Surfing Victoria Competition Rules and FAQs

COMPETITION RULES:

Judging Criteria

a) Standard Judging Criteria

“A surfer must perform radical controlled manoeuvres in the most critical section of a wave with speed, power and flow. Innovative and progressive surfing as well as the combination and variety of repertoire (of major manoeuvres) will be taken into consideration when rewarding points for a surfer’s performance. The surfer who performs to the criteria above, exhibiting the maximum degree of difficulty and commitment on the waves shall maximise his/her scoring potential”.

Surfing Australia Events –

First Round Seeding – Attempts should be made to seed all rounds of every event. Methods to obtain a first round seeding are:

a) If the contest is part of a circuit or State competition round, then a seeding list should be available on the aggregate results of the event to date or at worst on the results of the last contest.

b) Once entries are closed then an alternate list can be created and used to take position of no-show competitors etc.

c) Where possible, heats should be four (4) person according to entries and the available time to conduct the event. A projected time schedule of events should be compiled to ensure that the program can be completed.
d) Events should be designed to accommodate a minimum 50% progression rate in all divisions

Heat Timing and Wave Counts –

a) It is recommended that all heats and finals be 20 minutes minimum or up to 40 minutes maximum at the discretion of the Head Judge in consultation with the Contest Director.

b) The best two (2) waves will be counted as the surfers final heat score.

A ten (10) wave or up to fifteen (15) wave maximum will be set before the heat or final commences, at the discretion of the Head Judge and in consultation with the Contest Director.

c) No beach starts, all heats are to be started from a marshalling area in the line-up. With the exception of Surfing Australia teams format.

d) Siren or horn blasts must be used to start and finish heats (one to start; two to finish).

A five minute visual and PA warning is to be given prior to the finish of the heat.

The official timing of all heats is to be done by the Head Judge.

A large disc/flag system at least 1 metre square must also be used.

Green will signify the start and yellow/orange for the last five minutes. The disc/flag must be in a neutral position once the commentator reaches zero in his countdown.

The commentator must give a five-second countdown at the end of the heat, when the countdown reaches zero the heat ends. The first of two sirens must blow immediately as the commentator reaches zero. The end of the heat is the start of the first decibel of sound from the siren.
e) Any surfer standing up and riding a wave before or after their heat may be fined $100 per wave ridden

f) At the beginning and during the heat, “the surfer must be clearly in possession of the wave on the wave face, making a movement to stand, his hands having left the rails (rail grabs excluded) for the wave to be scored”.

g) No automatic starts will be allowed. If the Event Director wishes to use the minimum time delay between heats, of 10 seconds, he/she must provide a marshalling area in the water outside of the lineup.

h) Time delay between heats once a heat has paddled out must be no more than 2 minutes unless due to some unforeseen circumstance.

i) Under no circumstance will there be any time extensions once a heat has entered the water. If a heat is interrupted for any reason it will be stopped by the Head Judge and will be resumed at the time it was stopped and will run for the originally set period. Exception is if the Head Judge on consultation with other event officials, feel the entire heat should be re-run because no-one had a definite advantage at the time of cancellation or altered conditions make it impossible for judges to keep the same scale.

j) If at the 10 minute mark of any heat, no surfers have caught a wave, and no surfer has an advantage nor colluded with other competitors in not catching waves, then the heat may be cancelled and re-run. This will be at discretion of the Head Judge.

k) The Contest Director is the only person who can give the exact schedule of events. If any other employee of the event or Surfing Australia is asked and wrong information id received, subsequently missing a heat or some other problem, then there is no form of protest. If the Contest Director gives wrong information and a surfer subsequently misses a heat the a protest can be considered.

l) The Contest Director must have an official notice board where the daily schedule is posted for all competitors to see. This schedule is always subject to change.
m) Double banking or 15 minute heats may be allowed, however, not recommended.

It is a recommendation that if double banks are utilised that there be a minimum of 50 metres between the outer boundaries of the contest areas. The area between the two contest areas will be classified as the “no competition zone”.

Surfers may surf into this zone but, cannot takeoff in this zone.

Surfers who surf through the “no competition zone” and continue into the other contest area can be penalised with an interference if he or she hinders the scoring potential of another competitive surfer. Surfers should not takeoff in the other contest area and can be penalised with a paddling interference.

General Rules –

a) There has to be a minimum of 45cm of wave height before surf can be deemed contestable. A special allowance may be made if the surf is rideable. This will be determined by the Contest Director in liaison with the Head Judge and Technical Director/Tour Manager.

b) Competitors must wear the designated competition vest upon collection from the Beach Marshal during the course of the heat and up until returning it to the Beach Marshal. Failure to do so may incur an infringement penalty. Under no circumstance can an event sponsor force contestants to wear any board shorts or wetsuits as a condition of entry into any sanctioned or non-sanctioned event.

c) Caddies (one per surfer maximum) may not enter the water once a board is lost or broken unless in surf conditions where water caddies are being allowed. If the caddy rides a wave the surfer who he is caddying for will be fined $100 per wave and if he/she interferes with the other surfers in any way, in the opinion of the judging panel, an interference will also be levied on the surfer for whom he/she is caddying. Water caddies may enter the water in a defined marshalling area if the Head Judge along with the Event Director see fit.
Exception to this rule is if the event officials feel that the surfer is in a life-threatening situation. In this case the water patrol may remove a surfer from the impact zone and position the surfer in a safer place that is no closer to the lineup, from where the surfer may continue their heat.

d) Surfers may only use replacement equipment carried by their own caddy once their heat has started. The use of any outside craft e.g. Inflatable boats, water patrols’ boards, photographers craft or previous or current heat competitors’ boards will be deemed an interference if the surfer after using one of them re-enters the competition zone and rides a wave or interferes with any other competitor.

e) There is to be a maximum of TWO photographers in the line-up during a heat. The photographer cannot use hard boards and or similar for floatation. After checking in with the Event Director and signing a waiver, if required, they can enter the water only during assigned heats. It is stipulated that photographers wear a suitable helmet when filming from the water. The Event Director and Head Judge can remove the photographer from the water at any time if they deem fit. Priority will be given to recognised event film crew.

f) Any surfer found colluding to fix heats or results will lose all competition points and prize money for that event plus the possibility of further fines and disciplinary action.

PROTESTS:

Lodging Protests –

A judging scoring decision once made is irrevocable no matter what proof is available to show otherwise. Once a decision has been made, by the judges or officials there is no form of protest other than with the Head Judge or Surfing Australia Technical Director/Tour Manager. No judges are to be approached over any calls or a fine will be imposed on the offending surfer.

The process for lodging a protest with the Head Judge is as follows:
a) Within 30 minutes after the heat has finished the surfer must submit in writing on the official protest sheet the details of the incident to the Beach Marshal. The Beach Marshal will submit the protest sheet to the Contest Director or SA Technical Director/Tour Manager.

b) The Contest Director or SA Technical Director/Tour Manager passes the protest sheet to the Head Judge who will then confer with the surfer either at the conclusion of the day’s surfing (30 minutes maximum), or at the Head Judges discretion.

c) Competitors, coaches, parents and non-event officials may not be allowed to access the official judging area.

Note: Video evidence is inadmissible.

INTERFERENCE RULES:

Basic Rule –

a) The surfer deemed to have the initial 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 judges feel that a fellow competitor has 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 in non priority one-on-one heats has the chance to ride or kick out of the wave without being called interference, unless they hinder the scoring potential of the surfer with right-of-way by any means. This includes excessive hassling, leg rope pulling or breaking down a section.

c) Anyone riding a wave in priority one-on-one heats has the chance to kick out of the wave immediately without being called interference when the priority surfer using their right-of-way catches that wave, unless they hinder the scoring potential of the surfer with right-of-way by any means. This includes excessive hassling, leg rope pulling or breaking down a
section or other applicable paddling interferences. If they continue to ride the wave in any direction and they do not hinder the scoring potential of the surfer with right-of-way, they will be scored a zero and the wave will count as one of their maximum allowable rides but not as one of their scoring rides.

**Right-Of-Way In Three & Four Person And Non Priority One-On-One Heats –**

Wave possession or right-of-way in these situations will vary slightly under the following categories, and is determined by the nature of the contest venue. Basically it is the responsibility of the judge to determine which surfer has the inside position based on whether the wave is a superior right or left, but never on which surfer is first to their feet.

**Exception:**

a) If at the initial point of takeoff neither the right nor left can be deemed superior, then the right-of-way will go to the first surfer who makes a definite turn in their chosen direction by “making an obvious right or left turn”.

b) Two peaks that eventually meet

**Point Break (Single Direction)**

When there is only one available direction on any given wave, the surfer on the initial inside position shall have unconditional right-of-way for the entire duration of that wave.
One Peak Break (Reef Or Beach)

a) One peak situation – if there is a single well defined peak with both a left and right available.

At the initial point of takeoff the judges will decide whether it is a superior right or left, if neither the right or left can be deemed superior then the right-of-way will go to the surfer who makes a definite turn in their chosen direction by making an obvious right or left turn.

b) A second surfer may go in the opposite direction on the same wave without incurring a penalty, providing they do not interfere with the first surfer who has established right-of-way.

They may not cross the path of the first surfer in order to gain the opposite side of the peak unless they do so without hindering, in the majority of judges’ opinion, the inside surfer.
Multiple Peak Situation

In conditions with multiple random peak situations, wave possession may vary slightly according to the nature of an individual wave:

a) With a wave with two peaks, there will be cases where one swell will have two separate, defined peaks far apart that eventually meet at some point. Although two surfers may each have inside position on those respective peaks, the surfer who is first to their feet shall be deemed to have the entire wave possession and the second surfer must give way by cutting back or kicking out before hindering the right-of-way surfer.

b) If two surfers stand at the same time on two 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 cross paths and collide or hinder one another, the judges will penalise the surfer who has been the aggressor at the point of contact.
iii) 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.
The Right-Of-Way Criteria

The choice of right-of-way criteria for each of the above possible situations is the responsibility of the Head Judge or the senior available judge in that order.

Snaking

a) The surfer who is farthest inside at the initial point of takeoff and has established wave possession is entitled to that wave for the duration of their ride, even though another surfer may subsequently takeoff behind them. The judges will not penalise 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 penalise 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 interference may be called on the second surfer, even though they are behind the first when the penalty was called.

d) A surfer may not takeoff on the other side of a fully broken wave peak to gain possession of the opposite wave face when a surfer has already established possession of the opposite wave face.

An interference will be called if the majority of the judges feel that the surfer riding from behind the broken peak has hindered the scoring potential, of the surfer who has already established possession/right-of-way in that direction.

e) The above situations apply only to multiple surfer heats or one-on-one in non-priority situations.
Paddling Interference

In 3-4 person heats or non-priority one-on-one situations another surfer paddling for the same wave should not excessively hinder a surfer who has inside position. Positioning at the correct point of takeoff for a wave is an integral part of surfing skill and each competitor must be allowed to reach this chosen point unhindered.

Paddling interference tactics in the general contest area can be, but will not be restricted to:

a) Blocking the direct pathway of an opponent to the takeoff position by paddling across his/her line, other than by taking and holding the natural inside paddling position.

b) Blocking/hindering a direct/natural pathway of an opponent into the line up from the beach paddle out position

c) When a surfer is put in a position while paddling out that they cannot get out of the way and a collision happens due to this, it is up to a majority of the judges to call an interference based on whether it is felt to be accidental or not.

d) Unsporting Paddling Tactics must be penalised. A heat placing is decided as a result of waves ridden. Tactics directed at reducing waves ridden are negatives to the performance of the heat. Positioning at the correct point of takeoff for a wave is an integral part of surfing skill and each competitor must be allowed to reach this chosen point unhindered. Similarly, priority is available to a surfer so he/she is not hindered in actually catching the selected wave, not as a tactic to prevent opponents catching the wave. If the majority of judges mark a paddling tactical interference on a surfer, the Head Judge will issue an oral warning by announcement to the surfer concerned; however this initial penalty will not be immediately applied. If a second tactical paddling interference is marked, or the tactical paddling continues to a second interference situation, then the offending surfer will be asked to leave the water under
the two interferences rule. The offending surfer will be charged with two interferences.

e) When a surfer is put in a position while paddling out that they cannot get out of the way and a collision happens due to this, it is up to a majority of the judges to call an interference unless it is felt that the rider contributed to the collision by selecting an unreasonable and aggressive line across the wave.

f) Unsporting Paddling Tactics must be penalised A heat placing is decided as a result of waves ridden. Tactics directed at reducing waves ridden are negatives to the performance in the heat. ROW is available to a surfer so he/she is not hindered in actually catching the selected wave, not as a tactic to prevent opponents catching the wave.

“Unsporting paddling tactics” (TPI) can be, but will not be restricted to:

Holding the inside position and right of way with respect to a particular opponent, then intentionally aborting the takeoff to deter another competitor at the takeoff point.

**Interference Penalty Scoring Procedures**

a) At least three of the four/five judges must call interference to be considered a majority. Interference will be shown as a triangle on each judge’s scorecard

i) The triangle placed around their score if caused by riding

ii) The triangle will be above their score if they ride a wave but cause interference while paddling for that wave ridden.

iii) The triangle will be between scores if caused by paddling for that ride.

In all of the above situations an arrow to the rider’s score will denote which surfer has been interfered with.

Unsporting paddling tactics Scoring Procedure:

i) Judges will view the TPI situation, taking the first instance as an indication by the competitor that he/she is enacting this tactic.
ii) When the second TPI for that surfer occurs, the announced warning will be given and the appropriate disc shown.

iii) When the third TPI for that surfer occurs, he/she will be asked to leave the water under the two interference rule.

Note: Recorded TPI's may involve infringement against different opponents each time.

b) A Head Judge may be included to achieve a majority decision, and in this case the interference would be determined on three of five/six judging sheets.

c) If a majority of judges call interference, then that wave will count in the final tally as a zero score. This applies to a riding interference or a paddling interference, where the surfer catches that particular wave. A loss of the lowest scoring ride, applies for a straight paddling interference. If a surfer has less than the required minimum scoring rides and receives an interference then they will be scored on one less wave, i.e., if they have caught only one wave and the best two count then their one wave will be scored as a zero. Until the surfer catches another wave, then the 50% deduction rule will apply.

d) Under best two (2) waves the interfering surfer will be penalised with a loss of 50% of his second best scoring ride in non-priority situations only. The wave that the interference was called on by the majority of the judges will count on the final tally as a zero. When halving the second best score the computer scoring system will either round up or round down to the nearest one hundredth of a point. The computer averaging cannot be disputed and no correspondence can be entered into.

e) Any interfering surfer must be penalised and an interference decision once made is irrevocable. The judges and/or Tour Manager/Rep will not enter into any discussion over the interference call. All discussion must be directly with the Head Judge, if they wish to discuss the situation.

f) The rider, who is interfered with, will be allowed an additional wave, beyond their original wave maximum, set within the prescribed time limit. Exception to this is a double interference where neither surfer gets an extra wave. An extra wave or heat delay as decided by the Head Judge, at
the time will also apply to interference from water photographers, water security personnel or other outside interferences.

g) Where any surfer incurs 2 or more interference penalties they must immediately leave the competition area. Failure to do so will result in a fine and/or disqualification.

In addition, a surfer who remains in the water after their maximum number of waves will be penalised for interference if:

- A surfer rides any extra waves that obviously deprive another competitor of an available ride.
- A surfer interferes with any other competitor by paddling, positioning or some other reason.