

SOUTHERN FREEDIVERS

SPEARFISHING COMPETITION RULES – CLUB SERIES

8 Oct 2014

GENERAL

1. All competitors must be financial members of the AUF, unless that particular competition has been opened to all spearfishers (eg. Novice Competition).
2. All competitors MUST fill out a Competition entry form prior to sign on for each competition.
3. Competitors under the age of 15 may only compete with the approval of the dive convenor and with parent or guardian consent.
4. Competitors must load their own gun, kill and thread their own fish, produce their own berley and carry their own gear. Exemptions for gun loading may apply but only for the very, very young or the physically handicapped, on a case by case basis.
5. All competitions shall be a minimum of 4 hours, and a maximum of 6 hours duration.
6. All fish must be captured by the competitor using their hands, a spear, speargun or similar device.
7. No breathing aid other than a snorkel shall be permitted.
8. Competitors must be immersed in the water at the time of spearing of any fish.
9. Competitors must only load their speargun whilst in the water and must unload their speargun before leaving the water.
10. Competitors must not tow a loaded speargun on a float.
11. Competitors should be mindful of where their speargun is pointed at all times, loaded or otherwise.
12. The use of torches is permitted.

SAFETY

13. Competitors must tow a Personal float with positive buoyancy of not less than 7 kilograms and principally coloured either yellow, orange or red with reflective tape and with a flag clearly displayed as per **14** (below)
14. International Code Flag A (blue/white) of minimum size 300x250mm with its base a minimum of 200 mm above the surface of the water.
15. A diver must remain within 30 metres of their floats when he/she is at or near the surface of the water.
16. Competitor's floatlines shall be of a minimum length of 10 metres.
17. Competitors must carry a whistle and a reflective mirror of at least 50 mm x 50 mm.
18. Spearheads must be covered in a suitable manner at all times whilst not in the water.
19. Weight belts must be fitted with quick-release buckles. Weight vests must have the capacity to be easily removed in an emergency situation.
20. Competitors must carry a sharp knife which shall be adequately sheathed and readily accessible.
21. Other safety equipment such as use of smoke flares, safety sausages or electronic shark shields shall be permitted.

BERLEY

22. Berleying is only permitted using species that have been obtained in the water at the competition site during the hours of the event. No pre-purchased bait or otherwise to be used.
23. The Berleying of Abalone, Sea Urchins and Southern Rock Lobster is strictly forbidden. Any Member found to be berleying these species, shall be disqualified from the days competition with no exception.

BANNED AREAS

24. No competitor is allowed to swim within a banned area during any competition. Such person if found guilty will be disqualified. Banned areas include;
- a. Any restricted area or closed water as specified by Victorian recreational fishing legislation.
 - b. All Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries
 - c. Any restricted area outlined by the dive convenor in the pre-dive brief.
 - d. An area within 100m of the Sorrento/ Queenscliff ferry terminal (Note-both Sorrento and Queenscliff)and the Blairgowrie Marina.
 - e. The area adjacent to Swan Bay and the Submarine marked by Yellow “No boating “buoys . (This means no spearfishing at the Submarine or inside of the buoys).
- Note-** The Portsea pier/ Front beach area is now open for spearfishing however the standard 30m rule from all jetty’s applies.

ELIGIBLE SPECIES

25. All fish captured during competition must comply with Victorian recreational fishing minimum legal size limit and bag limits.
26. Not more than two fish from any eligible species are to be presented at the weigh-in. A competitor will only receive points for one eligible fish of each species on the current scoresheet.
27. Should any competitor’s fish presented for weighing be thirty percent (30%) or more below the minimum weight, a 50 point penalty will result.
28. Fish speared whilst in traps, nets or on lines shall be ineligible for the weigh-in.
29. 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.
30. A competitor may borrow an unloaded gun from another diver for a second shot or due to gear failure.
31. Eligible species, minimum weight/length and point allocation shall be as per the club score sheet.
32. All species that are scored on length will be measured overall; measure fish from tip of snout with mouth closed, to tip of tail.
33. Unlisted species may be weighed in. Minimum weights / lengths and eligible species will be at the discretion of the weigh master. Species that may not be weighed in as “unlisted” include;
- a. Blue Devil Fish, Crustacea, Toadfish, Puffers, Porcupinefishes, Boxfishes, Sunfish, Rays, Sharks, Elephant Fish, Catfish, Cockatoo Fish, Herring Cale, Kelpfish, all Flute Fish, all Flutemouth, all Pipefish, all Long Tom, Batfish, Angelfish, Old Wives, Crested Weed fish, Johnson Weed fish and Moonlighter.
 - b. Those species removed from a competition score sheet.
 - c. Those species protected under the governing authority’s legislation.

SIGN ON / SIGN OFF / WEIGH-IN

34. All competitors must personally sign-on at least 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the event. If there is no record of a competitor entered on the competition roll, that competitor shall be considered not to have entered the event.
35. Prior to the competition start a pre-dive safety check will be conducted and announcements concerning the competition shall be made, including:
- a. A current weather report with any warnings which may be applicable.
 - b. Identification of any areas of danger: i.e. shallow reef, strong currents.
 - c. Official time shall be announced at this time with the responsibility on the competitors to synchronize their watches.
 - d. Official finishing time of the competition shall be stated at this time.
 - e. If a boat start is to occur, the starting point is to be defined.

- f. Any changes to score sheets shall be made known at this time.
 - g. Announcement of boundaries and marine park zonings are to be defined at this time.
 - h. Officials are to be identified at this time.
36. Competitors must start from the designated area and may travel by foot over land to another area, but must sign-off back at the designated sign-off area.(unless otherwise specifically allowed by the organiser on the day of competition)
 37. Competitors must personally sign-off after exiting the water (even if disqualified).
 38. All competitors must treat their fish appropriately to preserve their edibility after the competition and present them to the weigh-in area within fifteen minutes of the conclusion of the event.
 39. Competitors are to present fish whole at the weigh station, however in the event of a shark, seal, stingray, or similar predatory species attacking a competitor's catch resulting in damage or mutilation, or any other activity causing severe damage, breakage or mutilation to the fish then only the longest/heaviest section of each score-able species can be entered at the weigh in. Two or more sections of the same species cannot be weighed as one.
 40. Fish will be drained by the weigh master before weighing.
 41. Competitors who are late back shall have their fish recorded but are not eligible for scoring unless reason for being late is successfully protested and approved by the convener.
 42. Any competitor who is caught in the weigh-in ring or at the competition venue(including in their boat), with an undersized fish, breaking any bag limits or other fisheries regulations as determined by Victorian fisheries laws and regulations will be disqualified from the competition on the day. Depending on the severity of the offence further penalties may be applied.
 43. Any Member found to be disposing whole fish in an inappropriate manner, after exiting the water, shall be subject to disciplinary action with no exception.

VALDES PAIRS COMPETITION/ PAIRS COMPETITION

44. The rules for individual spearfishing shall apply except that competitors must use one float with 2 rig cords, consisting of one with a maximum length of 4m and the other with a maximum length of 30m.
45. Float/Plat may be anchored but members of each team may not be more than thirty (30) metres apart.
46. The diver on the surface must remain within 4m of the float/plat and must be holding the tethered line at all time. Each diver shall provide a safety watch over his/her partner.
47. Club series scores for pairs will be calculated from 4 nominated events in the normal club series.
48. Mirror and whistle must be carried by each diver. (not on float)

BOAT COMPETITIONS:

49. All power craft used in the course of a competition must comply with all requirements of the Maritime authority, and must carry all appropriate safety equipment. All power craft may be subject to inspection by the event organizers.
50. 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.
51. Boat flags must be displayed by dive boat as soon as a diver is in the water.
52. 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, with the exception of 'caddies'.
53. Personal floats must be used at all times regardless of proximity to the boat.

CLUB SERIES SCORE SYSTEM:

54. Trophies are awarded at the completion of the club series to:
- Club Champion (Overall winner of the Club aggregate)
 - "A" Grade Champion
 - "A" Reserve Grade Champion
 - "B" Grade Champion
 - "C" Grade Champion
 - Junior Champion
 - Over 50's Champion
 - Pairs Champions
 - Women's Champion
55. Individual grades shall be determined by the competition committee at the beginning of the club series. Any protests regarding grades must be raised to the competition committee by the third competition of the club series.
56. Scores shall be determined as a percentage of the top score from the day's competition.
57. Competition scores will be posted in the club rooms at monthly meetings or on the clubs website forum; www.southernfreedivers.org.au/forums
58. Club aggregate will be based on the competitor's SIX highest scores from the EIGHT potential competitions. Should more than two competitions not be conducted, the club series will be decided on the results of the competitions completed.
59. The dive convenor will endeavour to hold the competition at the location scheduled on the club calendar. This location may change if the weather is deemed unsafe in which case the closest, suitable alternative location will be utilised. If the dive convenor determines there are no suitable alternatives the competition may be cancelled and re-scheduled for the following spare weekend.

PROTESTS

60. No protest fee is required to be paid.
61. Any competitor may protest against any fish weighed during a competition. The objection must be made whilst the fish is being weighed in and is still available.
62. Competitors are responsible to see that their fish are properly weighed and recorded by taking the spare score sheet provided, and must protest any discrepancy prior to their fish being removed or mixed up with other fish.
63. Protests involving discrepancies in the provisional scores must be submitted to the dive convenor within 7 days of the competition scores being posted on the club website forum.
64. All protests will be heard by the dive convenor and any other official, competitor, or club member that the dive convenor deems to nominate as part of a protest committee. The protest committee may hear evidence as it sees fit. The protest committee's final ruling on the protest is final.
65. Any protest will be ruled on in a time frame decided by the dive convenor.