

SPORT: Surfing

EVENT: 2017 VISSLA ISA World Junior Surfing Championship

PLACE: Hyuga, Japan

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A record-breaking 41 countries officially inaugurated the **2017 VISSLA ISA World Junior Surfing Championship** in Hyuga, Japan on Saturday afternoon.

306 of the world's best junior surfers hailing from all continents of the globe paraded with their teams through the heart of Hyuga for the event's Opening Ceremony. The Ceremony also featured the ISA's signature Sands of the World Ceremony in which the young athletes pour sands from their local beaches into a clear container as a symbol of unity and peace amongst the nations.

The Ceremony marked the opening of competition, which is set to get underway on Sunday morning at Okuragahama Beach.

Various local and regional dignitaries were in attendance at the event, including ISA President, **Fernando Aguerre**, the Mayor of Hyuga, **Kohei Toya**, the Governor of Miyazaki Prefecture, **Shunji Kono**, the President of the Nippon Surfing Association, **Atsushi Sakai** and the Chief Operating Officer of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, **Yukihiko Nunomura**.

ISA President, Fernando Aguerre, addressed the international competitors at the Opening Ceremony.

"Welcome to all teams coming from all corners of the world to the VISSLA ISA World Junior Surfing Championship in the beautiful city of Hyuga. I want to welcome some special teams competing for the first time in the event's history: Channel Islands, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Fiji, and our newest and 103rd Member Nation, Samoa.

"This is the largest junior surfing competition in the world, and the only one where you compete not for money, but for the honor of representing your countries.

"Only four of you will go home with medals, but you all are winners for representing your country.