

ANNOUNCEMENT



SSL Gold Cup 2026: Qualifying Series Line-Up

*With 255 days to go until the second edition of the SSL Gold Cup, described as the **Football World Cup in Sailing**, the final qualification events are taking shape. The regatta will take place from 18 November to 13 December 2026 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*

The SSL Gold Cup features 66 national teams, of which 40 qualify for the Grand Final in Rio. So far, 29 have qualified through the SSL Nations Ranking, while two more secured their places during the Asian Qualifier in Pattaya, Thailand. Nine spots are still available and will be decided in the remaining qualification events.

The qualification series comprises five stages:

- **December 2025 – Asian Qualifiers**, Pattaya, Thailand. *The golden tickets were secured by the SSL Team Philippines and SSL Team Oman (Groups A and B).*
- **2–4 June 2026 – African & Oceanian Qualifiers**, SSL Training Center, Grandson, Switzerland (Group C)
- **8–11 June 2026 – European Qualifiers I**, SSL Training Center, Grandson, Switzerland (Groups D and E)
- **14–17 July 2026 – European Qualifiers II**, SSL Training Center, Grandson, Switzerland (Groups F and G)
- **18–15 November 2026 – Pan American Qualifiers**, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

12-13 November 2025 – Pan American Qualifiers, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
(Groups H–J)

SSL newcomers and the Pacific team



Group C

SSL Team Seychelles, SSL Team Morocco, SSL Team Mozambique, and SSL Team Tahiti will gather in early June to compete for two qualification spots - the only group where two teams will secure qualification. All four teams have already had the opportunity to become familiar with the Swiss venue. They trained on Lake Neuchâtel during official SSL training sessions in July and August 2025. For several of these nations, the event will mark their debut on the SSL starting line.

Tahiti, however, already left a strong impression during the first SSL Gold Cup in Gran Canaria. The team led by Teva Plichart was one of the biggest surprises of the event, delivering an impressive performance and reaching the Round of 16.

European teams ready to race



Group D

Teams representing SSL Team Austria, SSL Team Slovenia, and SSL Team

Estonia will line up in Group D. Austria and Estonia finished the previous SSL Gold Cup in the Round of 32, while Slovenia advanced to the Round of 16. At the moment, Austria holds the highest position in the SSL Nations Ranking in this group, currently ranked 21st under the leadership of Thomas Zajac.

Group E

In Group E, **SSL Team Norway, SSL Team Belgium, SSL Team Lithuania, and SSL Team Serbia** will compete for a ticket to the second edition of the SSL Gold Cup.

Three years ago, all eyes were on Team Lithuania, which put on an amazing performance at the first edition of the SSL Gold Cup. They pushed the limit from the first day of racing. Finally, the team, under the leadership of Rokas Milevičius, advanced to the quarterfinals.

Belgium and Serbia will have another opportunity to qualify for the prestigious event. Both teams trained at the SSL Training Center last summer. Norway already knows what it's like to taste the SSL Gold Cup finals, having reached the Round of 16 in the previous edition. The team currently holds 23rd place in the SSL Nations Ranking, the highest position from the E group.

Group F

Group F features **SSL Team Croatia, SSL Team Finland, and SSL Team Ukraine**. Ukraine started the previous SSL Gold Cup in the Round of 64, which also marked their final stage. Croatia and Finland both raced in different groups and concluded their campaigns in the Round of 32.

Croatia enters the qualifier as the highest-ranked nation in the group, currently in 24th place in the SSL Nations Ranking. The team includes Rio 2016 Olympic champions in the 470 class, Šime Fantela and Igor Marenčić, as well as Laser silver medalist Tonči Stipanović.

Group G

Group G brings together **SSL Team Portugal, SSL Team Greece, SSL Team Türkiye, and SSL Team Bulgaria**. Portugal is led by João Rodrigues and skippered by Afonso Domingos, one of the most experienced sailors in the SSL fleet. During the Gran Canaria edition, Portugal delivered an outstanding campaign, progressing from the opening knockout round all the way to the quarterfinals. The team currently holds 22nd place in the SSL Nations Ranking, the best position in this group.

As Greece and Turkey didn't compete in the finals, they want to do their best. SSL Team Greece is looking forward to good racing, as they have already started training at the SSL training base, on the same venue where the qualification will be. The Greek team is full of very experienced sailors, so the battle looks very promising.

Bulgaria also reached the SSL Gold Cup finals in Gran Canaria but was eliminated in the opening knockout round.

**SSL GOLD CUP
EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS**

GROUP D
LAC DE NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND 8-11 JUNE 2026

- AUSTRIA** [21]
- SLOVENIA** [30]
- ESTONIA** [43]

ROAD TO RIO

**SSL GOLD CUP
EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS**

GROUPE
LAC DE NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND 8-11 JUNE 2026

- NORWAY** [23]
- BELGIUM** [27]
- LITHUANIA** [41]
- SERBIA** [40]

ROAD TO RIO

**SSL GOLD CUP
EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS**

GROUP F
LAC DE NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND 14-17 JULY 2026

- CROATIA** [25]
- FINLAND** [29]
- UKRAINE** [32]

ROAD TO RIO

**SSL GOLD CUP
EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS**

GROUP G
LAC DE NEUCHÂTEL, SWITZERLAND 14-17 JULY 2026

- PORTUGAL** [22]
- GREECE** [26]
- TÜRKIYE** [33]
- BULGARIA** [64]

ROAD TO RIO

Pan American teams complete the line-up

**SSL GOLD CUP
PAN-AMERICAN QUALIFIERS**

- GROUP H**
 URUGUAY [42]
- GROUP I**
 BERMUDA [44]
- GROUP J**
 MEXICO [45]



Group H

Group H features **SSL Team Uruguay**, **SSL Team Venezuela**, and **SSL Team Cuba**. Cuba is the only nation in this group to have previously participated in the SSL Gold Cup finals. The team qualified for the 2023 edition in Gran Canaria and finished the regatta in 36th position overall. In the current SSL Nations Ranking, Uruguay ranks 46th in the group.

Group I

Group I includes **SSL Team Bermuda**, **SSL Team Antigua and Barbuda**, and **SSL Team Guatemala**, representing the Caribbean Sea and the western Atlantic region.

Bermuda currently ranks 47th in the SSL Nations Ranking and enters the group as the highest-ranked nation. Both Bermuda and Antigua and Barbuda previously competed in the knockout stages of the SSL Gold Cup qualification rounds, racing in the same Round of 64 group and advancing to the Round of 32. Their campaigns ended with Antigua and Barbuda finishing 26th and Bermuda 31st overall.

Guatemala also took part in the previous qualification series but did not advance to the finals.

Group J

Group J is **SSL Team Mexico**, **SSL Team Puerto Rico**, and **SSL Team El Salvador**. Both Mexico and Puerto Rico competed in the 2022 SSL Gold Cup qualification series but did not manage to reach the final stage. The two nations are closely matched in the SSL Nations Ranking, currently ranked 49th and 50th.

El Salvador represents an exciting new chapter. The SSL Team was established this year and is led by Olympic sailor Enrique José Arathoon Pacas. The team completed a full training session in the SSL training base in Grandson, Switzerland.

