

Editor of The New Yorker:

I enjoyed reading William Finnegan's piece on the Surf Ranch and the future of surfing ("Kelly Slater's shock wave," December 17 issue). As a physical oceanographer, I'm thrilled to see that Slater and his team have harnessed the science of surf-wave making. As a surf fan, however, I'm concerned about the future of professional surfing. I share Finnegan's mixed feelings about the impact of Kelly's Wave on the sport. And I think the World Surf League should organize professional surfing into two categories: a traditional league in the ocean, similar to today's world tour, and a performance league in wave pools. The wave-pool league has the potential of popularizing surfing in landlocked countries, making it a true Olympics sport. But the commercialization behind this type of league—a main interest of the WSL—will divorce professional surfing from the good-old soul surfing, which attracted most of us into the sport in the first place.

Yours in apprehension,  
C. B. Rocha