

# San Diego Windsurfing Site Guide



**Site Name:** Tourmaline Surf Park

**Location:** North Pacific Beach in San Diego. This is an ocean-sailing site.

**Skill Level Rating:** Adventurous Intermediates and up – solid sailing skills are necessary.

**Typical Sailing Conditions:**

*Wind:* 8-15 knots from the WNW or NW, typically starting in the late morning and tapering off mid-late afternoon. Winter storms can bring good NW 15-25 knot clearing winds, which are ideal for Tourmaline.

*Water:* Salt water, water temp is high 60s/low 70s in summer, mid to high 50s in winter. Water quality is usually good, though runoff after storms can sometimes cause pollution problems.

*Boards:* Floaty wave boards or durable slalom boards that turn well. It's not unusual to see custom fiberglass boards. Slogging is often part of the program, so having enough board volume is crucial.

*Skills:* Typically 6.0 to 7.5+, though in good winds people are often on 5.0s – maybe even a 4.7 here and there.

*Gear Note:* Bring stuff that can survive the rinse cycle. This is not a good place for fragile epoxy boards and 90% carbon masts.

**Water Conditions:** Ocean surf sailing with chop. Tourmaline is a fairly gentle reef break and as such is a very popular longboard surfing spot as well as a windsurfing spot when the conditions are right. Conditions range from slogging around in small surf and light winds (most common) to the occasional stronger wind days with logo-high waves and a big wind swell. It is definitely not for beginners. Solid water starting and jibing skills are a must, and experience in rougher, choppy waters is very helpful.

**Wind Notes:** Tourmaline is really only sailable in WNW or NW winds, as a west wind is too onshore to allow most people to get out past the crunch zone. It is not sailable all that often, but on those rare days when there is a 15+ knot NW wind, it is as good as

any surf sailing spot as any along the Southern California coast. The best winds are often in the spring, but occasional winter storm clearing winds can really turn this site on. Summer and fall can be hit or miss, but generally the wind is too onshore and light during the summer and fall months and good days at Tourmaline are rare during this period.

**Rigging and Launching Notes:** There is no real rigging area at Tourmaline, so most everyone rigs in the parking lot (if there's room). The other options are to rig in the grass area on the east side of the parking lot, or shlep your gear down to the sand on the beach and rig there. Depending on the time of year, there may be little or no beach, especially in winter months. The launch is a starboard tack and it can be tricky to get out past the crunch zone when there is a swell of any size. Light winds and onshore conditions also can make this a challenging launch; unfortunately, these are fairly typical conditions for Tourmaline. Be sure to respect the surfing crowd, they're out there too in all but the most extreme conditions.

**Other Notes:** Public restrooms are located next to the beach in the parking lot and there's an outdoor shower to rinse yourself down. Surfing (particularly longboarding) is really popular so bring your surfboard too in case the wind is light. The beach extends all the way to south Mission Beach so long beach walks are also a great way to kill time while waiting for the wind.

**Parking and Fees:** The parking lot is fairly small, and it fills up quickly on the weekends especially in summer. If there's wind and/or surf, the spaces disappear even faster. Unfortunately, there is no convenient street parking anywhere nearby so expect to hunt for a space if you don't arrive early.

Parking is free.

**Directions to Site:** Take Interstate 5 to Pacific Beach: the Balboa Ave/Garnet exit (southbound) or the Grand/Garnet exit (northbound). Head west on Garnet Ave until it T's at the beach. Turn right on Mission Blvd, then make a left on La Jolla Blvd, which quickly wraps north just after you get on it. Go north two streets and make a left into Tourmaline Surf Park. The parking lot is at the bottom of the hill.