2026 Junior Surf Series

Event Format

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Overview

The Junior Surf Series (JSS) is designed to be a fun, friendly, and accessible introduction to competitive surfing. The series continues to work in partnership with surf clubs across England to provide a welcoming pathway for young surfers aged under 12 and under 14.

For 2026, we've introduced a few important updates — including how spaces are allocated and how surfers can qualify for the English National Surfing Championships. This document explains everything you need to know before entering.

By entering a JSS event, all surfers and parents/guardians accept these terms. Please note this document may be updated if required.

Divisions

Shortboard

- **Under 12 Girls** (Max 12 years old on 31 December 2026)
- **Under 12 Boys** (Max 12 years old on 31 December 2026)
- **Under 14 Girls** (Max 14 years old on 31 December 2026)
- **Under 14 Boys** (Max 14 years old on 31 December 2026)

Age categories align with the ISA rulebook, ensuring consistency with the English National Surfing Championships and Team England selection.

Entry fee: £20

Event Date and Location

Main date: Saturday 5th September

Backup date: Sunday 6th September

Preferred location: Widemouth Bay, Bude

If conditions are contestable, the event will run on one of the dates above. If conditions do not allow the event to run, contest organisers reserve the right to revert solely to Wildcards (into the U14 & U12 English Nationals, scheduled to run Thursday 29th October at The Wave) for this event.

Important Dates

- **ENTRY OPENS - Monday 10th August** at 19:00pm - Entry Opens via LIVEHEATS.

*ENTRY DOES NOT GUARANTEE A PLACE – PLEASE **READ THE EVENT FORMAT IN FULL** AHEAD OF ENTERING.*

- **ENTRY CLOSES - Sunday 23rd August** at 23:55pm.

- **ENTRY CONFIRMATION – Wednesday 26th August** by 17:00pm.

All successful entrants to the event will be confirmed and surfers who do not have places will be informed of their waitlist position (for the first 5) by this date. **On confirmation, you will be charged the Entry Fee of £20**

- **MEMBERSHIP DEADLINE – Wednesday 2nd September** by 17:00pm.

*If you do not have a Surfing England Membership by **Wednesday 2nd September**, your competition place will be withdrawn. See the 'Membership' section below to sign up or check your status. A Surfing England team member will contact you before the deadline if you need to join or renew.*

- **EVENT CALL - Thursday 3rd September** by 13.00pm. Deadline for Contest Organisers to make the Event Call as 'ON'/'POSTPONED'. If conditions require, the event may **relocate to a more sheltered nearby venue**.
- **If the event is postponed to Sunday 6th September, the deadline for the event call will be Friday 4th September by 13:00pm**.

If you are booking travel or accommodation, please wait for confirmation of your place. It is your choice if you wait until the event is ON. Surfing England is not liable for any costs if the event is postponed or cancelled; all bookings are made at your discretion.

If the event cannot run on either main or backup date the qualification places for national championships may revert to **wildcards** at Surfing England's discretion. Competitors will be informed of this decision as soon as possible.

Event Entry Requirements

To enter a JSS event, surfers must hold a **valid Surfing England membership**. You can check or renew membership via your Surfing England online account.

Entry does **not** guarantee a place. Oversubscribed divisions will follow the allocation rules described in Section named 'Entry Allocation'.

Entry Allocation

For oversubscribed divisions

Some divisions — particularly the U12 and U14 Boys — are often oversubscribed. To ensure fairness across the entire series, a new allocation system will be used for 2026.

Host Club Allocation

At every event:

- **One-third of total spaces** in each division are allocated to the **host club's members**.
- These spaces are given on a **ballot** basis within the club allocation.

Remaining Spaces – Event 1 (Ballot)

For the first stop of the series (held at South Shields earlier in the year):

- All remaining spaces are allocated by **ballot**.
- Every entry carries **equal weight** — no first-come-first-served advantage.

Remaining Spaces – Events 2, 3, and 4 (Priority + Ballot)

Spaces will be allocated in the following priority order:

1. **Surfers who registered for the previous event but did not receive a place**.
2. Surfers who have had **fewer total entries** into JSS 2026 events.
3. **Ballot** for all remaining entries.

This ensures surfers don't repeatedly miss out and that opportunities are spread fairly.

Qualification to the English National Surfing Championships

New for 2026 — the Junior Surf Series is now part of the qualification pathway for the English National Championships. With limited places available at the National Championships, 50% of them will now be available for qualifying surfers through the JSS (the other 50% are available via wildcard).

Automatic Qualification

For each JSS stop:

- **1st and 2nd place** in every division earn an **automatic qualification place** for the English National Championships, if eligible to surf for England.

- If a surfer who has already qualified or is ineligible to surf for England, finishes 1st or 2nd again, the qualification place passes down to the **next highest unqualified finisher** (e.g., 3rd place) at that event

- If the stop is fully cancelled (all back up options exhausted), all qualification places for the National Championships for that event convert into **wildcard places**

Wildcard Route

Surfers who do not earn automatic qualification may still enter the English National Surfing Championships via the wildcard process, where their JSS results and other junior/club competition results can support their application. Essentially all surfers who compete at JSS will still be able to apply for a wildcard.

The 2026 English National Surfing Championships for U12 and U14 will run on Thursday 29th October 2026 at The Wave, Bristol. Information on the Nationals is held on the website **HERE**

Competition Format

Each JSS stop runs as a **one-day, single-peak event with live scoring – SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**. Surfing England will determine the heat structure for each event to maximise the number of places we can provide within approximately **8 hours of surfing** per day.

Heat Format

- Priority judging will be in place for U14 Boys and U14 Girls **where conditions allow**
- Standard heat format will be 4-person 20-minute heats, with the caveat to feature 15-minute heats/ 5 person heats if needed to maximise participation or accommodate conditions on the day
- 5-minute paddle out times as standard, with allowance this may change on the day

Any changes to the heat format to try and accommodate additional surfers in oversubscribed divisions, will not be to the disadvantage of surfers in undersubscribed divisions.

Judging

The JSS provides an entry point for new judges and volunteers, supported by experienced leadership to ensure consistency. However as the Event is now qualification, we will ensure an experience Head Judge at every stop.

- Each event will be led by a **Surfing England Nationals-level head judge**.
- Additional judges may be emerging or club-level volunteers.
- Any appeals must be submitted within **15 minutes** of the end of the relevant heat.
- The **Contest Director's decision is final**.

Surfer Safety

Safety of our surfers is a top priority and each event will have qualified lifeguard(s) safety team. Their assessment of conditions and the ability to deliver a safe competition, both in the run up to calling an event on and on the day, is final.

- If lifeguards or event staff deem conditions unsafe (e.g. increasing wind or swell size, rips, fog), the competition may go on hold or be cancelled.
- The decision of the safety team is final.
- Parents/guardians must ensure their child is a **competent swimmer**, understands **surf etiquette**, and can safely participate in the conditions as presented on the day.

If unsure about your child's surfing ability, we recommend attending as a spectator first where you and your child can meet other competitors and staff and get a good feel for the standard of surfing. You can also watch our previous video edits on YouTube or social media.

By registering on event day, you are providing parental consent for their participation, and you accept the terms of the Surfing England legal disclaimer, accepting the risks associated with competing in a surf competition.

Code of Conduct

Rudeness or abuse toward judges, staff, or volunteers will result in removal from the event and may lead to a ban from the remainder of the 2026 series and other Surfing England sanctioned results. The full CoC is on the Policies and Resources section of our website here.

Event cancellations

If the event cannot take place on the original scheduled weekend, it will be cancelled and all entrants will receive a refund. There may be opportunities to return to the same location later in the year, but any rescheduled stop will be treated as a new event and entries will reopen via LiveHeats. If you were due to compete in the original cancelled event, you will need to register again for the newly organised event.
While we will do everything possible to deliver the event, circumstances outside of our control may prevent it from running. These may include unsafe surf conditions, a lack of lifeguard cover, or approvals being withheld by the landowner, local authorities, or relevant national bodies.

Refund Policy – Competition Entry Fees
If you cancel/withdraw your entry **before** the specified closing date of the contest, you will not be charged for entry.

Upon registering to compete, you will be sat on a waitlist until entry closes. Once entry is closed, you will be either confirmed a place or made aware of your waitlist position. Once entry is confirmed, payment will automatically be taken.

If you cancel/withdraw your entry **after** entry has closed for an event, a refund will not be issued.

If the event is postponed to the back-up date and you wish to cancel/withdraw your entry you will not be issued a refund if the back-up date and venue is clearly written within the event format.

If the event is postponed/cancelled and there is **no** back-up date stated in an event format, you are eligible to claim a refund for your entry fee (minus transaction fees).

Wherever possible, if you are unable to attend an event, please let us know at the earliest opportunity so that places may be given to other surfers.

Membership Requirements:

You must be a UK citizen and Member of Surfing England to enter the contest.

Junior membership is £20 for a year, and includes insurance.

For Surfing England Membership you can join us here. If you are unsure of the status of your Surfing England membership, please email: membership@surfingengland.org

If you require any support with Membership, please email: membership@surfingengland.org

Image Rights & Consent

If you attend and / or participate in any event organised by Surfing England, you hereby grant to Surfing England and its partners permission to use your image and / or your child's image (if you are the relevant parent or legal guardian) in photography or videography produced by us including in the following:

- Surfing England displays
- within any printed publications
- on the Surfing England website
- on Surfing England's social media pages

- In Videos and other promotional materials

If you are under 16, then you hereby confirm and warrant that you have obtained consent from your parent(s) or legal guardian(s), for your image to be used by us, in the way set out above.

Contact Information

For all Junior Surf Series enquiries, please contact: max@surfingengland.org

For all Membership enquiries, please contact: membership@surfingengland.org

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FAQs

Can I help my child in the water?

Yes — assistance is allowed in the **U12 divisions** to help surfers get out back. No assistance can be given to catch waves. Please note, if you secure a place at the English National Surfing Championships, no assistance is allowed in the water. The lifeguards will always assist in a rescue scenario.

How long are heats?

Heats are planned as **20 minutes** with a **5-minute paddle out**, but these may be changed depending on surf conditions. On occasions, heats are 15-minutes.

Late entries

There are no late entries for JSS events – at Surfing England's discretion if stop is not oversubscribed.

Waitlist

If you do not get a place confirmed, you will be waitlisted. If spaces become available at Surfing England's discretion they will contact waitlisted surfers.