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مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والجذب السياحي  
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

## VENDOR TALK – FEBRUARY 2023

### PARA SURFING POISED FOR OLYMPIC INCLUSION

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

Article by: **EPICSURF**



*Davi Teixeira (Brazil), Surfing's Youngest World Champion*

In a historic move, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) announced in January that para surfing has been recommended for inclusion on one of the world's largest adaptive sporting events – the Paralympic Games set to take place in Los Angeles in 2028.

This significant milestone represents the tireless efforts of athletes, organisers and advocates to advance the sport and the adaptive movement worldwide. A final decision by the IPC is expected by the end of 2023.

Olympic inclusion of para surfing will undoubtedly inspire new athletes, create awareness, and shift perception about what it means to be different and still enjoy sports, competition and recreation. At Aquatic Development Group, we see this as a watershed moment to capture the energy and drive change for greater accessibility and inclusion within the aquatic, leisure and amusement industry.



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Surfing captured hearts from around the globe at its Olympic debut in the Tokyo 2020 Games. Here's a closer look at para surfing and the evolution of surfing worldwide.

### Para surfing & the Paralympic Games

Para surfing is the adapted form of the sport that allows people with physical disabilities to ride waves on a surfboard.

The Greek word 'para' means parallel, signifying that the Paralympics operates in tandem with its able-bodied counterpart, the Olympics. Together, the Olympic and Paralympic Games stand out as one of the world's most prestigious and highly anticipated sporting events, gathering elite athletes from around the globe. Held every four years in the same host city, these events are unparalleled in scale and scope attracting millions of viewers and generating enormous excitement and national pride.



ISA Para Surfing World Championships Opening Ceremony 2022

### International Surfing Association (ISA) making dreams come true

The International Surfing Association (ISA), founded in 1964, is recognised as the world governing authority for surfing by the IPC. With 111 member countries spanning five continents, the ISA's mission is creating 'a better world through surfing'. Elevating para surfing to the world stage undoubtedly fulfills that vision.





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Sharing his thoughts about the Paralympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028, Fernando Aguerre, President of ISA stated “This has opened up unlimited opportunities for universal access to the sport and to spread surfing’s therapeutic and life-changing benefits with the world.”



Interest towards creating a pathway to the Olympics and Paralympics has motivated many countries to begin developing surfing programmes, building high-performance training centres and recruiting wave-riding athletes. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, nine nations have joined the ISA with the most recent additions being the Saudi Surfing Federation and the Egyptian Surfing Association. While other countries are starting to establish adaptive teams, Israel has taken the lead as the first country in the MENA region with para surfers positioned to compete in the LA 2028 Games.

### ISA World Para Surfing Championship

The highest level of adaptive surfing competition is currently the ISA World Para Surfing Championship, which began in 2015 and has grown progressively each year. The annual competition held in December 2022 at Pismo Beach, California attracted a record-breaking 181 top para surf athletes from 28 nations worldwide, setting the stage for Olympic inclusion.





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### The surfing revolution

Manmade waves have sparked a revolution in the sport of surfing, making it more accessible for a wider audience, especially those that do not live near the ocean or prefer a more controlled surfing experience.

At ADG, this narrative set the tone for commercialising our newest wave technology, EpicSurf – a deep-water, stationary wave for surfing and other wave-riding recreation in a compact footprint. From design to commercialisation, our vision was to create an authentic surfing experience to be enjoyed by individuals of all skill levels and abilities.



Christiaan "Otter" Bailey, US Team Para Surfing Captain & Multi-Medal Champion



Senegalese Surfing Federation Training on EpicSurf



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**EpicSurf®** is the first deep-water stationary wave manufactured in the US, making real surfing possible anytime, anywhere – offering a customised surfing experience for ALL abilities. Learn more about our award-winning technology at [www.epic.surf](http://www.epic.surf)

**Aquatic Development Group (ADG)** is one of North America's most respected water park and recreational design, construction, and manufacturing firm in the industry. ADG's products & services have been utilised in over 4,000 facilities worldwide spanning six continents. They have designed, engineered, and constructed more than 100 indoor and outdoor waterparks, and over 500 wave pools and specialty wave systems around the world. For more information, visit [www.aquaticgroup.com](http://www.aquaticgroup.com)



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