



Surfing



Hello everyone! My name is Stephen Cannell. I'm a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Toyohashi. Today I'd like to introduce you all to surfing, which has recently been added as an official event at the Olympics.

Surfing is a sport in which you ride along the face of a wave on a board called a surfboard. Most surfing takes place on waves in the ocean, but there are also people surfing waves in lakes, rivers, and in man-made wave pools.



A popular standing river wave in
Germany



A "tidal bore" in the Amazon River



Wavepool

Surfboards come in a variety of different styles. The most popular styles are the shortboard and the longboard. Longboards are generally defined as boards that are longer than 9 feet, or 3 meters. There are a variety of other styles as well, such as the fishtail board, and boards known as hybrid boards, which combine the mobility and speed of a shortboard with the stability of a longboard. In order to prevent the board from slipping on the wave, fins are attached to the bottom. In order to keep the board from flying away if the surfer falls, a cable attached the board is wrapped around the surfer's ankle. To keep surfers' feet from slipping on the board, wax is applied. Hard wax is rubbed on the board, creating small bumps which provide traction.

Surfing comes with a variety of risks. From riptides and tidal waves, to dangerous animals such as sharks and jellyfish, there are many opportunities to

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injure oneself. There is also the risk of being injured by your own surfboard when you fall. Because of this, surfers need to know their limits. Overestimating oneself can result in serious injury.

Surfing will make its Olympic debut in Tokyo next year, but competitive surfing is nothing new. There have been international level competitions for many years, and the rules of competition are well developed. The Olympics will use the 4 man heat format in the preliminary rounds, in which 4 surfers at a time enter the water and compete for waves. The final rounds will feature 2 surfers at a time. Only 1 person is allowed on a wave at a time, so competitive surfing uses a “right of way” system, where the athlete closest to the peak of the wave earns the right to surf it. If someone gets in the way of the surfer with the right of way, they receive a penalty, and lose points. This system results in a variety of tactics to not only secure the best waves, but to prevent opponents from being able to surf them. For example, pretending not to have interest in riding the wave, and then riding it at the last moment to force a penalty on the opponent, or pretending to have an interest in riding the wave and then not riding it to frustrate the opponent. These heats usually last 20 to 30 minutes. Surfers can ride a maximum of 25 waves per heat, but only the best 2 will count towards their total score. The criteria for judging are: difficulty of the maneuver, variety, originality, speed, etc. High risk techniques, such as jumps and spins, are worth the most points. Scores are not awarded to individual maneuvers, but to the overall performance on the wave.



Currently, Australia, America, and Brazil dominate the surfing world. In America, John John Florence and legend Kelly Slater have high chances of qualification, along with Courtney Conlogue.

Japan also has a number of strong surfers. Shun Murakami and Shino Matsuda secured their Olympic qualification at the 2019 ISA World Surfing Games. Japan also has Ichinomiya natives Hiroto Ohara and Reo Inaba. Ichinomiya is known as the surfing capital of Japan. The incredibly strong Kanoa Igarashi holds both Japanese and American citizenship. If he manages to secure a qualification, he will have to decide which country to represent at the Olympics. With the Olympics drawing near, the remaining qualifiers will soon be decided. I can't wait!

I recently had the chance to go surfing at Komatsubara beach in Toyohashi. Toyohashi has a beautiful shoreline. Tall cliffs run along the entire shoreline, continuing past the horizon. The loud noises of the city are replaced only with the sounds of the crashing waves.

When we arrived in the morning, it was a bit stormy, making for rather large waves. By the time we started surfing, the weather had improved, but the large waves remained. Before getting in the water, we practiced paddling, standing up on the board, and how to stand on the board on the beach. After getting a good understanding of the movements, we entered the water and tried our hands at surfing. The first 5 waves were failures. It was completely different performing the movements in the water than it was on land. It requires a lot of arm strength to push yourself up on to the board, and is extremely tiring. On the 7th wave, I finally managed to stand up on the board. It was a small wave and I did not ride it for long, but I gained confidence to try bigger waves. Bigger waves mean longer and faster rides, and I had so much fun. I only surfed for 3 hours, but here are the tips I came up with in order to successfully ride a wave:



This is not me, unfortunately.

Stephen's Surfing Tips

- When you decide on a wave, position yourself and board to face the same direction as the wave. It will usually be slightly diagonal to the shore. Once positioned, get on the board and lay down on your stomach.
 - While the wave is still a few meters away, start paddling as fast as you can.
- When the wave catches up to you and begins to break, you will feel a sudden burst of speed. This is the moment when you want to stand up.
- Position one foot towards the middle of the board and one foot towards the tail. Hold your balance and do your best to ride the wave until it collapses!

Surfing is incredibly fun! Next time I want to go faster and ride the waves for longer! I hope everyone gets the chance to enjoy Toyohashi's beautiful beaches and give surfing a try, and then watch the surfing tournament at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and cheer on Japan!



Omotehama Shoreline