Small Nations, Big Wins at the Billabong ISA World Surfing Games
Presented by Amarok of Volkswagen

Many Countries Advance, Host Peru and Latin Americans Are Still Top of the Heap As Big Waves Continue to Power on the Fourth Day of Competition

Punta Hermosa, Peru
October 23, 2010

If you don’t think Israel, Sweden, Venezuela, Great Britain, Tahiti, Chile, Switzerland, Uruguay, Germany, Puerto Rico or Canada are surfing nations, think again. On day four of the Billabong ISA World Surfing Games Presented by Amarok of Volkswagen, each of these countries still had surfers advancing in Punta Hermosa Peru’s big, shifting 6 to 10 foot faces, sometimes besting the top surfing nations in the process.

At the start of the day 16 nations were tied in a statistical dead heat, vying for the top slot. With 31 international teams competing at the Billabong ISA World Surfing Games in Peru, a bevy of historical surfing powerhouses fall into their usual form. The Americans, Australians, South Africans and Brazilians have flexed their muscles with standout performances by Drew Courtney (AUS) Ben Bourgeois (USA) Peterson Crisanto (BRZ) and Casey Grant (RSA).
But what has proved to be equally impressive, the South American teams have shown that when surfing’s version of the Olympics comes to their own continent, they’ll fight tooth and nail for every heat.

At the cusp of the South American contingency, the Chilean team has proven to be one of the most dynamic. After finishing 19th at last year’s ISA Games in Costa Rica, the Chilean squad has dropped jaws time and again. After bowing out of the open round, Chile’s Guillermo Satt has put on a blistering showing in the repercharge round with some of the smoothest, most vertical, and rail-to-rail surfing of the event. After his performances over the past few days, people are quickly taking notice not only of Satt, but the remarkable team Chile has produced as a whole.

In addition, the Argentinean squad has also showed that they’re able to hold their own against the world’s best with sold showings by Santiago Muniz. But some of the most remarkable South American surfing of the event came from the Peruvian team front-lined by Cristobal de Col, Gabriel Villaran and Matias Mulanovich. All three Peruvian surfers have gone toe-to-toe with some of the world’s most adept surfers and come out smiling time and again. Today, they continued to put on impressive showings where they squeaked through their Round 3 Open heats and into the next round.

Venezuela, a dark horse in the event, had 3 major wins today, taking advantage of the 8 to 10 foot faces of the shifting pointbreak waves.

"We have been training hard and I believe that was key to our wins today," said Jesus Chacon. Added winner Francisco Bellorin, “I was lucky to find the best waves and do maneuvers well on them. The competitors were good, but my wave selection was the major factor.”

The Latin Americans were far from the only outstanding performers in the big Peruvian surf: With spectators packing the beach front bleachers, Steve Pierson from Tahiti racked up a huge upset against powerhouse Australia. Micah Lester from the United Kingdom continued his remarkable string of victories as if he’d been surfing Hawaiian reefs all his life.

Perhaps the standout surfer of the day was South African Team Captain Greg Emslie. Unable to find the needed waves in his heat Friday, he had to do battle in the repercharge heat today.

“It’s very tough out there, said South African Coach Graham Hines. “But we South Africans love a good fight. When our backs are against the wall, we thrive!”
Emslie redeemed himself in Repercharge Round 2 winning his heat decisively; in fact he won two critical heats today, posting some of the highest scores of the contest. It was a crucial comeback to keep the Springbok dream alive.

“That was a serious demonstration of high performance surfing,” said Adam Replogle Billabong resident pro and one of the contest announcers, after Emslie’s tour de force exhibition. “It was textbook technique coupled with knowledge and confidence.”

Despite not having the surfing pedigree as some of the other teams, part of the ISA World Surfing Games soul is made including countries not typically considered surfing nations. The Germans, Swiss and Swedish teams have all fielded surfers in this year’s games. Sweden’s Freddie Meadows surfed with such heart and soul, that even the locals were cheering him on.

Tiny landlocked Switzerland couldn’t advance this year, but were at no loss for enthusiasm. “We were so happy to be here,” said Martin Muller, a Swiss team member. “The international level of surfing just keeps going up and up and up. Sometimes it is a bit intimidating!”

Although they may not have made a full run for the podium, their inclusion in the Games signals the growing roots of competitive surfing are taking hold.
But unexpected wins from complete dark horses were still a frequent result in the repercharge heats. Spain got all 3 of their men through, and surprise chargers like Tahiti and 3 members of the Costa Rica Team also qualified. Bombshell surprise Mexico blasted through 2 repercharges and is still fighting to make the next round. “The deciding factor for me was doing some really big maneuvers” said Angelo Lozano, after the heat. “Earlier I was falling off when I tried them, but in this heat I went big and landed them!”

Alejandro Moreda whose team had two advances today summed up everyone’s feeling on the fourth day with this comment: “Puerto Rico is very happy to be here! It makes me happy to be back in an ISA event because we feel so proud to represent our country. Here you feel patriotism of the strongest form. I travel a lot on the WQS and the World Surfing Games is a much more personal event. I am stoked that we all are close, surfing for our homelands and flying our flags.”

The contest will be webcast LIVE everyday at [www.BillabongISAgworldsurfinggames.com](http://www.BillabongISAgworldsurfinggames.com)
There will be new video, stories and images uploaded on this site daily, with separate, nation specific folders for every team competing in the event. Simply open the site and look for the folder with the nation you wish to cover.

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About the International Surfing Association (ISA)
The International Surfing Association (ISA) is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the World Governing Authority for Surfing. It was originally founded as the International Surfing Federation in 1964 and has been running world championships since 1964 and the Junior World Championships since 1980.

ISA membership includes the surfing National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of over 60 countries on six continents. Its headquarters are located in San Diego, California. It is presided by Fernando Aguerre, first elected in 1994 in Rio, and re-elected six times since. The ISA’s four Vice Presidents are Alan Atkins (Australia), Robin de Kock (South Africa), Mike Gerard (USA) and Karín Sierralta (Peru).