

Teaching Surf Instructors to Teach



National Surf Schools and Instructors Association Instructors and Coaches Training Manual



Contest Judging Section 13

Provided exclusively for NSSIA certified instructors.

Other use prohibited by US Copyright Laws

Section 6 (To be used primarily with the Coaching Section)

Contest Judging

Effective coaching requires a basic understanding of surf contests and the criteria by which contestants are judged. The contest judge is the person who decides which surfer performs the closest to the established judging criteria in any heat. Not only do judges require the experience and knowledge to allow them to make objective calls, but coaches need this same experience and knowledge base to make recommendations that can be followed for higher scores by those they coach.



Judging Criteria

This section covers some very general criteria. The formal international rules currently in place for contest judging are addressed in a later section, plus the ASP rulebook is included as a link to this chapter. A few simple-judging procedures to observe will save much dissatisfaction from contestants at a meet. The most important of these is not to miss any wave ridden or parts of rides. This one problem is the most common complaint by competitors and is usually the cause of judging arguments. Under no circumstances should a contestant or spectator speak with a judge or in any way cause a distraction that could result in a missed ride. Contest officials should only be spoken to during lulls when no surfers are taking off. Spotters or recorders should be the only ones talking to judges in larger or very consistent surf. The judge should also never talk to another judge about a ride until after the score has been recorded.

The score should not be awarded until the contestant has completely finished the ride. Never give a score for just the outside ride, and then watch someone else outside while the other contestant gets a good ride on the re-formed shore break inside. This might require watching two rides simultaneously by the judge, but is still preferable to missing part of a ride where points could accumulate.

It is difficult to judge when multiple surfers are riding waves at the same time in a large heat. This situation can occur during a set when two or three waves roll through in quick succession. If the waves are breaking outside and stay formed clear into the shore break, chances are good that most contestants in the heat will take off during the set.

The best procedure in consistent conditions is to keep the heats small. The international format of four surfers works well to prevent missing wave judgment criteria. If you must judge, let your eyes follow each surfer, moving back and forth in quick succession, trying not to miss when important maneuvers are performed. Yell out the color and score to your recorder immediately when a ride is completed while still following the remaining surfers. Odds are good that no more than one or two of the rides in progress will be exceptional and earn much higher than average scores.

Judging Scale

A judging scale of 1 to 10 points, with 1/10 point or 2/10 point increments, is currently used for surf contests. Generally, the 1/10th point increment system is used in major events as it allows maximum flexibility for evaluating individual performances. This wide flexibility is necessary to prevent ties, especially when conditions are poor.

The judge's first responsibility after deciding on the scoring system is determining the score for the average ride on an average contest wave. This could vary from 4 points in poor conditions to 6 points in excellent conditions. In large surf the average wave could be 8 points.

For this discussion we will define an average ride as taking off on a normal set wave, turning off the face, maybe performing one not too radical over the lip re-entry, and then riding the wave until it starts to die out with only a few more non-critical or non-exceptional turns. The turns are smooth, well controlled, but not especially powerful. Exhibiting exceptional powerful turns off the bottom and nearly vertical attacks off the lip are not considered normal turns.

Once the average score for an average wave has been established, the point spread can be determined for the level of performance on better or worse than average waves. As an example, suppose the average will score a 6.5. Now an excellent surfer takes off on a poor wave and does very well, getting everything possible out of the wave, but performing no exceptional maneuvers. This surfer should not score higher than the surfer who catches the largest set wave and performs a slightly better than average job. In other words, any variance from the average by either the contestant or the wave should be added or subtracted accordingly.

On the theoretical average 6.5 point wave, a good breakdown would be to score plus or minus up to 1 point for the wave selection, and up to plus or minus 2 points for the "averageness" of the ride. This means that the surfer who caught the best wave of the contest and did an excellent job on a 6.5-point day should still not be scored higher than 9.5 points.

The surfer who takes off on a closed out wall and then gets tubed before he or she is bombed on a very short ride should not get more than 6 to 7 points. If the surfer managed a turn before being bombed, he or she still might be scored the same as an average ride. Sometimes judges get carried away by the crowd and may score more than deserved on a little shorebreak tube that closes out. A shorebreak should almost never be scored higher than an average wave on an outside set.

Things to Look For When Judging

Judgment is in reality an opinion based on considering conditions, ability of contestants, and experience. Finer techniques displayed when surfing are easily spotted once the judge knows what to look for, but placing a figure of merit on these techniques is not so simple. This section will present a brief summary of important areas to consider when judging an event. It is intended for non-surfing administrators, coaches who need to understand what they are watching, team members new to judging, and even as a refresher for judges. *(We hope that other judges who read this will have opinions they can offer to help us upgrade this section in the future.)*

Wave Judgment

The right wave choice is essential for maximum performance. Position also plays an important role. Look for the surfer who takes off on the largest MAKEABLE wave. If a good set rolls in, the surfer who paddles over several good waves in order to position him or her near the peak of the largest wave will have the greatest chance for a maximum score. Slightly higher scores can be given for taking off behind the peak and making the wave, especially when the contestant must drive under (or over) the lip at maximum speed in order to gain a position high on the shoulder for the next maneuver.

Takeoff and Turns

Paddling into the wave and the initial turn are sometimes over evaluated by judges. The way a wave is entered by the contestant should fit the type of surfing conditions. A late takeoff from way back on a steep wall necessitates paddling towards the shoulder with only a slight turn towards the top of the wave. The reason for the late takeoff should be to obtain maximum speed and most critical positioning, not just because it was the only way to make the wave.

The surfer who drops clear to the bottom on a fast wave, makes a nice powerful turn, comes up to the lip once, and then straightens out in the soup or kicks out over the top should not be scored nearly as high as the surfer who turns at the top on a similar wave, drives across the face, and then attacks through or over the curl, and then continuously works the wave until it dies out.

In slow, mushy waves, initial turns after takeoff are very critical. The loss of momentum on a bottom turn will cause the contestant to stall slightly and allow the wave to catch up. Too strong a turn off the rail causes the contestant to go over the top or too high for the board's fins to hold effectively. The best scores are given for the surfer who can drop in well under the peak and execute a powerful turn into a critical wave position with no loss of speed.

In slightly slower surf, deep turns into the peak are difficult and should score higher. Under these conditions, watch for the surfer who drops clear to the bottom behind the peak and then moves under the peak with a powerful turn off the board's rail to a high enough position on the opposite side to allow for the most radical maneuvers. No speed



should be lost from the turn. If such a turn can be executed on a large fast wave, and the maneuver is successful, the surfer should be able to achieve a solid score for the ride.

You have a real problem when judging in nearly flat or small wave conditions. In many contests, there will be times when the surf simply doesn't break or when the tide gets so high that the waves start to roll in without breaking. When this situation happens, the real challenge is often simply catching enough waves or pumping on the wave enough to get a long ride. If the waves aren't breaking, you must still judge each ride using a point spread wide enough to allow winners to be selected. This isn't a problem in professional contests which delay for quality surf but it happens often in amateur contests. Don't simply give a 2 for a poor ride simply because the waves are bad. It's best to score 1 for a standup and immediate fall off and then go higher for at least a turn while falling. Whatever you score, make sure you stay away from creating ties among heat members.

Evaluating Turns

The surfer who can execute the most maneuvers on the face or curl of the wave will naturally have the opportunity to score the most points. Judges should use higher scoring for surfers who ride the steepest part of the wave while making smooth but radical cutbacks and maneuvers. Look at the surfer's angle relative to the wave. If the body

position can get nearly horizontal relative to the bottom of the wave then a good score for turning is indicated. To achieve such a position, the surfer must have executed a powerful enough turn that centripetal force will keep his or her body weight against the board while in an unusual position.



Another area to watch is the bottom on the wave where a cutback is initiated, and how far back into the curl the surfer can get before turning out to the shoulder again. By turning at the most critical location, the most force can be generated, and the most speed can be achieved. Remember that average turns off the bottom should receive only average points.



Extra points should be given for cutbacks on steeper waves when executed close to the lip. After the cutback, the contestant should try to drive right into the curl before turning back out into the face again. On slower waves, speed is needed; so several powerful turns back and forth close to the curl are needed to maximize points. Turns should be executed while in the steepest area of the face. Cutbacks on mushy

waves should carry the surfer over the breaking crest and back off the bottom for maximum points.

Evaluating Maneuvers That Give "A Little Extra"

One or some additional 1/10th points should always be given to the surfer who tries and completes something a little extra on the wave. The same trick over and over, or several different tricks on one wave shouldn't generate more than a couple of points, but can have the effect of becoming "old" with the judges if used over and over. Normally, a short tube or an over the lip roller coaster will add a couple of points, while an occasional controlled fin slip, switch stance, spinner, etc. can gain a point. A 360-degree turn (helicopter on longboards) is much more difficult and can gain two or more points depending on wave conditions. For longboard judging, nose riding with one foot over, or better yet with both feet or 10 toes over obviously draw high scores from judges.

In small shore break conditions, with no outside waves available, tricks can be given the highest consideration for judgment. In such conditions, combining two maneuvers, such as switching stance at the top of a roller coaster wave or side slipping inside the tube are good for 1.5 to as many as 2.5 points. Long rides inside the tube or large backside roller coasters over the lip can earn three extra points in good waves.



10 Toes Noseride

Inside The Tube

One of the classical positions in surfing is the tube ride. This occurs when the surfer positions him or her self underneath the breaking lip and well back into the wave as shown in the figure. Judges have traditionally scored a tube ride higher than virtually any other maneuver in surfing. Even a short tube (a simple head dip) can usually earn an extra point or so during a competition. With all other conditions being equal, the surfer who gets the best tube ride will usually get the higher score.

Length of Ride

At least .5 to one point should always be reserved for rides where the surfer exhibits many different abilities. The surfer who has an average ride from outside clear into the shorebreak should be able to score on more maneuvers than the surfer who pulls out before the wave forms inside. However, simply riding a long wave with no continuous additional maneuvers does not score additional points. Remember the



Well Positioned in the Tube

surfer who can continue momentum generation sufficient to get him or her through flat spots on a wave has demonstrated more skill than one who hasn't demonstrated the ability to maintain momentum. Also, remember that an inside trick in the shore break could generate an extra 1/10th point or more.

No matter what tricks are accomplished on an inside wave, the surfer on a shorebreak wave only should never be able to score as high as the average ride on the outside wave. Many times inexperienced judges score as high for an inside tube ride that ends in a closeout as they do for a good solid outside wave ride. When outside waves are present, a couple of tricks on an inside wave can't possibly be scored as high as a much longer ride on an outside breaking wave, even if it is a slightly below average ride.

As an example, say the shorebreak surfer takes off, makes a quick turn, gets completely tubed, and then kicks over the break with a floater or re-entry. In a 10 point scoring system, the surfer could get 1 or 2 points for wave judgment (he found a non-closeout), 0 or 1 point for the turn, 2 points for the tube ride, and 1 or 2 points for the re-entry. The maximum this wave could generate on an average breaking day is 6 points, not the 7 to 9 points possible for an average ride on an outside wave. This view of judging becomes less stringent in poor wave conditions or when the outside break is inconsistent.

Style

Since style is developed by striving for the ultimate attainment of perfection, at least 1 or 1.5 points could be reserved for this surfing ability, particularly on quality breaking days. Points for style are not always given, and should only be granted when a contestant's ability clearly indicates his or her excellence. All turns should appear smooth and free from any artificial effort. The surfer should become a part of the wave, flowing with it, or dancing to its natural music. The surfer should appear to be the master of the wave, showing no reluctance going where he or she wants, with no fear of ability to direct his or her own actions. In perfect ten-point surf, as many as 2.5 extra points could be awarded for smoothness and perfection on a wave.

Simple Examples of Judging

Let's say we have an average wave day with an outside break and waves consistently about four to five feet, slightly choppy, and steep. The waves do not form inside but provide about a 40-yard ride.

With a 10-point scale, an average wave day could allow maybe 8 points as the highest possible score considering conditions. This means that an average ride on an average wave for an average competitor will score around 5, and for a very good competitor will score probably 6.

The contestant paddles into the pocket on his or her takeoff just before the wave breaks, turns at the bottom just under the lip, and then finishes the wave with smooth but straightforward turns on the shoulder. Let's say the turns appear to the judge as slightly too quick to allow for maximum transfer of power, and that the curl is attacked just once during the ride to help increase speed. The wave is of average height and lasts about the same as most others. The wave breaks left with the surfer riding regular foot.

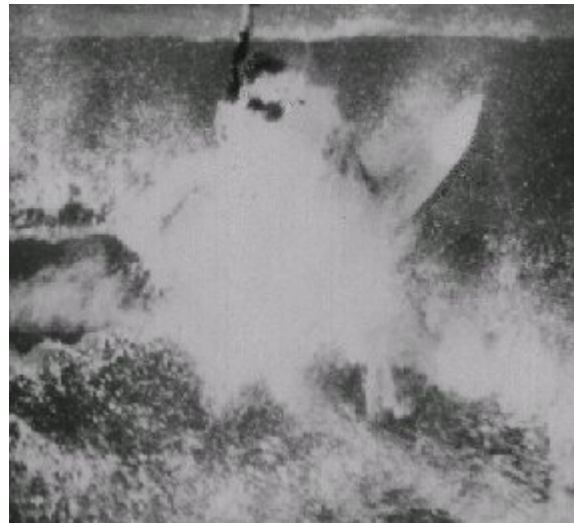
A judge watching this ride could consider it as average and award maybe 4.5 points for the overall wave judgment and ride, and one to two points for the maneuvers under the

lip and into the curl. An extra 2/10ths point could be added for riding the full wave while turning. The total score for this ride would be in the range of a 6 to 7.

A second regular foot surfer drops straight in at the peak on the next average wave and makes a nice smooth turn off the bottom under the peak. He now turns straight up into the lip and cuts back with his board almost as high as his whole body. He jams back into the hook and powerfully turns his board back towards the bottom and then up into the face again. He then finishes his ride with average turns and no other difficult maneuvers.

This time the judge would primarily consider the initial few maneuvers of the ride as most important for scoring. A 5 point score could be awarded for wave judgment and overall ride. Up to 1 point would be given for the first turn with an extra point for the difficulty in gaining a near horizontal position, and 1 to 2 additional points for the power of his second and subsequent turns. A score of 7.5 points is a good score and should not be given unless a very solid ride occurs. Judging scores higher than 8 would indicate the surfer exhibited exceptional ability.

The next surfer in the same heat (also a regular foot) takes off at the peak on the left breaking clean-up wave of the set – a five footer with nice shape. After driving to the bottom, a powerful turn brings him right through the lip (Figure 3.4), over the curl, and back high onto the shoulder where he immediately turns along the steep edge of face under the curl. The wave is ridden all the way until it dies using a number of nice turns and re-entries, but not quite the maximum that could have been obtained if he was more aggressive. However, the surfer's style is classy making his maneuvers look easy.



Powerful Off the Lip Re-entry

This ride deserves almost a maximum score. The overall ride is better than the earlier contestant's, and is on a better wave, deserving an overall wave judgment and ride score of 6. The initial maneuver through the lip with power sets up the rest of the wave, and could be given 1-2 extra points. Riding the wave to the end with smooth maneuvers could also gain a 1/2 extra point, with maybe 1/2 more point scored for the surfer's overall style. This wave could easily earn a total score of 8.5 to 9.

How to beat this ride? Again, this is an opinion call, with another judge possibly offering different views. Lets say the contestant, a goofy foot, paddles into a peak on a similar cleanup wave from the left side, drops across the face low, then drives backwards over the top and down the inside face under the curl. At the bottom, the surfer again makes a powerful turn nearly straight up into the curl, finishing high on the shoulder where he again drops low across the face. The wave is also ridden to the end using a series of turns intended for maximizing the length of ride. Just as the wave starts to die, the surfer

switches stance and rides a few more yards. This surfer also has a classy style, but not quite as perfected as the previous surfer.

For this ride, not only did a very good surfer make maximum use of conditions, but he also put out that little bit extra to go ahead of the previous contestant. Breaking the scoring down, a 6 could again be awarded for the overall wave judgment and ride, 1 to 2 points for the initial maneuver, and 1 to 2 points for milking the wave that little bit extra. A 9.1-9.3 could easily be given for this ride.

Interference

Wave possession and interference calls are a sensitive issue with most competitors and judges. Precision judgment is required to reach decisions that involve disciplining a competitor for interference during a heat. Even judges often disagree on interference calls. Therefore, when an interference occurs, a judge must distinctly remember the precise circumstances and reasoning for the infraction. While interference is less common in one on one competition, it can be a real problem in large heats when waves are inconsistent and not much time is available.

Penalties for interference are based on contest rules in place prior to the event. Usually they are scored one of two ways. The most straightforward is to subtract points only when the majority of judges agree that a contestant on the wave was interfered with. This method allows each judge the freedom to make an independent call on what occurred. The second method requires each scorecard with an interference call to have its score adjusted prior to the totals being tabulated.

The chances of being called for interference during a major contest were critical during the days when US Championships often were held in poor surf conditions and when six surfers competed in the heat. Such a situation happened during the 1974 US Championships in Huntington Beach to Corky Carroll. The dispute erupted during the final point tabulation, and resulted in the heated discussion between this author and Corky documented in the movie *Five Summer Stories*. Rules are rules, and, as I told Corky, I didn't make them. However, in order to keep a contest from falling apart, it is of utmost importance that the Contest Director enforces whatever rules apply equally to all contestants.

The surfer with wave possession is the surfer who stands up first and is closest to the breaking part of the wave. In big surf, contestants can sometimes take off late by paddling into the peak above and behind the surfer already on the wave. Although some judges may disagree, especially Hawaiian judges, the surfer dropping in behind the first surfer is interfering and should be penalized.

Another interference which is often missed is the surfer who waits until another surfer inside of him gets in position to take off, and then paddles across the inside surfer and takes off further into the wave at the same time the first surfer takes off. This maneuver called wave hopping is a common tactic and should be spotted by a judge immediately.

Sometimes it is possible for two surfers on the same wave to cause no interference, especially if the outside surfer pulls out early. The judge should determine an interference if the surfer in front caused the inside contestant to change style, ride in a place other than the best wave position, or take any chances that would not normally have been taken. The

judge should also determine if the wave itself broke differently as a result of the second person riding it. A potential interference could exist with the situation shown in the figure below.

A few examples may be helpful in understanding how to determine a simple interference call. Say on an average five-foot fairly consistent day, the first contestant sees a nice wave and paddles into position near the peak. At the same time, a second surfer who is more outside and farther away sees the same wave and starts to paddle for it. The second surfer paddles across and behind the first just as the wave reaches them and both take off at the same time with the second surfer on the inside. Without realizing another surfer is near, the first surfer drops low into the wave causing the second surfer to cut back and out of the break. The first surfer then continues on the wave for a scored ride.

Which surfer was interfered with? This is the classic case where the second surfer was wave hopping the first. The first surfer had initial position and therefore wave possession. The second surfer interfered with the first when he paddled across and took off. The first surfer's cut back causing the second surfer's wave loss has no significance.



Potential Interference Situation

Next, consider the situation where two surfers position themselves on each side of the peak on a slow, mushy day. One surfer, a goofy foot, takes off to go left while the other, a regular foot, takes off to go right. The right shoulder doesn't look very good, so the surfer going right changes his or her mind and then cuts across the peak to the left shoulder. In this case, the surfer on the left had first possession, and will be interfered with by the new surfer on the wave. This situation could have been changed if the regular foot had taken off at the peak and gone left initially.

Another situation commonly occurs at point breaks. Two surfers take off on a wave some distance from each other. The surfer farthest back has more speed and almost, but not quite, catches the surfer in front. The wave holds up nicely and the first surfer's wake is pretty much gone before the second surfer reaches it. Even though the first surfer may

complain, the judge should not score interference in this case unless some actual physical results were observed.

One of the most difficult situations for a judge to evaluate occurs when two surfers on a wave change positions. This happens in larger surf when the surfer in front cuts back above the trailing surfer and ends up on the inside section of the wave. Although difficult, this maneuver can sometimes occur without any interference to the trailing surfer. Some judges are of the opinion that it is possible to change wave possession under these circumstances, and the surfer in front will have to relinquish the wave.

As a final example, consider the case where a surfer paddling out is caught inside during a set. If a contestant surfing on one of the set waves hits the surfer paddling out, no interference should be called, as the surfer on the wave should maintain control of the ride. On the other hand, if the surfer must kick out to avoid hitting the paddler, interference may or may not be called. The judge should determine in his or her own mind whether the contestant paddling out could have avoided the situation, or if the surfer on the wave was trying to draw interference. In most circumstances, if the paddler has stopped in the water, it is the wave rider's responsibility to avoid him or her.

Contest Judging Rules (Derived from the 2006 ESA and 2011 the ASP Rule Book and Judging Course)

The basic surfing criteria established and published by the Eastern Surfing Association and the ASP is as follows:

"A surfer must perform radical controlled maneuvers in the critical section 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 consideration 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."

Analysis of the Surfing Criteria

The above surfing criteria is separated into two sentences. The first being the major emphasis of the Criteria, concerns the maneuvers, how radical and controlled they are, the section of the wave they are performed on, and how they are strung together.

The criteria can be graded into four main sections:

1. Radical Controlled Maneuvers

This is by far the **MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE CRITERIA**. Contemporary maneuvers basically constitute change of direction of the board on the wave (not the surfer on the board). Such maneuvers would include re-entries, cut backs, floaters, aerials, tube rides, vertical snaps, etc. How radical they are, followed by the amount of control and commitment put into each of them, will determine how high they will score.

An important judging point to note is that even if a surfer has completed 90% of a maneuver, it will not score if he loses control and falls off.

2. Most Critical Section

This part of the Criteria describes the position where wave maneuvers should be performed to score the maximum points. **THE CRITICAL SECTION WAVE IS THE “POCKET”, CLOSEST TO THE CURL.** The degree of commitment and risk involved in performing a maneuver close to the curl is the reason that it scores higher.

3. Speed, Power and Flow

The surfer who generates and displays speed throughout his or her maneuvers, and a display of power, while at the same time, using flow to put maneuvers together, will score high. According to current ESA published criteria:

*****Wave selection is the single most important factor for a surfer in a heat.***

- 4. Innovative / Progressive surfing as well as Variety of Repertoire (maneuvers), will be taken into consideration 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.**

The object here is to set out to free up the criteria with the dual objectives of further rewarding progressive surfing and introducing a reward system based on demonstrating variety of repertoire and linking maneuvers together, still in the critical sections of the wave, in a seamless flow of power and speed.

A Judge must judge the Maneuvers. Not the wave, or length of the ride. Therefore, it is important to judge the maneuvers, not the distance traveled.

This is a departure from the old system and too many local judges still regard it as one of the criteria. It is not.

It is of the utmost importance for every member of the judging panel to adhere to the same point or reference “The Criteria” so that each competitor knows how to maximize his or her point scoring potential.

Judging

Article 144 of the ASP Judging Criteria is as follows:

Surfers must perform to the ASP judging key elements to maximize their scoring potential. Judges analyze the following major elements when scoring waves.

- Commitment and degree of difficulty
- Innovative and progressive maneuvers
- Combination of major maneuvers
- Variety of maneuvers
- 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

Per the ESA criteria:

USE WHOLE POINTS AND HALF POINTS AS MUCH AS YOU CAN DURING A HEAT. RESORT TO DECIMAL POINTS ONLY WHEN NECESSARY. DO SO TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WAVES IN THE GOOD TO EXCELLENT

Avoid scoring higher as the heat continues. Bear in mind the previous scoring waves. The final wave exchange in a heat should be in context to the first waves scored in a heat.

It is important that a judge concentrates on the scoring of individual waves and ignores the final outcome of a heat.

Judges are never to be asked to break ties. They are there to score that heat, on that day without regard to either who is in the water or what the scores coming in add up to.

ESA JUDGING METHOD

It is important to score the first wave exchanges in the heat correctly. That will set the scale for the rest of the heat.

Try to see the wave in terms of scoring potential. While the competitor is riding the wave, maneuvering, you are allocating points that will be automatically added in your mind. Thus, at the end of the wave, or in the case of a fall, you immediately have a score for the ride. Do not forget to compare this score with previous scores and remember: **NEVER DEDUCT POINTS** (already earned during a ride) because a surfer fell.

IMPORTANT: “Each judge must give 100% effort. Maximum concentration is essential to ensure your contribution to the panel is significant and personal bias is eliminated.”

JUDGING IN BAD CONDITIONS

A lot of events take place in marginal conditions. In poor surf you should concentrate on surfers who are utilizing the mini pockets on the wave with explosive maneuvers that are timed to occur at each of these spots on the wave.

Observe if each maneuver has been linked directly to another without “groveling” (rail to rail turns through the flat sections should be distinguished from hopping all the way to the next section). Establish if the surfer is generating and creating his or her own speed out of turns because the wave will certainly not be cooperating. You also must notice which surfers are completing each wave flawlessly with major significant, perfectly executed maneuvers.

NOTE: In poor conditions there are normally not many waves. **Keep in mind the fact that each heat can have 10.0 rides regardless of the wave conditions (see above). This is crucial.**

It is important that you know how to use a full range on any given wave conditions you are presented with. Never be afraid of rewarding a surfer who utilizes his/her ability on small waves to show extra effort/talent.

JUDGING “HEAVY” HEATS

Difficult heats should be accepted as a challenge. This means judging methodically, being extremely critical, watching details, and picturing the whole wave in your mind. In every contest there will always be some heats that are more difficult than others either

because they are the first heats of the day, due to worsening conditions, or because it is a close heat due to the level of surfing that is taking place (good or bad). This is when the top judges come to the forefront.

The following factors should be considered when analyzing each wave in such heats:

1. Where was the first maneuver performed?
2. How well was the first maneuver executed?
3. How well were the maneuvers connected together?
4. Did the surfer execute rail-to-rail maneuvers through the flat sections or did he or she just hop all the way to the next section?
5. Compare outside maneuvers to inside maneuvers.
6. Compare take off areas and how deep the surfer was at the initial point of take-off.
7. Consider how the surfer utilized the wave.
8. Consider the ability of the surfer to make sections and whether the maneuvers were functional in doing so.
9. Did the surfer actually complete the maneuver and with control?
10. What did the surfer complete before falling?
11. Comparison between the first scoring wave and the last scoring wave is extremely important. Inexperienced judges tend to over score last waves as they forget or ignore what has taken place during a heat. This often affects a result. However, the good judge will never add up his or her scores during a heat. The judge scores colors, not people, and records history at that moment in time and moves on.

This is an area where an inexperienced judge can learn a lot from an experienced judge. The experienced judge has the ability to concentrate on the broad picture of what is happening in the heat as well as minor details such as possible paddling interference, etc.

JUDGING 4, 5 AND 6 MAN HEATS (US Only)

100% concentration is the key. It is important not to merely have each score down correctly, but also to assist the Head Judge with wave and interference calls. In such heats the ability to score the wave instinctively in your mind and allocate the score automatically at the end of each ride is of the utmost importance. When several competitors are riding at the same time, it is important to watch everyone. However, it is essential that you focus on the more critical areas. For example, the take off point, the first maneuver, and other outside maneuvers because this is where the surfer's greatest scoring potential will occur. The beginning of a wave is far more important. Therefore, when at least two surfers are riding, concentration must be apportioned according to each surfer's scoring potential on their waves. The surfer's scoring potential at the end of a wave is obviously much lower. But...it is still there. A surfer finishing with control of his or her ride, surfing to the judges, not away from them...can earn extra decimal points.

It is important to get your scores down on your judge's sheet as quickly as possible.

Continuously call wave counts when no competitors are riding.

If unsure about a score, **never ask a fellow judge** because he or she may have missed something or be on a different scale than you. **Always ask the Head Judge for assistance because that is what he or she is there for.**

If a surfer continues a ride outside the competition area, don't forget that your **prime** responsibility is ***to the surfers inside the competition area.***

In addition, waves caught ***outside*** the competition area should not be scored. If in doubt, consult with the Head Judge.

JUDGING LONGBOARD HEATS

The renewed popularity of longboarding has brought with it a need to develop a judging philosophy; especially since judges who were not surfing during that period on longboard equipment will most likely be judging longboard events.



ASP Article 80: Judging Criteria for Longboard

80.01 Surfers must perform to the ASP judging key elements to maximize their scoring potential. Judges analyze the following major elements when scoring waves.

- (a) Commitment and degree of difficulty
- (b) Combination of traditional and modern maneuvers
- (c) Combination of major maneuvers
- (d) Variety of maneuvers
- (e) Innovative and progressive maneuvers
- (f) Speed, power, style 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.

80.02 Judges will utilize a 75-25% ratio being that Surfers will only ever get a maximum of 75% (7.5 pts) of the scale for surfing only one aspect of modern or traditional, up to an additional 25% (2.5pts) can be added when the 2 aspects are combined. Incomplete maneuvers will not be rewarded.

ESA Longboard Competitions

The criteria set out below presents an approach to recreate surfing of the original longboard era, which still allows creativity, and a development of the art of longboarding by its current contemporary exponents.

LONGBOARDING WILL BE JUDGED ON THE NORMAL SURFING CRITERIA. FURTHER, LONGBOARDING WILL BE JUDGED ON A COMBINATION OF TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY MANEUVERS WITH CONTROL BEING THE MAJOR FACTOR.

This criteria is appropriate, provided attention is made to the following:

Points will be awarded for classic surfing maneuvers. In longboarding, such maneuvers include:

- Nose riding, trimming, and stalling
- Walking on the board
- Standing and crouching “Island pullouts”
- Bottom turns - full rail or from the tail
- Cut backs - Drop knee or wide stance/sit down style
- Tube rides and cover-ups
- Top turns and fade take offs
- Late take offs
- Critical surfing

A surfer may embellish his or her performance with soul arches, head dips, grace and style, although these are not considered maneuvers as such.

Summary

This is a summary of maneuvers used in traditional surfing technique. Judges should make themselves aware of these maneuvers and classic surfing in general by studying suitable reference material in the form of magazines or movies from that era.

NOTE: Judges must consider the difference in accomplishment in various nose rides, such as stretch or cheater fives, hang fives, hang tens, and walking back to the tail to continue the ride, and clean conclusions to the ride such as island pullouts as opposed to wipe outs to conclude the ride.

Walking cleanly and precisely foot over foot to the nose and back to the tail is obviously superior to shuffling forward and back.

Classic nose rides are usually best when the walk to the nose is set up by a tail stall or directly in or from the arc of a turn.

It is not necessary for a surfer to “work the wave over” in this division. Simple trimming or climbing and dropping, if performed with control in the critical part of a wave, may receive a high score.

ESA INTERFERENCE

The interference rules determine which surfer has the Right of Way (**ROW**) as situations arise. It is up to the individual judge to determine whether the surfer with **ROW** has possibly been hindered in his/her scoring potential. The key word in these criteria is “possibly”. Each judge must decide for him or herself.

When in doubt...don't. Be prepared in your mind to defend your decision, not to the athlete, but to yourself. Be sure.

A head judge cannot call interference for a panel. A Head Judge can advise the panel who has priority.

What a judge considers:

1. Which surfer has the **ROW**? Inside surfer always has unconditional **ROW**.
2. Was there interference or not? Did the surfer with unconditional **ROW** have his or her scoring potential possibly hindered?
3. What rule reflects the infringement? Drop in, snaking, paddling, causing a section to breakdown a section, excessive hassling.

INTERFERENCE - BASIC RULE

A. “The surfer deemed to have inside position for a wave has unconditional right of way for the entire duration of that ride. Interference will be called if, during that ride, a majority of the judges feel that a fellow competitor has possibly hindered the scoring potential of that surfer deemed to have right of way for that wave.”

B. “Anyone who stands up in front of a surfer with right of way has the chance to ride or kick out of the wave without being called for interference, unless he or she hinders the scoring potential of the surfer with right of way by any means including excessive hassling, leg rope pulling, or breaking down a section.”

ESA INTERFERENCE - SPECIFIC RULES

Wave possession or right of way will vary slightly under the following categories, as determined by the nature of the contest venue, but basically it is the responsibility of the judge to determine which surfer has the inside position based on whether the wave is primarily a right or left. If at the initial point of take off neither the right nor the left can be deemed superior, then the right of way will go to the first surfer who makes a definite turn in his or her chosen direction.

A. 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.

B. One-Peak Break

If there is a single, well defined peak, with both a left and a right available at the initial point of take off and neither the right nor the left can be deemed superior, then the right of way will go to the first surfer who makes a definite turn in his or her 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 he or she does not interfere with the first surfer who has established right of way (i.e. the surfer may not cross the path of the first surfer in order to gain the opposite side of the peak unless he or she does so without possibly hindering, in the majority of the judges’ opinions, the inside surfer).

C. Beach Break (with multiple random peaks)

In these conditions, wave possession may vary slightly according to the nature of an individual wave.

1. With multiple peaks there will be cases where one swell will have two separately defined peaks, far apart, that eventually meet at the same point. Although two surfers may each have inside position on those respective peaks, the surfer who is first to his or her feet shall be deemed to have wave possession and the second surfer must give way by cutting back or kicking out before hindering the right of way surfer.
2. If two surfers stand at the same time on separate peaks that eventually meet then:
 - a. If they both give way by cutting back or kicking out so that neither is hindered, there will be no penalty.
 - b. If they cross paths and collide or hinder one another, the judges will penalize the surfer who has been the aggressor at the point of contact.
 - c. If neither surfer gives way by cutting back or kicking out and **BOTH** share responsibility for the confrontation, then a double interference will be called.

PADDLING INTERFERENCE

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

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

Paddling interference has occurred when there is:

- **PHYSICAL CONTACT**
- **FORCED CHANGE OF PADDLING LINE**
- **BREAKING DOWN A SECTION CAUSING LOSS OF SCORING POTENTIAL**
- **HINDERING A SURFER'S RIDE BY ANY MEANS**

SLAKING

The surfer who is farthest inside at the initial point of take off and has established wave possession is entitled to that wave for the duration of his or her ride even though another surfer may subsequently take off in the whitewater behind. The judges will not penalize the surfer because he or she has the right of way even though he or she is in front.

If the second surfer has not hindered the original surfer with right of way then the judges may choose not to penalize him and will score both surfers' rides.

If in the opinion of the judges, the second surfer has interfered with (snaked) the original surfer with the right of way by causing him or her to pull out or lose the wave then interference may be called on the second surfer even though he or she is behind the first surfer when the penalty is called.

JUDGES DISCRETION

Judges must wait until the completion of the tabulation work before checking the tally sheets for results.

No judge of an event may pass comment on a surfer's chances in any event to the public, media, or other contestants or their supporters.

Judges, once selected, must remain on the panel for the duration of the event.

JUDGING TIPS

- Arrive at the beach early and check conditions and surfing to establish your Scoring range.
- Be punctual in judge's rotation.
- Maintain concentration during heat.
- Minimize conversation.
- Keep up wave counts.
- Check previous heat sheets on your breaks.
- Be open-minded and contribute at judges meetings.
- Try and spend some time in the water every day. Plan your breaks to get wet if possible.

No other area in the contest is more heavily scrutinized than judges. Remember to stay professional and business like at all times, especially off the beach or off rotation. Do not discuss your scores or opinions to anyone outside the judge panel, head judge or contest director. Never talk with the competitors, their friends or their family about scores, interference calls or other judge's opinions. If you have a question or problem, talk to the head judge or contest director. **Never discuss your problems with the competitors, their friends or family. Judges who do not abide by this rule shall be dismissed.**

The General Guidelines

