

Surfing Judging Criteria (from European surfing federation rulebook)

A SURFER MUST PERFORM RADICAL MANOEUVRES IN THE MOST CRITICAL SECTIONS OF A WAVE WITH SPEED, POWER AND FLOW TO MAXIMISE SCORING POTENTIAL.

INNOVATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE SURFING AS WELL AS VARIETY OF REPERTOIRE (MANOEUVRES) WILL BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN REWARDING POINTS FOR WAVES RIDDEN.

THE SURFER WHO EXECUTES THESE CRITERIA WITH THE MAXIMUM DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY AND COMMITMENT ON THE WAVES SHALL BE REWARDED WITH THE HIGHEST SCORES.

Surfing Criteria Breakdown

The Criteria has purposely been broken into 3 sentences.

The first sentence having the most emphasis and is by far the most important part of the criteria. It concerns the manoeuvres, how radical and committed they are and the section of the wave that they are performed on. It is vital that every member of a judging panel adheres to the same point of reference so that each competitor knows how to maximise his/her scoring potential.

1. A surfer must perform radical manoeuvres in the critical sections of a wave with speed, power and flow to maximise scoring potential.

This is by far the most important part of the criteria

We can dissect this part of the criteria further by looking at the key words and explaining exactly what each means. They are:

Radical Manoeuvres Critical Section Speed, Power & Flow

Radical Manoeuvres - Modern day manoeuvres basically constitute a change of direction of the board on the wave (not the surfer on the board). Such manoeuvres include tube rides, reentries, hacks, snaps, floaters, aerials and cutbacks etc. With how much commitment they are carried out radical they are, how much the surfer pushes the board to the limit will determine how high that they will score, as long as other sections of the criteria are also met. To score, a manoeuvre must be completed. If a surfer has completed 99% of the manoeuvre then loses control and falls off or is not able to continue riding the wave, then that manoeuvre will not be scored. (The wave score will consist of a combination of all the completed turns *before* the fall.)

Critical sections - This part of the criteria describes the area of the wave with potential to yield the high score. The critical section of the wave is the steepest part of the wave next to the curl, also known as 'the pocket'. The degree of commitment and risk involved in performing close to the curl is the reason why more points are awarded. Generally in beach break conditions the most important critical section is the first section 'out the back' and a big turn performed here is difficult and risky. Certain types of wave (and even beach breaks), have critical sections at an inside 'bowl' such as Sunset Beach, Bells and St. Leu on Reunion.

Speed, Power and Flow - Generally speaking speed and power become more evident when a manoeuvre is carried out in the critical section and all three are intrinsically linked.

The word "style" has been excluded from the new criteria as it has become apparent that many surfers were misinterpreting it. The judges' definition of style was defined as how the surfer reads the wave, utilises sections and links his moves in a seamless flow power and speed. On the recommendation of Kelly Slater it was thought the word flow better defines this concept.

2. Innovative and progressive surfing as well as a variety of repertoire (manoeuvres) will be taken into consideration when rewarding points for waves ridden.

This part of the criteria allows the surfers to be more expressive with dynamic and futuristic manoeuvres that are constantly being created by the elite surfers of our sport.

Innovative and Progressive - This sentence in the criteria reminds the judge to be open minded about new directions and developments in surfing. Progressive surfing is often called 'new school' and used to consist of tailslides, aerials and reverses before they became mainstream. The most important thing to remember with a new manoeuvre is that if it encompasses all sections of the criteria i.e. it is committed, has speed and power, and is performed in the critical section of the wave, then it must be high scoring.

Variety of Repertoire - Another new part of the criteria, to differentiate between safe surfing and get the surfers to use the full variety of manoeuvres in their repertoire. A surfer can satisfy all the other aspects of the criteria but produce the same reliable turn monotonously along a wave, the new criteria means that three different big turns will get the bigger scores than three similar big turns.

3. The surfer who executes these criteria with the maximum degree of difficulty and commitment on the waves shall be rewarded with the highest scores.

The best judges are good surfers who can understand the degree of difficulty of a manoeuvre, obviously the more difficult the manoeuvre the more points (or parts of a point) should be rewarded. Likewise a surfer who commits everything to each turn is risking everything by not completing the turn, (these surfers are pushing themselves to the limit but also the sport), therefore surfers who commit themselves to high risk manoeuvres in the critical sections, with control, should be rewarded.

Remember: Degree of difficulty and risk taken = Reward

Judging scale

Scale	Category
0,5 and 1,0 and 1,5	Bad ride
2,0 and 2,5 and 3,0 and 3,5	Poor ride
4,0 and 4,5 and 5,0 and 5,5	Average ride
6,0 and 6,5 and 7,0 and 7,5	Good ride
8,0 and 8,5 and 9,0 and 9,5 and 10,0	Excellent ride

Use whole points and half points when setting the score for a wave. During the course of a heat, try to use the whole of your scale from 0 – 10 regardless of surf conditions. Score the good waves up and the bad waves down. Avoid scoring higher as the heat continues. Bare in mind the previous scoring waves. The last wave exchange should be in context to the first waves scored in the heat. It's important that a judge concentrates on the scoring of individual waves and ignores the final outcome of the heat. No riders are identical, so try to differentiate between all scoring waves.

Don't deliberate on your scores – put pen to paper. If a judge misses a wave or part of a wave, he should place an "M" in the square of the manual judges sheet and inform the Head Judge immediately, to have the wave included into his sheet, by the Head Judge.

Judges may not change their score or interference scores. In the event that a mistake has been made, the Judge should have the Head Judge make the correction for him.

Avoid being influenced by the spectators, commentators or friendships and other outside influences. Have the confidence to stand by your own decisions. During the heat, do not express your opinions to other judges.

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 make at least a one point spread between your first two scoring rides. Then, if your next wave falls in between your first two, you still have a good spread. The comparison between the scores is imperative between heats. Try to see the waves in terms of point potential. While the competitor is riding a wave, manoeuvring, you are allocating points that will be added automatically in your mind. Thus, at the end of the wave or in case of a fall, you immediately have the score. Do not compare this score with the previous score and remember, never deduct points because a surfer fell.

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