

# The Value and Promotion Path of Surfing Sports

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**Abstract:** This paper uses a literature study to examine the development status and value of surfing at home and abroad. It puts forward the implementation path of popularizing surfing in China. The importance of surfing mainly includes promoting cultural exchange, education, economic development, etc. The approaches for surfing promotion are proposed: improve the safety supervision system and pay attention to safety management; improve the diversified event system and enhance cultural communication; pay attention to the cultivation of competitive talents and prepare for Olympic events; strengthen the publicity and promotion efforts and improve the popularity; play a role in national fitness and encourage public participation.

**Keywords:** Sports management; Surfing; Value; Promotion

## 1. Introduction

Surfing is a sport that originated in ancient Polynesia. Spread from Hawaii in the early 20th century, it has become a popular water sport worldwide. Due to the significant contribution of surfing to the Tokyo Olympic Games, surfing was included in the "Preliminary Establishment Sport" of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games at the 139th International Olympic Committee (IOC) meeting on February 3, 2022. Following the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, surfing has become an Olympic event for three consecutive times, marking the expansion of surfing's international popularity and influence and providing an excellent opportunity for countries to develop surfing. Therefore, in this context, this paper analyzes the development status of surfing abroad, summarizes the experience and characteristics, and investigates the value of surfing. Furthermore, it puts forward the implementation path to promote surfing sports. This paper provides a reference for the national surfing team to prepare for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and promote the sustainable development of surfing in China.

## 2. The Development Status of Surfing at Home and Abroad

### 2.1 Current Situation of Surfing in Foreign Countries

Duke Kahanamoku, an American swimming champion of the 1912 and 1920 Olympic Games, promoted modern surfing from Hawaii to worldwide. International surfing organizations include the International Surfing Association (ISA) and the World Surf League (WSL). The International Surfing Association is an international surfing management organization recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). It is headquartered in La Jolla, California. It has 109 member states and manages surfing events such as shortboard surfing, longboard surfing, SUP, and disabled surfing. The World Surf League is a surfing organization certified by the International Surf Association. It is the largest and most influential organization in professional surfing and the competent body of experienced surfers worldwide [1].

The surfing events with higher specifications mainly include the ISA Surfing World Championships and the WSL Professional Tour. From July 25 to August 1, 2021, the first surfing competition in the Olympic Games was held in Japan. 40 athletes from 18 countries participated in the competition. Ultimately, Brazilian athlete Italo Ferreira won the men's gold medal, and American athlete Carissa Moore won the women's gold medal. Surfing in the United States and Australia has a long history, high popularity, and a solid competitive level. Influenced by geographical conditions, only some countries in Asia allow surfing. In addition to China and Japan, which are managed and promoted by the national sports department, the development of surfing in other Asian countries is primarily the personal behavior of amateurs, with loose organization, less funds, and low participation.

## **2.2 The Current Situation of Surfing in China**

### **2.2.1 Current Status of the Surfing Tourism Industry**

Surfing started late in China. Before becoming an Olympic event, surfing was only carried out spontaneously by amateurs in coastal provinces such as Hainan and Guangdong. In recent years, thanks to the publicity and promotion of the Water Sports Management Center of the State Sports General Administration, surfing has gradually become a fashionable sport popular among young people. The number of notes related to "surfing" on the popular social software "Little Red Book" has reached more than 970,000, and surfing has become a new hot spot in coastal tourism. Many cities, including Wanning, Sanya, Zhangzhou, Huizhou, Beihai, and others, have formed a relatively complete surfing tourism industry chain by natural geography and climate. In the first quarter of 2022, affected by the epidemic, the number of tourists in Hainan Province showed a negative growth, while Wanning, with its characteristic surfing sports, increased the number of tourists by 2.67 % year-on-year, ranking first in Hainan Province. With the rapid development of the surfing tourism industry, the Water Sports Management Center of the State Sports General Administration has successively issued management methods related to surfing skills training, surfing coaches, and surfing clubs [2].

### **2.2.2 The Development Status of Competitive Surfing**

After surfing became an official Olympic Games event, the General Administration of Sport of China emphasized developing competitive surfing. Relying on institutional advantages, China formed a national surfing team for the first time in 2017 and widely gathered provinces, cities, and social forces to participate in surfing projects and prepare for the Olympic Games. Cross-border selection, hiring high-level foreign teachers, and training with competitions have rapidly improved the competitive strength of China's surfing sports. However, the development history of competitive surfing in China is short, and the competitive level needs to catch up to that of international surfing powers. In the Tokyo Olympics qualifying series, the best result for men's individual was 64th, and the best result for women's individual was 65th, with the highest country ranked 27th and failing to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. To achieve an early breakthrough in surfing during the Olympic Games, the national surfing team prepared for the Paris Olympic Games in advance formulated the overall plan, hired the internationally renowned coach Wade Sharp, led the team for long-term training, and achieved good results. Currently, China's surfing competitive strength is in the middle of the world level, second only to Japan in Asia, and the women's individual has the power to enter the Olympic qualification.

## **3. The Significance of Promoting Surfing**

### **3.1 Surfing Promotes Cultural Exchange**

Sports is a competitive activity and carries the mission of cultural exchange. Looking back on the history of human civilization, sports, and sports events have always been a bridge to maintain communication between people and regions. First, in international surfing events, not only do surfers from different countries and regions participate in the competition, but also tourists from various cultural backgrounds come to watch the events and travel. Second, there are news media reports of the event venue so that people worldwide will understand the local cultural customs, regional customs, national characteristics, and geographical landscape, enhancing the venue's artistic influence and visibility. Third, modern surfing sports events reflect the socialization of sports. Surfing is connected with the regional culture and folk customs of cities. Based on this, we should create a unique surfing culture, improve competitive strength, strengthen international exchanges, and inherit an excellent culture [3].

### **3.2 The Educational Value of Surfing**

Surfing positively affects fitness, ideological and moral education, and personality shaping. It stimulates people's potential and creativity, which has been fully demonstrated. The British National Health Service (NHS) recognizes surfing as a healthy intervention that can treat children and young people at risk of mental illness and promote their mental and physical health. Furthermore, surfing requires high coordination of the human body. It involves coordinating body parts to complete movements under the unified command of the nervous system [4].

In addition, the surfing is mainly on the beach with pleasant scenery. People who are stressed can not only improve their physical function but also relax in the beautiful countryside by surfing. Second,

surfing helps to shape people's optimistic, adventurous, and tenacious character, which is of educational value. Especially for young students, surfing sports guide students to form a healthy and perfect personality. In the face of the ever-changing waves, athletes must maintain high mental concentration and flexibly use their sports skills to deal with changing tides. The unique environment has cultivated the excellent quality of indomitable and persistent.

### ***3.3 Surfing Drives Economic Development***

In recent years, China attaches great importance to developing the sports industry. The surfing culture can promote the development of the surfing equipment manufacturing industry, the professional training industry, and other related industries. In addition, it can also significantly boost the development of the city's tourism industry. In cities such as Wanning, Sanya, and Shenzhen, with their natural geographical and climatic advantages, the surfing tourism industry has begun to scale and attract more and more tourists [5]. Surfing-related sectors have become a new engine for the sustainable development of coastal city tourism. The middle reaches of the surfing industry chain are the surfing clubs. In 2021, 136 clubs were registered in the Water Sports Management Center of the State Sports General Administration, which is distributed in 22 provinces. Currently, most surfers' consumption is concentrated in the middle and down reaches of teaching and experience. Surfing has become a popular sport in China and has formed an industrial ecology with Hainan as the representative, focusing on surfing clubs, surfing brands, and surfing training.

## **4. The Promotion of Surfing Sports**

### ***4.1 The Improvement of the Multi-event System***

Sports events are the most crucial way of cultural transmission of a sport, so China should pay attention to the development of surfing events. There are two requirements for professional competitions. On the one hand, we should actively apply to host major international surfing events, gain experience hosting top-level events, and bring China's hosting level up to international standards [6].

On the other hand, we learn from the advanced experience of foreign countries, holding national, provincial, and municipal professional events so that surfers gain more competition opportunities. For mass events, we combine the regional cultural characteristics of different places to hold innovative events, including exciting surfing competitions with local features. In this way, the public can participate in the contest, mobilize the public's enthusiasm, and encourage everyone to participate in surfing.

### ***4.2 Pay Attention to the Cultivation of Competitive Talents and Prepare for the Olympic Games***

Under the background that surfing has become a permanent event of the Olympic Games, China has trained outstanding athletes to win honors for the country in the international arena. To improve the competitive level of athletes, we put forward the following strategies. First, paying attention to the selection and training of high-level talents is necessary. A selection mechanism should be established in various places and departments to select potential athletes. Second, we can choose skills through cross-border and cross-item selection, expand the channels, and increase the number of reserve talents. We actively acquire standardized and scientific training systems from foreign countries, formulate physical and tactical training methods in line with international standards, and improve the competitive level. In addition, the state strengthens the training of coaches, hires excellent foreign coaches, and cooperates with domestic coaches to lay a solid foundation for developing China's competitive surfing [7].

### ***4.3 Strengthen Publicity, Promotion, Popularity***

In July 2021, the first sports data report released by TikTok showed that the popularity of surfing as an emerging sport grew rapidly and ranked seventh among all Olympic events. However, the public's acceptance of surfing could be higher. The mainstream media rarely broadcast surfing events, greatly restricting the spread of surfing culture. Since the advent of the media era, it has provided great convenience for the public to spread and obtain information. Internet bloggers and well-known network anchors have a considerable fan base. Therefore, we give full play to the flexible and diverse characteristics of self-media publicity and use self-media for advertising and interaction to expand the spread of surfing culture [8].

#### 4.4 The Perfection of Safety Supervision System

Surfing is an extreme sport in the ocean. Risk factors include marine biological attacks, drowning, and offshore currents. The accidents occur from time to time at home and abroad. For example, in 2015, Australian surfer Mick Fanning was nearly killed in a shark attack on the WSL Tour in South Africa. According to the report released by the China Adventure Association, there were five accidents involving surfing in 2021, most of which were drownings caused by offshore currents. Therefore, the competent departments at all levels should give full attention to the safety supervision function and strictly supervise the surfing events, the qualification examination of surfing clubs, and the qualification evaluation of employees following relevant standards. In addition, managers attach importance to the emergency response and implement the preparation and exercise of emergency management plans [9].

#### 4.5 Play the Role of National Fitness and Encourage Public Participation

Relevant managers play the entertainment experience function of surfing and combine surfing with festival and national fitness activities. Furthermore, they hold thematic competitions, carry out surfing knowledge popularization and publicity, encourage public participation, and give full play to the national fitness value. They are taking the surf club in the coastal area as the main body, with the help of various channels such as news reports and self-media, to promote the surfing culture, creating a brand in the tourism season. In conclusion, the relevant departments hold many activities to enable the public to learn surfing knowledge, develop diversified events, and carry out mass surfing events of different levels and forms to make them play a valuable role in national fitness.

### 5. Conclusion

Surfing is an official event of the Olympic Games and one of the ways of national fitness, which is becoming increasingly popular. Promoting surfing is conducive to the development of culture and economy. China actively promotes the development of surfing, creates an environment with Chinese characteristics, and improves its competitiveness. Surfing makes cultural derivatives, shapes people's optimistic, adventurous, and tenacious characters, and has educational value. In addition, the development of surfing is highly integrated with coastal tourism, which promotes the development of the surfing equipment manufacturing industry and professional training industry, thus promoting economic prosperity. In surfing sports, people exercise various body parts and maintain health. When the activity is held, people can feel the charm of surfing and experience the distinctive regional culture. In addition, this paper proposes promotion methods, including perfecting the competition system, cultivating competitive talents, and publicizing on the network platform. In conclusion, we are committed to increasing the popularity of surfing, promoting the development of the sport, and providing some references for related research.

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