

The Fantasy Wash-up's – Fantasy Surfing 101

[Fantasy What?](#)

The best place to start with fantasy surfing is a definition: fantasy surfing is an interactive online game that is directly linked to the real-life results of the World Surf League (WSL) professional surfers. You are required to select a team of 8 surfers from the 36 surfers entered in each of the tour events. Your picks should be based on who you predict will succeed in each contest; if the surfers on your selected team do well in the contest, you will get a great score, if they are eliminated early, you will get a measly total. Easy. You don't have to leave your living room, yet you get an unjustifiable sense of satisfaction every time a surfer on your team wins a heat.

[Sounds OK, Where Do I Go?](#)

There are a number of different websites offering you free fantasy surfing options, and all of them have their merits depending on your preferred style of play. [Fantasy Surfer](#) is owned by SURFER magazine and is one of the oldest and most popular versions of the game. There are also a number of sites that let you put your money where your mouth is and bet against other teams: [Fantasurf](#), [FASL](#) and [Fantasy Grudge](#) to name a few. For pure simplicity and convenience though, you can't go past the [WSL's own fantasy game](#). The overview and rules can be found [here](#). Most of my articles relate to selecting a team using the WSL fantasy game, however much of the advice can be transferred to other sites.

Once you've registered, the fun begins; it's time to select a team.

[Golden Rules of Team Selection:](#)

There are so many factors to take into consideration that it can be easy to resort to superficial factors. The following 3 rules, when cross-referenced, should help you to refine your selection process considerably.

1. Check the draw. Those 20 bonus points for winning a R1 or R4 heat are pure gold, and you don't get many of them by stacking a R1 heat with 3 of your 8 surfers. Ideally you should aim to have the 8 surfers most likely to win their R1 heats and therefore have no more than one surfer in each heat (unless there are 2 must-have surfers in the one heat – but even then look to see if there is a viable plan B). Make sure you RE-check the heat draw too, as heats get reshuffled after injury withdrawals. Surf-stats' [injury-hub](#) is pretty tight with this sort of stuff.

2. Look at the forecast. Having a big wave charger is great in waves of consequence, but if the forecast is small then you'll need to rethink. Similarly, a small wave trickster may keep his air game in the bag if the swell jumps to double-overhead. It's always best to pick guys for the conditions, not for the perfect waves that your ill-informed memory is projecting.

3. Look at form. The surf stats guys will be the first to tell you that the data only gets you so far. Lots of the data they use is taken from their entire career. It won't take into consideration their past few results, especially if they've been on the tour for a few years. Look at the recent results of surfers, look at possible injuries, look at their body language, and pick the surfer, not just the stat.

[Read Some \(my\) Articles](#)

There are some good articles out there, giving a range of opinions based on pure opinion ([Jimmicane's](#) Picks for SURFING magazine and [Ross Williams'](#) pieces for WSL), data-driven statistics ([surf-stats](#)) or a combination of both ([me](#)).

Obviously you will need to make your own choice, that's part of the fun, but having a well-rounded sense of how others are selecting their teams may help you decide your own final 8. Besides, some of the articles are remarkably well written and stand up quite well as impeccable pieces of journalistic worth, independent of their fantasy content (me again).

[Lastly, Find Some Friends to Beat](#)

Sure, living vicariously through elite athletes is fun, but is it sociable? No. Thankfully you can join/create groups or clubhouses so that you can compare your results with those of friends or even strangers that you desperately want to beat. There are public or private (password required) group options and plenty of different themes to choose from. A great place to start is the [surf-stats group](#) (password: fantasy), which will allow you to mix with other like-minded fantasy surf aficionados and ultimately compare your scores. Event winners will get a personal shout-out on the site and there is a possibility of prizes in the future.

That just about sums up everything you need to know to get started. I hope you enjoy the process, and hopefully I'll see you in a group or on the [leaderboard](#) soon.

Good Luck,

- Balyn