

SURF LIFESAVING NEW ZEALAND

PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

JUNIOR BLACK FINS

18 as of the 31st of December
(as per ILS)

BLACK FINS

U17 SQUAD

- Athlete competing in the U17 age group at the SLSNZ National Championships.
- Desire to pursue a performance pathway and understands the different HP events and selection.
- Performance potential on the Junior international stage within 2 years.
- Performing in multiple disciplines and/or multiple events within a discipline within the selection period.
- Eligible for Battle of the Tasman and Junior Black Fins selection.

U19 SQUAD

- Athlete competing in the U19 age group at the SLSNZ National Championships.
- Continued progression of domestic/Australian performances with consistent results and performance potential at a senior international event within 4 years.
- Performing in multiple disciplines and/or multiple events within a discipline within the selection period.
- Eligible for Battle of the Tasman selection, Black Fins and Junior Black Fins selection (if ILS eligible).

OPEN SQUAD

- Athlete competing in the Open age group at the SLSNZ National Championships.
- Consistent domestic & international podium performances in multiple events within discipline and/or across disciplines.
- Capable of A Final performances at key international events.
- Eligible for Black Fins selection .

SURF LIFESAVING NEW ZEALAND

PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

U17 SQUAD GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

Purpose:

Introduce athletes to high-performance behaviours, build multi-disciplinary capability, and prepare them for the demands of international youth competition.

Performance

- Demonstrates strong domestic U17 results across multiple disciplines.
- Shows potential to be competitive at junior international level within 1–2 years.
- Begins or is already being exposed to Australian competition (e.g., Aussies, World Ocean Series, QLD Champs).
- Shows improving consistency across heats, semis, and finals.

Training Behaviours

- Establishes reliable training habits (attendance, communication, recovery).
- Learns basic performance planning (goal setting, season structure).
- Begins to understand nutrition, sleep, and recovery expectations.
- Demonstrates willingness to learn and adapt.

Technical & Tactical Development

- Builds technical proficiency in board, ski (if age-eligible), surf skills, and/or beach and pool disciplines.
- Learns racing fundamentals: starts/finishes, positioning, transitions, awareness, pacing strategy.
- Develops confidence
- Begins to understand HP events and selections

Character & Culture

- Shows curiosity, coachability, and positive team behaviours.
- Demonstrates respect for officials, teammates, and the HP environment.
- Begins to understand the expectations of representing NZ.

Expected Progression

- By the end of U17, athletes should be ready to:
 - Move into U19 domestic competition with confidence.
 - Handle appropriate training loads.
 - Perform consistently across multiple disciplines.
 - Engage with the High Performance team around their own development

SURF LIFESAVING NEW ZEALAND

PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

U19 SQUAD GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

Purpose:

Prepare athletes for international youth (ILS U19) and senior competitions and build the foundation for Open-level performance.

Performance

- Demonstrates competitive and improving U19 results (New Zealand and/or Australia)
- Shows potential to be internationally competitive at Senior levels within 2–4 years.
- Performs consistently across multiple disciplines or, in some cases, excels in a specialist discipline.
- Shows ability to execute under pressure (e.g., finals, selection events).

Training Behaviours

- Manages a structured training programme.
- Demonstrates maturity in recovery, nutrition, and load management.
- Balances school/study/work with HP commitments effectively.
- Communicates proactively with coaches and HP staff.

Technical & Tactical Development

- Shows advanced technical proficiency and discipline-specific refinement.
- Understands tactical decision-making in complex environments.
- Begins to specialise while maintaining multi-disciplinary capability.
- Demonstrates strong race and situational awareness.

Character & Culture

- Demonstrates behaviours that positively influence and support younger squad athletes
- Demonstrates resilience, accountability, and professionalism.
- Demonstrates readiness for high-level international travel and team environments.

Expected Progression

- By the end of U19, athletes should be ready to:
 - Move into Open competition with confidence.
 - Be within 2 - 4 years of Black Fins selection (if ILS-eligible).
 - Managing training volumes and intensity consistently.
 - Demonstrate consistent podium potential domestically.

SURF LIFESAVING NEW ZEALAND

PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

OPEN SQUAD GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

Purpose:

Prepare athletes to perform at senior international level and contribute to the Black Fins' sustained success.

Performance

- Demonstrates consistent domestic podium results in Open events.
- Shows competitiveness in Australian and international competitions.
- Capable of A-final performances at key international events.
- Performs reliably under pressure and in high-stakes environments.

Training Behaviours

- Manages a professional-level training programme balancing school/study/work with HP.
- Demonstrates mastery of recovery, nutrition, and performance planning.
- Works collaboratively and proactively with club coaches, practitioners, and HP staff.
- Shows long-term commitment to international performance cycles.

Technical & Tactical Development

- Exhibits elite technical proficiency and discipline mastery.
- Demonstrates advanced tactical decision-making in complex conditions.
- Uses experience to adapt quickly to race environments and conditions.
- Continues refining skills to remain internationally competitive.

Character & Culture

- Embodies Black Fins values and contributes to a positive team culture.
- Recognises the importance of role modelling for younger athletes.
- Demonstrates leadership, professionalism, and emotional maturity.
- Represents SLSNZ with integrity in and out of competition.

Expected Progression

- Open athletes should:
 - Be strong candidates for Black Fins selection within the next cycle (2-4 years).
 - Maintain or improve international competitiveness.
 - Contribute to the long-term success and culture of the HP programme.
 - Demonstrate sustained performance across multiple seasons.