



CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION FOR USA SURFING

Executive Summary

The USOPC's Certification Review Group (CRG) recommends certifying USA Surfing as the certified National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of surfing within the United States. Following a review consistent with the USOPC's NGB Certification Policy and NGB Initial Certification Procedure, the CRG recommends providing USA Surfing a Certified with Conditions status until April 14, 2027, at which time, the CRG will reconsider whether, depending on USA Surfing's ability to remediate outstanding issues, it should upgrade USA Surfing's status to Certified in Good Standing. The details of the CRG's review are included in the following report.

NGB Certification Overview

NGB Certification History

USA Surfing sought NGB certification for the sport of surfing in February 2025 after it relinquished its certification in 2021. The CRG sought applicants in 2025 following the 2024 Olympic Games. Although the USOPC internally managed the sport after USA Surfing relinquished its certification, the International Surfing Association continued to recognize USA Surfing as the national federation for the sport.

Athlete Representation Review Working Group (ARRWG) Decisions

USA Surfing requested that the ARRWG review and approve expanded athlete representation options. The ARRWG's determinations can be found in USA Surfing's [Record of Decision](#).

USA Surfing received approval from the ARRWG for its expanded definition of NGB 10-Year and 10-Year+ Athletes. USA Surfing has been working with its internal athletes' advisory council to expand these definitions to increase the pool of eligible athletes who can serve on USA Surfing's board and Designated Committees. Seating athlete representatives meeting the definition throughout the USA Surfing Board and Designated Committees is a condition of this certification.



Athlete Well-Being

Athlete Safety

As a non-NGB amateur sport organization, USA Surfing was not subject to the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s (the Center) SafeSport Code, nor has it been through an audit by the Center since relinquishing its NGB certification. USA Surfing is currently engaged with the Center to ensure it is prepared to onboard as an NGB. The Center’s NGB onboarding timeline provides a new NGB with time to fully comply with Center training and policy requirements before they are fully applicable. If USA Surfing is certified as an NGB, USA Surfing will follow this onboarding schedule and enter into the Center’s standard auditing schedule. As a condition of certification, USA Surfing must continue to work with the Center and the USOPC Athlete Safety team to comply with the requirements of USOPC’s Athlete Safety Policy and the Center’s policies and procedures. The USOPC Audit team assessed additional athlete safety requirements within the scope of the Certification Audit, as noted below.

Anti-Doping

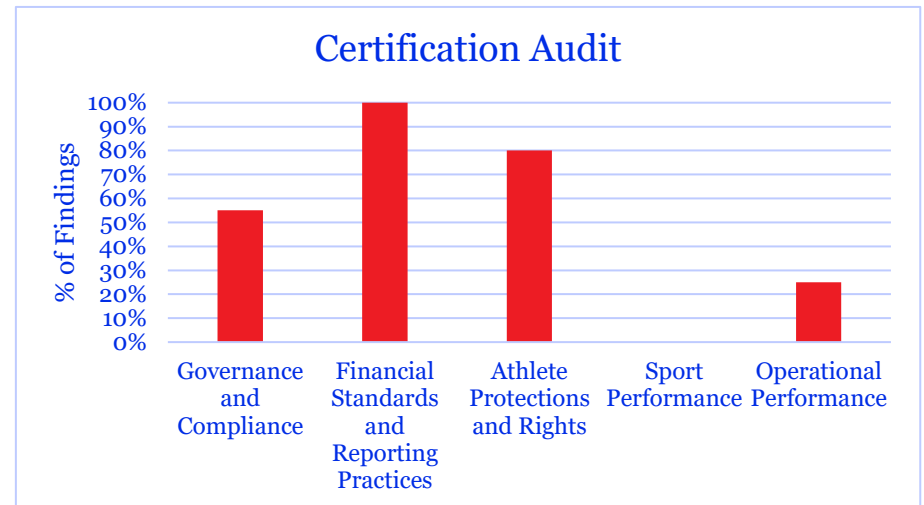
USA Surfing is prepared to maintain an anti-doping program consistent with the requirements of the USOPC and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) in its efforts to preserve clean and fair competition for its athlete participants. The organization is prepared to submit its Registered Testing Pool and Clean Athlete Program athlete lists on time, identify all athletes on Delegation Event Long Lists, and ensure that a staff member is responsible to serve as the USADA liaison in executing its anti-doping program.

NGB Operational Health

Audit

The Certification Audit conducted in 2025 resulted in 11 findings and 1 undetermined evaluation concerning Financial Standards and Reporting Practices. The associated graph shows the percentage of audit findings and evaluation for all core areas that were assessed. USA Surfing created management action plans to resolve the identified issues in a timely manner, and the outstanding higher risk audit findings and undetermined evaluation have been incorporated into this recommendation as conditions of the certification.

Specifically, and in addition to athlete representation findings as noted above, the USOPC Audit team found that testing of USA Surfing’s background check process lacked written documentation concerning the decision and direction of one flagged background check. Testing also revealed multiple instances where an individual did not have a





completed background check on file. Finally, at the time of the certification audit, USA Surfing's financial statements had never undergone an external audit. Resolution of the high-risk findings of the Certification Audit are conditions of this certification.

Compliance

The USOPC will assess USA Surfing's operational health through its completion of ongoing compliance requirements, including the submission of required annual reporting, publication of required documentation on its website, adequate athlete representation on its board of directors, maintenance of required insurance coverage, and IRS standing, among other requirements. USA Surfing appears prepared to execute these requirements; the organization will become subject to the requirements, and any accountability measures for non-compliance, upon its certification.

Competitive Excellence

High Performance Programs

USA Surfing will maintain and execute a high performance plan that supports Team USA athletes in achieving sustained competitive excellence. The organization has shown the ability to select teams and prepare its athletes for high achievement on the world stage in International Surfing Association events, and this experience provides a foundation for the organization to prepare Team USA athletes for Delegation Events as an NGB. The CRG determined that USA Surfing must submit an updated high performance plan for the 2028 quadrennium as a condition of certification.

Conclusion

The CRG concluded, based on the results of the Certification Audit as well as individual CRG members' assessments, that USA Surfing has met many of the requirements in the core areas of evaluation for NGB certification. Furthermore, at this time, the CRG is confident in USA Surfing's ability to fulfill all management action plans and to fully comply with the NGB Compliance Standards based on the CRG's interactions with USA Surfing's management. However, the CRG identified areas where USA Surfing has not yet demonstrated compliance with the NGB Compliance Standards and cannot yet be considered as a member in good standing. Accordingly, the CRG recommends that USA Surfing's certification as a member organization of the USOPC be granted with a status of Certified with Conditions as of June 1, 2026, with the deadlines outlined below, to fulfill all conditions of certification. The conditions of this certification are listed below.

Standard / Reasoning		Condition	Assessment
A.1 a & b	Athlete Representation	USA Surfing must fully populate its board, Athletes' Advisory Council, and Designated Committees with sufficient athlete representation to meet the NGB Compliance Standards. Within this process, USA Surfing must update their bylaws to meet athlete representation	Submit to the USOPC Audit team testing to confirm that athlete elections were executed in accordance with all requirements and that athlete representation requirements have been met.
A.3 a	Athlete Advisory Council		



		requirements and accordingly implement athlete elections procedures.	
A.4 b ii	Board Development	USA Surfing’s Board of Directors must participate in the USOPC-provided board onboarding training.	By May 14, 2026, USA Surfing must participate in the USOPC-provided training.
A.6 b	Conflict of Interest Policy	USA Surfing must successfully execute the disclosure and review process outlined in its conflicts of interest policy for USA Surfing’s Board of Directors, Ethics Committee, and management must also participate in USOPC-provided conflicts of interest training.	By August 12, 2026, submit to the USOPC Audit team testing to confirm that conflict of interest disclosure and review processes are being executed consistent with policy requirements, with a specific emphasis on distribution of sufficient management direction letters when required. By August 12, 2026, USA Surfing’s Board of Directors, Ethics Committee, and management must participate in the USOPC-provided training.
B.1 a & B.3 a-d	Financial Capability & Financial Documentation	USA Surfing must finalize its financial strategy, and then for a 12-month duration, meet with USOPC team members monthly to update on its execution, including sharing progress on budget-to-actuals, cash flow, and progress toward revenue generation targets.	By May 1, 2026, submit to the USOPC Compliance team USA Surfing’s financial strategy. By April 14, 2027, submit to the USOPC Audit team evidence to-date of its execution against its strategy.
C.1 b	Child Protection and US Center for SafeSport	USA Surfing must continue to work with the Center and the USOPC Athlete Safety team to review Athlete Safety and Center policies to ensure compliance.	By August 12, 2026, submit to the USOPC Athlete Safety team evidence that the Center has reviewed USA Surfing’s policies and, if necessary, a plan to ensure compliance.
C.2 a	USOPC Athlete Safety Requirements	USA Surfing must complete background checks in accordance with USOPC requirements.	By August 12, 2026, submit to the USOPC Audit team testing to confirm complete and current background checks of required individuals.
D.1 a-c	Selection Procedures and Process	USA Surfing must develop an athlete selection plan for the LA quadrennium.	By August 12, 2026, submit an athlete selection plan to the USOPC NGB Services team.



D.3 a	High Performance Plan Submission	USA Surfing must submit an updated High Performance Plan to the USOPC Sport Performance team.	By July 2, 2026, submit an updated High Performance Plan to the USOPC Sport Performance team.
E.1 a	Managerial Capability	USA Surfing’s CEO must participate in the USOPC CEO onboarding training.	The USA Surfing CEO must participate in the USOPC NGB Services team’s onboarding training.

In addition to the terms outlined above and as discussed with USA Surfing leadership, by June 1, 2026, USA Surfing must correct the donor / sponsor-director’s classification as a board member and ensure all directors who are designated as independent meet the definition of independence set forth in USOPC Compliance Standard A.1c and Section 6.7 of USA Surfing’s bylaws. Specifically, USA Surfing must ensure that directors designated as independent do not maintain “a business relationship with the [NGB]” either through themselves or through a related business entity. To satisfy this condition, USA Surfing must remove any such member from the board; re-classify any such member of the board of directors to no longer be an independent member of the board; or ensure that any such member does not maintain a “business relationship” with the NGB (including a business relationship involving the use of USA Surfing’s trademarks).

USA Surfing must also ensure the board has the sole authority to govern the organization’s finances by June 1, 2026. Specifically, USA Surfing must ensure that individual board members do not have outsized approval or veto rights over USA Surfing’s budget. To satisfy this condition, USA Surfing must remove any such member from the board of directors; or eliminate any such board member’s ability to individually “approve” portions of the USA Surfing budget.

The US Center for SafeSport has asked that USA Surfing’s effective date of certification be no earlier than June 1, 2026, to allow sufficient time for USA Surfing to undergo an orientation session, to develop a communication plan for members notifying them of the Center’s jurisdiction and requirements, and to update existing policies and procedures to comply with the Center’s requirements. To that end, USA Surfing must complete the requirements, included in the Center’s April 10, 2026, memo, on or before June 1, 2026.

Finally, USA Surfing must agree that it will relinquish its certification and bypass the process for decertification outlined in Section 8 of the USOPC Bylaws if USA Surfing does not satisfy the requirements included in this report to the CRG’s satisfaction on or before the corresponding deadlines.

In accordance with the NGB Certification Policy, if the CRG determines that USA Surfing has successfully addressed the conditions by the deadlines, the CRG may recommend that its certification status be upgraded to Certified in Good Standing. USA Surfing’s Certification with Conditions will be effective June 1, 2026, provided that USA Surfing resolves the issues relating to the donor / sponsor-director and addresses the requirements in the Center’s April 10, 2026, memo by June 1, 2026.



Appendix

Certification Review Process

The USOPC promotes and supports a culture of good governance, ethics, and compliance among the NGBs that, as member organizations of the USOPC, make up the Olympic and Paralympic Movement. Amendments to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (the Act), which became effective in late 2020, require the USOPC to certify NGBs.¹ The USOPC determined that as of January 1, 2021, all member organizations would be certified, and their certifications would be reviewed for renewal on a rolling basis every four years.²

Governed by the USOPC's [NGB Certification Policy](#), the NGB certification review process is supported by a cross-functional body of professionals at the USOPC, the Certification Review Group (CRG), who interact with NGBs in their day-to-day work. These professionals evaluate an organization's operations across multiple functional areas to provide a holistic review of its performance and culture.³ In addition to enumerated standards for NGB performance described in the Act, the [USOPC Bylaws](#), and the USOPC's NGB Compliance Standards, the CRG considers departmental observations about an organization's operations that may not be identified in a formal audit but are relevant to consider when evaluating overall performance.

Certification Standards, Exceptions, and Review Components

As required by Standard A.2 of the USOPC and IMS Compliance Standards, and described in Section 8.4.1 of the USOPC Bylaws, the USOPC must administer its membership by requiring NGBs to satisfy certification requirements in five core areas: Governance and Compliance, Financial Standards and Reporting Practices, Athlete Safety, Sport Performance, and Operational Performance. The USOPC Implementation Guide for NGB Compliance Standards provides NGBs with specific guidance for how they will be evaluated in each of these core areas.

Section 8.4.2 of the USOPC Bylaws permits an NGB to submit a request for limited exceptions to any of the NGB Compliance Standards which, as a result of its overall structure or other extenuating circumstances, cannot or need not be reasonably met. The CRG evaluates all requests received and grants or denies such limited exceptions.

Various provisions of Section 8.5 of the USOPC Bylaws permit NGBs to seek exceptions related to minimum athlete representation requirements on boards and designated committees as well as exceptions or additions to which of its committees are considered designated committees. The Athlete Representation Review Working Group evaluates and approves or denies all requests made under Section 8.5.

¹ See §220521(a) of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.

² NGB Certification Policy, Section 1.

³ The CRG uses a four-year lookback period during this review process.