



Backing the Best & SportsAid Award 2025

Nomination Process and Eligibility Criteria

Surfing England and SportsAid are working together to support young surfers and SUPers (up to 18) and adaptive surfers (up to 35) to access funding to support their competitive surfing journeys.

Surfing England run a single nominations process for Backing the Best and Sports Aid awards. The following guide outlines the process and eligibility criteria for each award. The awards programme is only open to surfers who's principle residence is in the UK and are eligible to surf for England.

SportsAid

Sports Aid awards provide £1000 of funding to the surfer alongside access to world class support in areas of nutrition, performance management, sleep, and mental resilience. More information on the programme is available here: ['what is a sports aid award'](#).

Based on the Sports Aid eligibility guidance, the following criteria apply for surfing nominations.

Surfers must be:

- Aged between 12 and 18 years old or up to 35 years old for adaptive surfing
- For surfers up to 18 years old also be in education, full or part time
- Be part of the Surfing England talent pathway, either through the Team England Junior Squad, Team England SUP or Team England Adaptive programme

Any surfer wishing to be considered for a Sports Aid award must complete the Surfing England 2025 Athlete Support Form, returning to juniorteam@surfingengland.org by 23:59 on Monday 18th November 2024.

The Surfing England nominations panel will convene to rank the nominations for submission to SportsAid. Surfing has been allocated 4 athlete places on the scheme.

Note: One panel manages nominations for both schemes, full details of the panel are included within the following Backing the Best guidance.

Backing The Best

All Backing The Best athletes must demonstrate outstanding ability to be eligible for the funding. They also have to show that, because of their family's financial situation, they might not get the opportunity to fulfil their potential without it. Surfing England have 10 award nominations, with each award worth up to £5,000 per year to help cover training and competition related expenses such as travel, accommodation and medical bills.

As part of Surfing England's ongoing commitment to tackling diversity and inclusion in surfing, we are targeting 50% of the awards to support athletes that are from under-represented communities within surfing and from geographies outside of the Southwest surfing heartlands.

This is to help support our ambition to widen the demographic profile of surfers coming through the talent pathway. We believe diversity of background, thought and approach can be a real strength for our training squads and teams as we look to continue building on recent success at a European and World level for our junior surfers, SUPers and para surfers.

Eligibility Criteria

Nominees must:

- Be part of the Surfing England talent pathway, either through the Team England Junior Squad, Team England SUP or Team England Adaptive programme (athletes outside of Team England that can demonstrate an outstanding level of talent to a comparable level may also apply).
- Be currently facing severe financial hardship and not able to meet the costs of competing in their sport.
- Gross household income less than £55,000 (unless supporting multiple siblings and regional variations will be taken into consideration).
- Primarily living and training in England.
- Be eligible to compete for England and Great Britain (including athletes with a leave to remain status).
- Be typically aged between 12 and 18 years old for non-disability sports and up to 35 years for disability sports.
- Typically, be in some form of structured education or apprenticeship
- Not have been in receipt of SportsAid or Backing the Best awards for more than 3 years.

Example considerations and reasons why an athlete may apply:

- Live a long distance from the main training and competition venues, requiring considerable spend on travel - for example North East based surfers.
- Need financial support to engage with performance coaching outside of Team England training provision.
- Have a disability that means more expensive equipment, additional travel, coaching costs, or personal assistants.
- Is from an underrepresented community within surfing and has faced social or cultural barriers to accessing surfing or performance surfing.
- Have lost a parent or guardian and need additional support in other aspects of their lives.
- Have only been surfing a relatively short time, but are on a steep trajectory to high-performance level.
- Have a parent, guardian or sibling who has a long-term illness that requires the athletes to take on caring responsibilities and is unable to do part-time work to support their sport.
- Have been injured while training or competing and requires financial help to overcome the injury.
- Is experiencing any serious mental or physical condition that prevents them from working to support their sport.

Any surfing wishing to be considered for a Backing The Best award must complete the Surfing England 2025 Athlete Support Form, returning to juniorteam@surfingengland.org by 23:59 on Monday 18th November 2024.

Nominations Panel

Nominations will go to a selection panel made up of two representatives from each of the Junior and Adaptive coaching/management teams and at least one Surfing England Exec, Board or Inclusive Line Up committee rep. The panel will consider applications against the Backing The Best nominations criteria, alongside the nominees surfing credentials.

Where more than one athlete meets the criteria, the panel have the discretion to consider wider factors in their determination of who will be nominated. Such factors may include, but are not limited to:

- Does the athlete have opportunity to access other financial support? For example UKS APAs available to progression athletes, or significant sponsorship opportunities
- Are there specific EDI challenges or barriers the athlete has had to overcome, or is facing in their surfing journey?
- For adaptive surfers, have they been classified or failed classification? Surfers need to be eligible to compete for Team England so must be classified or likely to classify.
- What is the athlete's performance impact within the wider team, does their performance set a benchmark for others?
- What is the athletes social impact on the team, how do they impact team dynamics, do they lift other team members and contribute to a positive team culture?
- Has the athlete held a backing the best award in previous years? There should be clear progression evidenced for any athlete in receipt of two years of funding and a maximum of 3 years is recommended by Backing the Best.
- Are they likely to be still competing and challenging for selection for the 2032 Olympics (potentially the first games to include Parasurf and SUP disciplines)

All the information submitted to the panel will be held in confidence. The selection panel will not verify financial status of applications, this will be done by Sports Aid.

The panel's decision on nominations will be final. There is no appeals process for athletes who's nomination is not successful. Once submitted to Sports Aid, the final checks and decision-making rests with the Sports Aid Backing the Best team, including financial verification.

Any press on the backing the best awards will not mention, unless permission has been explicitly supplied, award recipients.