

USFA SPEARFISHING COMPETITION RULES

August 2009



1. All competitors must be financial members of the USFA unless they are interstate members of the AUF or international competitors attending at the invitation of the USFA, or that particular competition has been opened to all spearfishers for any particular purpose.
2. All USFA perpetual trophies won by spearfishers non-domiciled to NSW shall not leave the custody of the USFA, but shall have the winner's name engraved thereon at the expense of the USFA.
3. Any competitor found to be unfinancial whilst competing in an USFA event shall be disqualified from that event, and any score registered shall be declared invalid.
4. In the event of an unfinancial competitor representing a Club in an USFA event, then that Club's score for that particular event shall be declared invalid unless the Club can produce evidence of acceptable extenuating circumstances.
5. The cancellation of a Club's score shall be automatic under Clause 4, and the responsibility of any protest shall be entirely the Club's concern.
6. At the time of contesting any particular competition:
 - a. Sub-juniors shall be under the age of 15
 - b. Juniors shall be from the age of 15 but under the age of 18
 - c. Intermediates shall be from the age of 18 but under the age of 25
 - d. Seniors shall be from the age of 25 but under the age of 45
 - e. Veterans shall be from the age of 45 but under the age of 55
 - f. Masters shall be over the age of 55 but under the age of 65
 - g. Grand Masters shall be over the age of 65
7. Sub-junior, Junior, Intermediate and Lady competitors may compete in an open event provided the open competition fees are paid.
8. Traditional pairs events shall be open to any nominated pair. The nominations are to be carried out by the competitors themselves.
9. Teams events shall be open to any nominated team consisting of a maximum of 4 members. The nominations are to be carried out by the competitors themselves.

10. In pairs or teams events, the total score of each individual member of the pair or team shall be added together to determine their total score. In the event of there being a tied score, the deciding factor shall be the greatest number of species cumulated by a pair or team. If still tied, the pair or team with the heaviest combined total weight of catch shall be declared the winner.
11. A competitor may weigh only one fish from each eligible species. Not more than two fish from any eligible species are to be presented.
12. Eligible species shall be of the class: OSTEICHTHYS – bony fishes – with the exception of the following:
 - a. SYNGNATHIFORMES: Pipefish and allies, the families Aulostomidae (Trumpetfishes) and Fistulariidae (Flutemouths).
 - b. TETRADONTIFORMES:
 - i. OSTRACIIDAE – Boxfishes and allies.
 - ii. TETRAODONTIDAE – Toadfish, Puffers and allies.
 - iii. DIODONTIDAE – Porcupinefishes.
 - iv. MOLIDAE – Sunfish.
 - c. Those species removed from a competition score sheet.
 - d. Those species protected under USFA or AUF(S) policy, e.g. Blue Groper and Bluefish.
 - e. Those species protected under the governing authorities legislation, e.g. Black Cod, Blue Devil Fish, Bluefish, Blue Groper, Elegant Wrasse, Estuary Cod, and Queensland Groper
13. Berleying is only permitted using eligible fish species outlined in Clause 12, and being obtained during the hours of the event from the water within the event boundaries.
14. Eligible species shall have a minimum weight of 450gms, or higher, as specified on the relevant score sheet. Where the authorities specify a minimum length for a species, the minimum weight specified for that species shall reflect a reasonable margin above that size.
15. Eligible species which have a minimum length as their eligibility criteria shall have a minimum length of not less than 20cm or of a reasonable margin over the authority's minimum specified length, where such length is legislated.
16. Different Zones may have differing score sheets to accommodate for the variances in species sizing and distribution throughout the NSW coastline. Adjoining Zones may utilise either Zone's scoresheet where appropriate.
17. Inter-club competitions shall be judged on the aggregate score of the 3 largest fish of each species selected from the total number of fish weighed in by all members of that Club.
18. All competitions shall be a minimum of 4 hours, and a maximum of 7 hours duration.
19. The starting and finishing times of a competition shall be stipulated and announced no later than at the conclusion of roll-call.
20. Competitors must not spear any fish in a designated competition area the day prior to the event.

21.

- a. All competitors must personally sign-on within 15 minutes of commencement of the event
- b. If there is no record of a competitor entered on the competition roll, that competitor shall be considered not to have entered the event
- c. Competitors arriving after the stipulated sign-on period must follow the registration and sign-on procedures, and shall then be allowed to compete without further restriction
- d. Competitors must personally sign-off, have entered the weigh-in ring in order to sign-off, or have followed any special sign-off procedure specified by the convenor at roll-call before the official timekeeper signals competition end
- e. After signing off, a competitor shall not re-enter the water nor deposit additional fish into the ring
- f. Failure to sign-off by the stipulated finish time shall result in automatic disqualification from the event. It is necessary for all competitors to sign-off even if disqualified. Failure to sign-off within the 30 minutes of the conclusion of the event shall incur a fine of \$20.00. In the event of genuine mitigating circumstances being presented, the fine may be waived by the event organizers.

22.

- a. All competitors shall answer their name from a roll-call conducted from the sign-on record. The roll-call shall be held during the last 15 minutes prior to the stipulated starting time of the event.
- b. Any competitor not answering when their name is called shall be considered not to have entered the event.
- c. All necessary announcements including safety issues and official time shall be made at roll-call.

23. It is the responsibility of the competitors to synchronize their watches to the official time.

24. A register of all powercraft and their crews shall be kept by the event organizers for any event. It shall be the responsibility of all competitors operating from powercraft to list all on board onto such register whether they are competitors, boat tenders, joy riders etc, and whether they are Members or not. Any infringement of this regulation shall render each competitor on the powercraft a fine of \$10.00.

25. Strict adherence to all maritime authority regulations shall be maintained, highlighting licensing and safe operating speeds whilst in proximity of persons or structures and objects in the water.

26. When at anchor or with divers in the water, all powercraft must clearly display flag "A", measuring 750mm x 600mm and displayed a minimum of 900mm above the gunwale.

27. All powercraft used in the course of a competition must comply with all requirements of the maritime authority, and must carry all appropriate safety equipment. All powercraft may be subject to inspection by the event organizers.

28. All competitors must have their fish in the ring prior to the conclusion of the event or must strictly follow the organizers directions regarding the method with which sign-off will be managed, and the method with which fish must be deposited into the ring.
29. The order of which the competitors' fish are deposited into the ring shall be the order in which the fish shall be weighed. Exceptions to this shall be at the discretion of the competition organizers.
30. Competitors shall comply with all relevant ordinances.
31. No breathing aid other than a snorkel shall be used.
32. All fish must be captured by the competitor using his hands, a spear, speargun or similar device.
33. Guns fired by the discharge of compressed air or explosive gases shall be forbidden.
34. Competitors must be immersed in the water at the time of spearing any fish.
35. Fish speared whilst in traps, nets, on lines or otherwise restrained, shall be deemed ineligible.
36. The use of explosives, poison, electricity or torches in the capture of a fish, shall be prohibited.
37. Any competitor carrying a powerhead for the specific use of safety only, must hold an appropriate firearms licence for that weapon.
38. Competitors must not discharge a speargun for any purpose other than to spear a fish.
39. Competitors must never load their speargun whilst out of the water.
40. Competitors must not carry a loaded speargun on a float.
41. Competitors must unload their speargun before leaving the water.
42. Competitors must not swim within 50m of any line fishermen or bathers.
43. Speared fish must not be tethered about the body.
44. Assisted catches shall be deemed ineligible. An assisted catch is one where another person, whilst in the water, contributed any muscular power towards the catch.
45. Spearheads must be sheathed in a suitable manner at all times whilst not in use.
46. Competitors must tow a personal float in all events. Such float must have a positive buoyancy of not less than 2.25kg and be coloured red, orange or yellow and clearly display flag "A", measuring a minimum of 30cm x 25cm, a minimum of 20cm above the water.
47. Personal floats must not be used for propulsion through the water.
48. Competitors using drop-lines must stay within 50m of their float at all times.
49. Weight belts must be fitted with quick-release buckles.
50. Competitors must carry a sharp knife which shall be adequately sheathed and readily accessible.

51. Competitors must carry a safety whistle and a reflective mirror.
52. Any Member cleaning or discarding fish refuse within 50m of a public bathing area shall be subject to a \$20.00 fine and further disciplinary action may be taken where deemed necessary.
53. Any Member found to be discarding whole fish in any manner, shall be subject to disciplinary action with no exception.
54. During the hours of a Competition and from a boat registered into that Competition, there shall be no line fishermen fishing or non-competing spearfishermen operating from said boat. By special arrangement with the Competition officials, a skindiver may escort a Sub-junior, Junior or novice spearfisherman, but shall not spear any fish unless personally entered into that Competition.
55. A registered Club member may not enter any competition during that competition year as a representative member of another Club unless they have given the USFA Membership Officer 45 day's notice, in writing, of such intention to transfer to that Club. Whilst the transfer period is in effect, the member may compete in any event as an individual member.
56. Unless specifically stated otherwise, the penalty for a breach of any of these rules shall be disqualification from the event.
57. Any competitor or recognized official may lodge a protest at any event. A protest must be lodged in writing, signed by the presenter, countersigned by another Member, and accompanied by a fee of \$20.00, which may be refunded at the discretion of the referee or the protest committee. All protests must be lodged with the competition referee within one hour of the posting of provisional results.
58. Protests involving discrepancies in the score sheets must be presented within one hour of the score sheet becoming available.
59. Should the competition referee receive a protest which cannot be amicably resolved, he or his representative shall convene a protest committee to consider the matter.
60. The protest committee shall consist of: the competition referee or his representative; one representative from each of the Clubs competing in the event. Each representative shall have a turn to speak uninterrupted on the matter. Each representative shall carry one vote with the competition referee also carrying one vote with an additional casting vote in the case of a tied result. The protest committee shall use its discretion in issuing a penalty if disqualification is not desirable.
61. A member, who is fined for any breach of these regulations, will be considered unfinancial and ineligible to compete in any event until such time the prescribed fine is paid.