Return the completed sheet to the Beach Marshall. 3. Written protest must be presented to the Beach Marshall and/or Contest Director within 30 minutes after the results of the heat in question have been announced and the judges sheets made public. 4. The Beach Marshall will pass on the protest to the NSSA Head Judge who will talk to the surfer as soon as possible.

c. Only the Contest Director, after consulting with the Head Judge may rule on a protest.

d. Only the Head Judge and/or Contest Director may discuss an interference call with the protesting competitor. No other judges and/or officials are to be approached over any calls or a fine or suspension could be imposed on the offending surfer.

e. Video will be accepted at the NSSA Championships and/or only at the Head Judges discretion. Video cannot be used to protest judges scores, timing or up after calls.

f. Tabulation errors will always be corrected regardless of time elapsed. Protests are not required.

g. A judging scoring decision once made is irrevocable no what proof is available to show otherwise unless the Head Judge feels that the majority of the judging panel did not see the situation or wave completely.

h. Any competitor once eliminated can not reenter the event for any reason unless there is less than 50% advancement in a heat due to non participation. Only event directors have the authority to advance a high 3rd place (in a 4-man format) or a high 4th place (in a 6-man format) from a prior heat into the next round. This is applicable for a division's first round heats only. This is not applicable or permitted in any interscholastic team events or any NSSA Championship Events.

#### 6. WAVE MAXIMUMS

a. In all 15 minute heats there will be a 10 wave maximum. All waves ridden after the 10 wave maximum will not go into the scoreline.

b. In all 20 (and greater) minute heats and finals, there will be a 15 wave maximum. All waves ridden after the 15 wave maximum will not go into the scoreline.

c. An attempt may be made to inform the competitor at the completion of his ten or fifteen waves, however it is the competitors responsibility to know his wave count.

d. Competitors must exit the water after the tenth wave (15 minute heat) in the preliminaries or fifteenth wave in the preliminaries (20 minute heat) or finals. Any wave ridden after the maximum will not be counted in the scoreline. If the competitor interferes with any other competitor in the heat by paddling, positioning or some other reason after his wave maximum has been reached, he will receive an interference.

#### 7. NSSA NATIONAL AGE DIVISIONS - Ages as of 1/1/27

a. Open Season: Mens all ages, Juniors U16, Boys U14, Mini Groms Boys U12, U10 Boys, Women all ages, Girls U16, Super Girls U14, Mini Grom Girls U12, U10 Girls, Longboard all ages. Mens, Juniors and Boys, Mini Grom, U10 Boys divisions are open to male competitors only. Womens, Girls, Super Girls, Mini Grom Girls, U10 Girls is open to female competitors only. Longboard are open to male and female competitors.

b. Explorer Season: Men all ages, Juniors U18 (17&under), Boys U15 (14&under), Menahuene U13 (12&under), Super Groms U11 (10&under), Women all ages, Girls U15 (14&under), Super Girls U13 (12&under), Masters 25 & up, Seniors 35 & up, Super Seniors 45 & up, Duke 55 & up, Longboard all ages, Womens Longboard all ages, SUP all ages. Mens, Juniors, Boys, Menahuene, Masters, Seniors and Super Seniors are open to male competitors only. Womens, Girls, Super Girls and Womens Longboard are open to female competitors only. Super Grom, Duke, Longboard and SUP is open to male and female competitors.

c. Competitors may surf up into more competitive age divisions (ie. Open Juniors may surf up into Open Mens, etc.).

#### 8. LONGBOARD Rules and requirements

a. BOARD REQUIREMENTS: Length is a minimum 9 feet measured from the nose to tail on the deck of the surfboard. Width dimensions to total minimum 47 inches aggregate. This is the total of the widest point, plus the width 12 inches up from the tail and the width 12 inches back from the nose.

b. Traditional longboard Malibu shape to be used with use of multiple fins and channels allowed.

c. Longboard Judging criteria: The surfer must perform Radical Controlled Manuevers 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 Manuevers will be taken into account when rewarding points for waves ridden. The surfer who executes this criteria with the Maximum Degree of Difficulty and Commitment on the wave shall be rewarded with the higher scores.

#### 9. LONGBOARD Rules and requirements

#### 9. INTERSCHOLASTIC TEAM SEASON REQUIREMENTS

*College, High School and Middle School Teams. For clarification purposes, the terms for High School and Middle School participating schools/teams are classified as public school teams with special circumstances regarding private, independent and homeschool student participation listed in a. i, ii, iii below.*

##### a. Team Participation Requirements/Team Member Eligibility

i. Enrolled in and attending the participating team's institution during the academic year and adhere to the academic requirements set forth in 9.d. (below). The academic year comprises the three terms in the fall, winter and spring quarters.

ii. It is the coaches and team members' responsibility to know and understand the NSSA competition rules and requirements.

iii. (High School/Middle School Team competition only, not applicable for College Team competition; please refer to clarification above) - Students attending private, independent, home school or a public school with no surf program may be eligible for participation with approval from participating school which administers the specific high school/middle school and team/club. A letter must be submitted on school letterhead to the NSSA as follows: A letter must be submitted to the NSSA from the participating school's principal and/or administrator stating approval that the student (who does not attend participating school) may participate on the high school/middle school team. This is not applicable for College Team competition.

b. TEAM COMPOSITION. College and High School Varsity teams are made up of 4 male, 2 female, 1 male longboarder, 1 female longboarder. High School Junior Varsity and Middle School teams are made up of 6 male, 2 female, 1 longboarder (male or female). Teams must be recognized and in good standing with their school and/or subject to state laws of club participation requirements.

c. Once a seeded team member is replaced he/she can not be placed back into the event in that respective division.

d. Academic requirements - Team member must be taking a minimum of three courses (two academic courses for college competitors during the academic year which is comprised of fall, winter and spring quarter) in order to be eligible for interscholastic competition. A minimum cumulative 2.0 G.P.A. is required for the current school year.. All interscholastic competitors must comply with the academic guidelines set forth in rule C. NSSA Academic Rules 3. a-g, in order to participate in the NSSA Interscholastic Championships.

e. In the event of a team point tie, the tied teams will surf off. Each team will select 2 team surfers to compete. The tiebreak time duration, wave count, etc to be determined by the contest director. Team surfers must have participated in the event to be eligible for the tiebreak heat.

f. Coaches, team members and parents are required to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner as defined in the NSSA Discipline Policy. Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in loss of points, fines or complete suspension of a team. Each coach will be required to sign and comply with the Code of Conduct document prior to participation in a NSSA event.

g. Any attempt to falsify/forged academic information and grade reports or mislead any team information including school attendance, team member impersonation or misrepresentation of any kind could result in immediate suspension of the associated team and membership privileges of the involved member for a minimum of one year with no refunds of any fees paid to the NSSA including forfeiture of all contests and/or championship entry fees. The involved member will be billed for all expenses incurred during verification of information that results in the finding of false/forged information.

h. The NSSA will respect any requirements for club/team member participation eligibility with regards to state law or school district policies.

i. Junior Varsity team participation requirements. **In order to enter a Junior Varsity team, a team is required to enter a Varsity team.** All Junior Varsity team members eligibility requirements are the same as Varsity. A Junior Varsity team members cannot compete on the Varsity team in the same event. A Varsity team member cannot compete on the Junior Varsity team in the same event.

j. Qualification requirements for teams to participate in the NSSA Regional and National Championships could vary in the different conferences. Please contact the conference director in your region or the National Office for any inquiries or questions regarding team qualification to compete in the Regional and National Championships.

k. **NSSA College and Interscholastic Membership requirement violations.** Any team member who is in violation of NSSA membership requirements/policies including non-registration and non-compliance of current NSSA membership will immediately be suspended from the team, future competitions and all rankings. The team member's team will also be regarded as non-compliant and will have all rankings suspended and the team will be suspended from participating and competing in any future events until the violation has been rectified. The team member's team is responsible for the payment of all membership in the case of non-compliance of membership for any of its team members.

## **10. OPEN MINI GROMS, EXPLORER SUPER GROMS and U10 DIVISIONS**

a. Because of their young age and possible inexperience in certain wave conditions, Mini Grom, Super Grom and U10 competitors may have one parent/guardian accompanying them in the heat. Parent/guardian may not use any flotation device (i.e. surfboards, bodyboard, etc.) upon entering the water, unless conditions warrant and approval given by the contest director. Parent/guardian may not assist competitor in paddling, catching or riding waves. Parent/guardian cannot interfere, disrupt or be in the way of any competitors or they will be asked to leave the water.

## **11. ADDITION OF NEW COMPETITION AGE DIVISIONS AND CATEGORIES**

a. Any addition of new age divisions and categories must be presented to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will submit any proposed new competition divisions to the NSSA Board of Directors for consultation, review and decision. All new age divisions and categories which are approved will be added to the following year's competition season. Any new age divisions and categories must be approved no later than June of the season prior to be added to the upcoming competition season.

## **12. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

a. At times, errors of a special nature occur within the contest with respect to judging, judges scores, timing, flags, office errors, etc. The Contest Director will rule on these circumstances, case by case.

13. POSTPONED OR CANCELLED EVENTS: Contests may be postponed or cancelled due to natural causes including weather and wave conditions. Conference Directors have the authority to decide if the event is to be made up or cancelled completely. Once a surfer has competed, entry fees are non refundable regardless if the event is postponed or cancelled. All dates and times of events are subject to change. Competitors must contact their conference director regarding the event status and ratings

#### 14. UP AFTER/SURFING DURING NEXT HEAT

a. Any surfer who stands up after his heat is over (see rule E. Competition rules 2. c.& d.), is considered surfing during the next heat in progress and an interference penalty and a \$15.00 per wave fine will be imposed. There is an approximate 10-20 second grace period after the heat ends before the Interference penalty and fine is imposed. An interference plus a \$15.00 per wave fine will apply. If a surfer has less than the required minimum scoring rides, then his second scoring wave will be halved. Only the Head Judge may call the up after. There is no up after penalty after the final heat of the day. If a surfer re-enters the contest area after his heat is over intentionally to interfere with the heat in progress, he/she will be suspended from the event and could face suspension from future NSSA events.

#### 15. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Announcers must understand the basic rules and criteria and can never announce approaching sets.
- b. If the commentator gives a score and it is wrong due to any judges entering an incorrect score or the commentator giving the wrong score, the surfers will have no form of protest.
- c. If any surfer requires information from the water during a heat where both the announcer and the computer scoring system are being used, they must use hand signals as follows: 1. Time remaining is one hand touching another above the head. 2. Wave count is one arm outwards horizontal to the water. 3. Scores (last score, heat score, score needed to win, etc) is both arms out horizontal to the water.

#### 16. FREE SURFING IN THE COMPETITION AREA

a. Free surfing in the competition area is prohibited. Any NSSA member who is free surfing in the area will be fined \$15.00 for each wave ridden and face a possible suspension from the event (see rule G. NSSA Discipline Policy 2. a.)

17. Electronic Coaching. Surfers are prohibited from receiving electronic communication in the Competition Area which includes all heats taking place in the ocean, from any source outside of the NSSA.

### **RIGHT OF WAY, INTERFERENCE AND PRIORITY RULES**

**PLEASE NOTE: THE NSSA WILL FOLLOW THE MOST UPDATED WSL PRIORITY RULES REGARDLESS IF THE RULES HAVE OR HAVE NOT BEEN UPDATED IN THE NSSA RULE BOOK. THE WSL OFTEN MAKES TWEAKS OR RULE CHANGES TO PRIORITY AND THE NSSA WILL FOLLOW THE MOST UPDATED WSL RULES. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AS WE WANT TO MAKE SURE TO FOLLOW THE MOST CURRENT WSL RULES.**

#### CHAPTER 11: PRIORITY RULES & INTERFERENCE

11.01 Application of Priority Rules & Interference (a) The Rules in this Chapter are applicable to all NSSA Events unless specifically stated otherwise in another Chapter. (b) An interference penalty can only be called if a majority of the judging panel mark an interference on their judging sheet. (c) The Head Judge will be able to call an interference penalty if a majority decision could not be reached (taking into account Judges who did not see it cannot vote on the call). (d) Where unforeseen circumstances occur with respect to competition, including relating to priority and timing, a resolution, which may include a re-surf, will be determined by; (i) At NSSA Championship events: The NSSA Head Judge will consult with any relevant people at their discretion. (ii) At Non-Championship events: The NSSA Head Judge will consult with the Conference and/or Event Director, or other relevant people at their discretion.

Non-Priority Rules 11.03 Right of Way in Non-Priority Situations (a) For non-priority situations, the Surfer deemed to have the inside position for a wave has unconditional right of way for the entire duration of that Ride. An interference

penalty will be called if during that Ride a majority of Judges determine that a Surfer has hindered the scoring potential of the Surfer with the right of way for the wave. Examples of interference include excessive hassling and leash pulling. If the Judges call an interference penalty, Interference Penalty 1 will apply. (b) The choice of right-of-way criteria for each of the situations described within Rules regarding "Right of Way in Non-Priority Situations" is the responsibility of the NSSA Head Judge or the most senior available WSL Judge in that order. (c) 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 each 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.

11.04 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.

11.05 Reef or Beach Break – One Peak Situation: If there is a single welldefined 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 Surfer 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, provided they do not interfere with the first Surfer who has established right of way (i.e., they may not cross the path of the first Surfer in order to gain the opposite side of the peak unless, in the majority of Judges opinion, they do so without hindering the inside Surfer).

11.06 Reef or Beach Break – Multiple Peak Situations: With multiple random peaks, the right of way may vary slightly according to the nature of an individual wave. (a) With two (2) peaks, there will be cases where one (1) swell will have two (2) separate, defined peaks far apart that eventually meet at some point. Although two (2) Surfers may each have inside position on those respective peaks, the Surfer who is first to their feet shall be deemed to have the right of way and the second Surfer must give way by cutting back or kicking out before hindering the right of way Surfer. (b) If two (2) Surfers stand at the same time on two (2) separate peaks that eventually meet, then: (i) If they both give way by cutting back or kicking out, so that neither is hindered, there will be no penalty. (ii) If they collide or hinder one another, a Surfer will be penalized by the Judges if either or both indicate aggression at the point of hindrance. If an interference penalty is called, Interference Penalty 1 will apply. (iii) If neither Surfer gives way by exiting the Ride and both share responsibility for the confrontation, then both Surfers will receive Interference Penalty 1.

11.07 "Snaking" (a) The Surfer who is farthest inside at the initial point of take-off and has established the right of way 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. (b) If 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. (c) 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 an interference penalty may be called on the second Surfer, even though they were behind the first when the penalty was called. If an interference penalty is called, Interference Penalty 1 will apply.

11.08 Paddling Interference (a) A Surfer paddling for the same wave should not excessively hinder another Surfer who has inside position. (b) An interference penalty may be called if: (i) The violating Surfer makes contact with the inside Surfer hindering them and resulting in the Surfer having to change their line while paddling to catch the wave causing possible loss of scoring potential. (ii) The violating 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) If an interference penalty is called, Interference Penalty 1 will apply. (c) In the event of a collision or near miss between a Surfer paddling out and a Surfer Riding a wave, which adversely impacts the scoring potential for the Surfer Riding the wave (if the majority of the Judges deem the collision/near miss occurred on a wave with no scoring impact on the

current heat result then there is no interference penalty), the following applies: (i) If a Surfer paddling out has no ability to remove themselves from the line of a Surfer Riding a wave, then there is no interference penalty. (ii) If a Surfer paddling out accidentally causes a collision or near miss with the Surfer Riding a wave, it is up to a majority of the Judges to call an interference penalty. In determining whether to call an interference penalty, the Judges will consider the Surfer's safety and the Surfer's positioning/effort to avoid the situation. If an interference penalty is called, Interference Penalty 1 will apply. (iii) If a majority of the Judges determine that the Surfer paddling out deliberately caused the collision or near miss with the Surfer Riding a wave then Interference Penalty 2 will be called on the Surfer paddling out. (iv) If a majority of the Judges determine that the Surfer Riding the wave deliberately caused a collision with a Surfer paddling out, then Interference Penalty 2 will be called on the Surfer Riding the wave. Any such interfering Surfer will be subject to additional sanctions under Rule 14.02.

## Priority Rules

11.09 Right of Way using the Priority System (a) For heats where priority applies, the priority system will determine which Surfer has priority to a wave at that time. The Surfer with priority has the unconditional right of way and can paddle for and Ride any wave they select. The Surfer's opponent(s) can paddle for and Ride the same wave in any direction and be scored providing they do not; (i) Hinder the scoring potential of the Ride for the Surfer with priority. (ii) Cross in front of or bottom turn around the Surfer with priority, regardless if the Surfer is up and Riding a wave or in the process of catching a wave. (b) If a Surfer without priority does not comply with Rule 11.09(a), Interference Penalty 2 will be called against them. (c) If a Surfer incurs an interference penalty, they will lose priority. The Priority Judge will determine the new priority position of the Surfers in the heat.

11.10 General Priority (a) Before Priority has been established, all non-priority rules apply. (b) The Priority Judge will make any call on Priority using a colored display system corresponding to the Surfer's competition jersey colors in the water to indicate priority and may consult the judging panel for close calls. With all display systems, if vertical then order of priority will be from top to bottom and if horizontal then order will be from left to right. Once Priority has been established, it is the Surfer's responsibility to check the priority system for their priority position at all times.

11.11 "Blocking Rule" in Non-Priority Situations: For all Events with a Priority Judge, a Surfer with the inside position will be allocated lowest priority applicable at the time if they: (a) Make a committed paddle for a wave and block a Surfer from catching that wave; or (b) Position themselves in the take-off zone and block another Surfer from catching a wave.

11.12 Excessive Hassling in Non-Priority situations: (a) For all Events with a Priority Judge, if in the opinion of the Priority and Head Judge, a Surfer excessively hassles, blocks or hinders another Surfer from paddling in the line-up they will be allocated the lowest Priority applicable at the time. If the behavior is aggressive or unsportsmanlike then an Interference Penalty 1 may also be called. The Surfer will also be subject to additional sanctions under Rule 14.02. (b) Wave priority is lost as soon as a Surfer Rides a wave or makes a committed paddle to catch and misses a wave. (c) Rule 11.12(b) will not apply in three (3)-Surfer or four (4)-Surfer heats if the Surfer is: (i) Paddling alongside a Surfer with higher Priority, who then catches the wave. (ii) They are blocked by a Surfer with higher Priority by paddling or positioning. (d) If a Surfer inside has second or third priority and their opponent paddles for, but misses a wave, the inside Surfer automatically assumes the higher priority. Therefore, if they also paddle for, but miss the wave, then they have also lost priority. That is, both Surfers have then lost priority even though only one (1) wave has passed and there was not sufficient time to change the priority.

11.13 "Blocking Rule" in Priority Situations: (a) The Priority Surfer will lose priority if in the opinion of the Head Judge or Priority Judge they: (i) Paddle in front of the non-Priority Surfer to deliberately impede them from catching a wave. (ii) Position themselves in the take-off zone to prevent another Surfer from catching a wave. (iii) Use their priority by either paddling for or taking off on a wave to block their opponent when the Surfer with priority appears

to have had no intention to score. In this situation, priority can be awarded regardless of which Surfer reaches the take-off zone first after the Ride. (b) If a Surfer with superior priority paddles outside the Primary Take-off Zone (including if they sit on inside position), the Surfer will have their Priority suspended until they re-enter the Primary Take-off Zone. If the Surfer does not re-enter the Primary Take-off Zone, they will no longer be the Priority Surfer. The Priority Judge will determine the Surfer's new priority position in the heat. All attempts will be made to verbally announce the Priority Surfer as they start to leave the Primary Take off Zone by a verbal warning via the PA system. Surfers should not rely on the verbal warnings and should always confirm priority by viewing the Priority Disc for the Event. (c) An Interference Penalty 2 may be called individually by the Head Judge only if the majority of the judging panel do not see the incident. (d) In all cases where a dispute results from a decision or a malfunction of the priority system, the NSSA National Office will consult with the NSSA Head Judge and Event Director to determine a resolution, which may include a re-surf. (e) Allocation is based on who the Priority Judge believes has reached the Primary Take Off Zone first. In cases where Surfers appear to reach the Primary Take-Off Zone at the same time, priority will go to the Surfer who did not have the last priority. (f) Once a heat has ended all priority ceases. If a Surfer is Riding on a wave as the heat ends, they can't be interfered with by any Surfer (even if that Surfer had higher priority before the heat ended). If an interference occurs, an Interference Penalty 2 will be called.

11.14 Two (2)-Surfer Heat Priority: Two (2) surfer Heat priority works in the following manner, subject to Rules 11.11 and 11.13(j): (a) At the start of a heat, once the first wave has been ridden, the second Surfer gets automatic priority for any other wave they choose, unless the Surfer Rides the wave before the heat starts (refer to Rule 11.13(j)) or if the Surfer is not in the Competition Area before the heat start. (b) If a Surfer with second priority paddles for and misses a wave they will not lose their priority position unless (i) their hands left the rails, as they attempted to stand or they paddled outside the Primary Take-Off Zone, as determined by the Priority Judge and (ii) the Surfer with first priority Rides a wave and returns to the Primary Take-Off Zone before the Surfer with second priority. (c) Allocation is based on who the Priority Judge believes has reached the Primary Take-Off Zone first. In cases where Surfers appear to reach the Primary Take-Off Zone at the same time, priority will go to the Surfer who did not have the last priority. (d) If a Surfer is not in the Primary Take-Off Zone when the heat starts and arrives late, priority will be allocated to the other Surfer at the discretion of the Priority Judge.

11.15 Three (3)-Surfer Heat Priority: Three (3)-Surfer Heat priority works in the following manner, subject to Rules 11.11 and 11.13(j): (a) The first Surfer to Ride a wave then receives third priority (First Surfer). (b) The remaining two (2) Surfers in the heat have priority over the First Surfer and may paddle for waves without losing this priority until one of them catches a wave (Second Surfer). (c) Once the Second Surfer catches a wave, the initial heat priority order is established: (i) The Surfer yet to catch a wave receives first priority; and (ii) the remaining Surfers will receive priority in the order they return to the Primary Take-Off Zone. (iii) The Surfer with first priority has priority over both other Surfers. The Surfer with second priority only has priority over the Surfer with third priority. (j) If a Surfer is not in the Primary Take-Off Zone when the heat starts and arrives late, the Surfer will be allocated the appropriate priority position as determined by the Priority Judge at the time when the Surfer reaches the Primary Take-Off Zone. (k) If a Surfer with third priority paddles for and misses a wave they will not lose their priority position unless (i) their hands left the rails, as they attempted to stand or (ii) they paddled outside the Primary Take-Off Zone, as determined by the Priority Judge.

11.16 Four (4)-Surfer Heat Priority: Four (4)-Surfer Heat priority works in the following manner, subject to Rules 11.11 and 11.13(j): (a) The first Surfer to Ride a wave receives fourth priority (First Surfer). (b) The remaining three (3) Surfers in the heat have priority over the First Surfer and may paddle for waves without losing this priority until the next Surfer catches a wave (Second Surfer). (c) The remaining two (2) Surfers in the heat have priority over the First and Second Surfer and may paddle for waves without losing this priority until one (1) of those Surfers catches a wave (Third Surfer). (d) Once the Third Surfer catches a wave, the initial heat priority order is established: (i) The Surfer yet to catch a wave receives first priority; and (ii) the remaining Surfers will receive priority in the order they return to the Primary Take-Off Zone. (iii) The Surfer with first priority has priority over all other Surfers. The Surfer

with second priority only has priority over the Surfers with third and fourth priority. The Surfer with third priority only has priority over the Surfer with fourth priority. (e) If a Surfer is not in the Primary Take-Off Zone when the heat starts and arrives late, the Surfer will be allocated the appropriate priority position as determined by the Priority Judge at the time when the Surfer reaches the Primary Take-Off Zone. (l) If a Surfer with fourth priority paddles for and misses a wave they will not lose their priority position unless (i) their hands left the rails, as they attempted to stand or (ii) they paddled outside the Primary Take-Off Zone, as determined by the Priority Judge.

11.17 Interference Penalty (a) Interference Penalties will be as follows: 1. Interference Penalty 1: The value of the interfering Surfer's second highest scoring Ride will be halved. 2. Interference Penalty 2: The interfering Surfer's second highest scoring Ride will tally as a zero. 3. Interference Penalty 3: The interfering Surfer's highest scoring Ride will tally as a zero. 4. Disqualification: The Surfer will be disqualified from the Heat (b) For priority situations when an interference is called on a Surfer, then Interference Penalty 2 will apply. For the avoidance of doubt, a violation of this Rule does not mean an automatic violation of Rule 11.20. If a majority of the Judges determine that the interference during the final five (5) minutes was intentional, the interfering Surfer will be Disqualified. (c) In non-priority situations when an interference penalty is called on a Surfer, then Interference Penalty 1 will apply. (d) When an interference penalty is called on a Surfer while paddling to catch a wave or while Riding a wave, the Ride will be scored zero. (e) Interference will be denoted by a triangle on the Judges sheet. (f) Any interfering Surfer will be penalized and once an interference decision is made, it can only be modified by the Head Judge if they deem the decision was made relying on inaccurate technology (video/audio). The Judges will not enter into any discussion over the interference call. (g) In non-priority heats, the Surfer who is interfered with will be allowed an additional wave beyond their wave maximum, within the prescribed time limit. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, if there is a double interference called, neither Surfer gets an extra wave. An extra wave or heat delay as decided by the NSSA Head Judge at the time will also apply to interference from water photographers, water security personnel or other outside interference. (h) Where any Surfer incurs two (2) interference penalties, they must immediately leave the Competition Area (failure to do so will result in a penalty in accordance with Chapter 14 of this Rule Book) and: (i) If both interferences are in a non-priority situation, then Interference Penalty 1 will apply to both. (ii) If one interference is in a non-priority situation and the other in a priority situation, regardless of the order, then Interference Penalty 1 will apply to the Surfer's highest scoring Ride and Interference Penalty 2 will apply to the second highest scoring Ride. (iii) If both interference penalties are in a priority situation, the Surfer will be disqualified from the heat. (i) If neither Surfer in an interference situation has established priority over the other Surfer involved, then Interference Penalty 1 will apply regardless of whether the other Surfers in the heat (not involved in the interference situation) hold priority or not. This rule will be applied to one-on-one, three (3)-Surfer and four (4)-Surfer heats.

11.18 Excessive Hassling in Priority situations: In the opinion of the Priority and Head Judge, if a Surfer excessively hassles another Surfer who has Priority, in an unsportsmanlike manner, an Interference Penalty 2 can be called against the interfering Surfer. For the avoidance of doubt, a violation of this Rule does not mean an automatic violation of Rule 11.17(b) but may include sanctions under Rule 14.02.

11.19 Using Priority: In the opinion of the Priority or Head Judge, if a Surfer utilizes their priority in an unsportsmanlike manner to intentionally block another Surfer with lower or no Priority outside of the Primary Take-off Zone, an Interference Penalty 2 will be called against the interfering Surfer. For the avoidance of doubt, a violation of this Rule does not mean an automatic violation of Rule 11.20. 11.20 Serious Unsportsmanlike Interference: If the Head Judge and event director determines that an interference during an Event was intentional or unsportsmanlike and results in the injury of another Surfer, notwithstanding any penalty available under Rule 14.09 which may include suspension from Events or an entire season a Surfer will lose the benefit of counting their best Event result when calculating their Ranking on the relevant season.

## **2026/27 NSSA DISCIPLINE POLICY.**

## 1. SURFER MISBEHAVIOR/UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

a. A surfer who causes willful destruction or damage to property, or damage to surfing's image will be subject to disciplinary action and possible immediate penalties as appropriately imposed by the NSSA Executive Director after consultation with the Conference Director, Contest Director and/or Head Judge.

b. Unsportsmanlike conduct (includes but is not limited to rude gestures, water splashing, foul language directed at another competitor, official, judge, spectators and any interference of the event in progress. Surfers should be fully aware that the definition of unsportsmanlike conduct is broad and they must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner or risk fines and/or suspension from the event. Fines and/or suspension from an event can only be determined by the Executive Director and/or Conference Director.

c. No list of penalties can cover every situation. Accordingly, this list of "general guidelines" for penalties is not intended to cover every possible situation, but only the most common situations in which surfers, judges, or officials are penalized. If a NSSA member, athlete competing in any NSSA event, judge, or official, has any doubt about whether an act or activity will constitute misconduct, he or she should ask the NSSA Executive Director, Conference Director or the Contest Director.

## 2. PENALTIES

a. Penalties for infractions could involve immediate suspension from that NSSA event, and/or future events, and/or a fine:

|                                              |                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Assaulting a judge or official               | Suspension                                       |
| Rude gestures to judges or officials         | \$100                                            |
| Swearing out loud at judges or officials     | \$100                                            |
| Ripping up judges sheets                     | \$100                                            |
| Writing on judges sheets                     | \$100                                            |
| Swearing in official area                    | \$100                                            |
| Assaulting event staff                       | Suspension                                       |
| Damage to event property                     | \$100 plus costs                                 |
| Re-entering contest area after heat is over  | suspension from event                            |
| Damage to property in event locality         | \$100 plus costs                                 |
| Free surfing in competition area during heat | \$15 per wave and possible suspension from event |
| Up after/surfing during next heat            | \$15 per wave and possible suspension from event |
| Staying in water after 2 interferences       | \$100 plus \$15 per wave                         |
| Taking contest jersey off in water           | \$25                                             |

b. Fines and/or suspension from an event can only be determined by the Executive Director and/or Conference director.

c. NSSA membership can be terminated only by a majority vote of the Board of Directors except in the case of academic requirements where membership can be immediately terminated by the NSSA Executive Director.

d. Where penalties involve losing NSSA membership status, the offending surfer has the right to appeal to the NSSA Executive Director. All appeals will be brought to the NSSA National Board of Directors for decision.

## 3. DRUG ABUSE

a. To uphold the image and good name of surfing, the NSSA opposes the use of illegal drugs by it's employees, officials and members. This also includes illegal alcohol use by a minor. Penalty for infractions associated with illegal drug and/or alcohol use will result in immediate suspension of NSSA employment, membership and privileges for a period to be determined by the NSSA Executive Director. Valid evidence of illegal drug and/or alcohol use by a member or official must be submitted to the NSSA Executive Director.

## 2026/27 PARTICIPATION RULES FOR NSSA CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION

1. NSSA members must surf in the mandatory number of events of their resident conference event schedule to qualify for any championship (i.e.: Southwest Open Season seven event schedule-member must surf in at least five of seven Open contests to qualify for the West Coast Championships and the National Championships).

Conference directors set the mandatory number of events for their respected conference. Resident conference means competitor must have a residence in the conference region boundaries or living with someone in conference region. If a competitor has a residence in multiple conference regions, he would be eligible to qualify in both regions.

2. NSSA members are required to participate in the Regional Championships in order to qualify for the National Championships (see rule J. NSSA Regional Championships and qualification # 1-3).

3. NSSA members may qualify for their required participation events out of their resident conference if needed but not exceeding more than half of the mandatory number of events in their specific resident conference. These events will count towards their total number of required qualifying events but conference ratings points are not combined or integrated with each other.

4. Open and Explorer seasons are separate competitive events and do not combine or integrate with each other.

5. Mandatory qualifying events for each conference will be stated on the conference entry forms. It is the competitors' responsibility to read entry form information and know the mandatory number of events including any changes or additions to the requirement. Qualifying events could be adjusted during the course of the season due to postponed events or matters of special nature. It is the competitor's responsibility to obtain any updated information from their conference director.

6. Special circumstances involving participation requirements must be submitted to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will rule on these cases after consultation with the NSSA Conference Director.

7. Out of conference competitor qualification (see rule J. NSSA Regional Championships 3e.)

#### **NSSA REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITOR OBLIGATIONS & QUALIFICATION**

1. Annual Regional Championships include the West Coast Championships, East Coast Championships and Hawaii Championships. East Coast Championships to be held each spring on the east coast. West Coast Championships to be held each spring on the west coast. Hawaii Championships to be held each spring in Hawaii.

2. Participation in the West Coast, East Coast and Hawaii Championships is by conference qualification only. West Coast Championships (west coast members only or surfers who have qualified from other regions), East Coast Championships (east coast, Caribbean, Puerto Rico members only), and Hawaii Championships (Hawaii members only).

3. Regional Championships Qualification - NSSA Southwest, Gold Coast, Northwest, Southeast, Southeast/North, Mid Atlantic, Northeast, Hawaii, Caribbean Conferences, Puerto Rico & Florida Gulf Coast.

a. Members will qualify to compete in the Regional Championships based on year end ratings and participation.

b. NSSA surfers must surf in the mandatory number of events of their resident conference event schedule to qualify for any championship. Please refer to your conference event requirements for the mandatory number of events.

c. Out of Conference competitor qualification

i. Surfers who reside out of a conference area (minimum 500 miles from nearest conference boundary). Out of conference competitors who participate in conference events must surf the mandatory number of events on the conference schedule to be classified as a conference competitor in order to count towards qualification to the Regional Championships and National Championships. Please contact Conference Director and Conference schedule for mandatory contest qualification.

d. All NSSA members are required to attend the Regional Championships to qualify for the NSSA National Championships (see below rule J. National Championships qualification 3 c.)

e. Competitors are responsible for picking up or making arrangements for pick up of any trophies given out at all NSSA events and championships. Trophies may not be stored so competitors must pick up trophies at any events or championships they compete in.

#### **DOUBLE REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS QUALIFICATION**

In order to offer competitors a more competitively challenging qualification route, a surfer can compete in another conference outside of their residence conference and qualify in that region for it's Regional Championships. The conference must offer more events and more surfers in a competitive division than the surfer's residence conference. Surfers must receive approval from the National Office in order to qualify in a conference outside of their residence conference. A surfer can double qualify in both their residence conference and a conference outside of their region if they meet the participation requirements in both. The surfer can only compete in one Regional Championship per discipline (Open and Explorer). For instance, if a surfer qualifies in the Open divisions outside their resident conference and qualifies for the Explorer in their resident conference, they can compete in one Regional Championship for the Open and then the other Regional Championship for Explorer. Prior to that year's Regional Championships, they must declare to the National Office which Regional Championship they will compete in for which discipline Open and Explorer. They would qualify for the National Championships through that Regional Championship and represent that region at the National Championships.

#### **NSSA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITOR OBLIGATION & QUALIFICATION**

1. Annual National Championship event held each summer in California to determine the NSSA National Interscholastic, Open, Explorer and Airshow Champions.
2. All surfers who compete in the Regional Championships are qualified to register in the National Championships in the divisions they competed in that year's Regional Championships only.
3. NSSA National Championship Qualification - NSSA Hawaii Regional Championships, NSSA East Coast Regional Championships, NSSA West Coast Regional Championships

#### **a. National Championships seeding will be determined by combining the 2026/27 year end ratings with the "5000" point allocation Regional Championships.**

c. All qualifying NSSA members must attend the Regional Championships to qualify for the National Championships (including conference champions). Non-attendance is excused only for extenuating circumstances eg. injury, illness, school commitments or other causes. Reasons for non-attendance must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director and Conference Director. A doctor's certificate and/or other appropriate documentation regarding non-attendance must be submitted to the NSSA Executive Director and Conference Director either prior to the Regional Championship date or within one week of the final day of the Regional Championships event. Only the NSSA Executive Director can rule on non-attendance case by case after consultation with the Conference Director. In the case of all excused absences, competitors are still required to register and pay for the Regional Championships in their division for National Championship qualification purposes.

d. All competitors must comply with the academic guidelines as set forth in rule C. NSSA Academic Rules 3.a-g, in order to participate in the NSSA National Championships.

e. Out of conference competitors who participate in the Regional Championships will be invited to the National Championships as alternates and will receive slots if and where space is available. Out of conference competitors will be seeded only after all conference alternate competitors have been seeded if space is available.

f. LATE ENTRY – It is the member's responsibility to know and understand alternate status and rules which are stated on the National Championship entry form. LATE ENTRANTS will be seeded after the Nationals entry deadline date if space is available according to their combined conference and regional ranking.

g. Competitors are responsible for picking up or making arrangements for pick up of any trophies given out at all NSSA events and championships. Trophies may not be stored so competitors must pick up trophies at any events or championships they compete in.

#### **SLOTING TO SPECIAL EVENTS FOR 2025/26. AGE AS OF 1/1/27.**

#### **USA SURFING PRIME**

**USA Surfing Prime divisions: BOYS U18, BOYS U16, BOYS U14, GIRLS U18, GIRLS U16. On the East Coast, Girls U14 may be offered. These are the only divisions offered by Prime so NSSA slots will be based accordingly WITH REGARDS TO NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS AND REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**RESULTS. REGULAR SEASON RESULTS AND RANKINGS ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS THE NSSA CONFERENCES OPERATE IN MULTIPLE REGIONS WITH DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF EVENTS AND VARIOUS LEVELS OF TALENT AND ABILITY. ALL SURFERS MUST HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE 2026 NATIONAL OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED (NATIONAL EXPLORER CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS ARE CONSIDERED BUT SURFER MUST HAVE COMPETED IN THE NATIONAL OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS).**

**SEE BELOW FOR THE ORDER OF SLOT CONSIDERATION.**

**PLEASE READ BELOW FOR ORDER OF SLOT CONSIDERATION.**

1. The NSSA will be invited to participate in special events such as the USA Championships, USA Surfing Prime, selected professional or specialty events and contests, etc.

Special event slotting for **USA Prime 2026/27**. PRIME AGE DIVISIONS ARE BOYS U18, BOYS U16, BOYS U14, GIRLS U18, GIRLS U16. **AT THE INITIAL SLOTTING FOR THE 2026/27 PRIME, ALL SURFERS CONSIDERED FOR PRIME ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE COMPETED IN THE 2026 NATIONAL OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED. NATIONAL EXPLORER CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN THE ORDER BELOW.**

**ALL 2026 NATIONAL OPEN CHAMPIONS IN THE MENS, JUNIORS, BOYS, MINI GROMS, WOMENS, GIRLS AND SUPER GIRLS WILL BE SLOTTED INTO THE 2026/27 PRIME DIVISION IF PRIME IS OFFERED IN THEIR REGION. ALL 2025 NATIONAL EXPLORER CHAMPIONS IN THE MENS, JUNIORS, BOYS, MENEHUENE, WOMENS AND GIRLS WILL BE SLOTTED INTO THE 2026/27 PRIME DIVISION IF PRIME IS OFFERED IN THEIR REGION (EXPLORER CHAMPIONS MUST HAVE COMPETED IN THE OPEN TO BE CONSIDERED). ALL 2026 NATIONAL OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP FINALISTS, THEN SEMI FINALISTS AND THEN QUARTERFINALISTS FROM THE MENS, JUNIORS, BOYS, WOMENS, GIRLS AND SUPER GIRLS WILL ALSO BE ISSUED A SLOT IF SPACE IS AVAILABLE. SURFERS THAT ARE MOVING UP INTO OLDER AGE CATEGORIES, THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP OPEN FINALISTS WILL BE CONSIDERED FIRST, THEN THE SEMIFINALISTS IN THE APPLICABLE DIVISIONS THEY ARE MOVING UP. OPEN MINI GROMS AND OPEN MINI GROM GIRLS CHAMPIONS AND FINALISTS WILL BE CONSIDERED ONLY IF THEY ARE MOVING UP INTO A PRIME AGE DIVISION AND/OR IF SPACE IS AVAILABLE. OPEN U10 BOYS, OPEN U10 GIRLS AND OPEN LONGBOARD RESULTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED FOR PRIME AS PRIME DOES NOT OFFER THOSE AGE DIVISIONS. AFTER ALL OPEN RESULTS ARE EXHAUSTED RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL EXPLORER CHAMPIONSHIPS WILL BE CONSIDERED EXCEPT FOR NATIONAL EXPLORER CHAMPIONS WHO WILL RECEIVE A SLOT (SEE ABOVE).**

**After the 2026 National Championship finalists, semi finalists and quarterfinalists slots have been issued in the applicable Prime divisions, slots to the 2026/27 West and East Coast Prime will be based by the following:** Slots for 2026/27 West Coast and East Coast Prime will be based on results from the 2026 West and East Coast Regional **OPEN** Championships in the applicable age division from the finals, semifinals and quarterfinals only. After that all remaining National Open results will be exhausted. Surfers that are moving up into older age categories. 2026 Regional Championships Open finalists will be considered first, then semi finalists in the applicable divisions they are moving up. 2026 Open Regional age divisions considered for Prime slots are **Open Mens, Open Juniors, Open Boys, Open Womens, Open Girls and Open Super Girls as these are the age divisions offered in Prime**. Consideration will also be made in the Regional Open Mini Grom finalists and Regional Open Mini Grom Girls finalists if space is available after the Open Boys and Open Super Girls results have been exhausted. **OPEN U10 BOYS, OPEN U10 GIRLS AND OPEN LONGBOARD RESULTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED FOR PRIME.** If there are ties in the Open Regional results, Explorer results from the applicable year in the applicable age division will be used to break the tie. After all of the National Open Championships results, the Regional Open Championships results and National Explorer Championship results have been exhausted, the Regional Explorer Championships results will be considered in the applicable age divisions. If there is a tie in the National Explorer Championships results, the Regional Open Championships result will be used to break the tie. NSSA Interscholastic State Championships High School and Middle School divisions are not considered for any special events. **ANY SURFER CONSIDERED IS REQUIRED TO HAVE COMPETED IN 2026 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY FINISHED IN THE REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS.**

## **2027 USA CHAMPIONSHIPS**

1. If qualification rules stay the same via USA Surfing for 2027, NSSA slots will be based on results from the 2027 West Coast, East Coast and Hawaii Regional Championships. Top two in Open Mens, Open Juniors, Open Boys, Open Mini Groms, Open Womens, Open Girls, Open Super Girls and Open Mini Grom Girls will receive slots based on their 1st and 2nd place

finish. 3rd place finishers will be slotted as alternates. BE ADVISED THAT USA SURFING MAY NOT TAKE ANY DOUBLE QUALIFICATION INTO CONSIDERATION. THEY MAY ONLY CONSIDER OUR TOP TWO REGARDLESS OF DOUBLE QUALIFICATION THROUGH PRIME OR ANOTHER ORGANIZATION. This double qualification rule is a policy by USA Surfing. If there is a tie in the results, Explorer results in the applicable division will be used. Longboard and older age categories such as Masters, Super Seniors, etc. will be taken from Regional Championship Explorer results. NSSA Interscholastic State and National Interscholastic Championships High School and Middle School divisions and results are not considered for any special events. **ANY SURFER WHO RECEIVES AND ACCEPTS A 2026 USA CHAMPIONSHIP SLOT THROUGH THE NSSA IS REQUIRED TO COMPETE IN THE 2027 NSSA NATIONAL OPEN AND/OR EXPLORER CHAMPIONSHIPS.**

**USA CHAMPIONSHIPS NON PRIME DIVISIONS:** All OTHER divisions (from the item 1. above) including Longboard, and all adult divisions over 18 must qualify through the NSSA Regional Championships. Slot amounts to be determined by USA Surfing.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

### **1. SURFER/SCHOLAR HONOR AWARDS**

a. Academic achievement awards presented to NSSA members who have achieved a 3.5 G.P.A. or better throughout the season. Official grade report must be submitted no later than 15 days prior to the National Championships of the applicable year. Awards presented at the National Championships