



Australian Underwater Federation- Spearfishing Commission

National Competition Rules

Also known as “A section Rules of Competition and Selection”

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of these rules is to be simple, practical and easily understood and implemented by administrators and divers. Because there were gaps and problems, the rules have been redrafted to reduce duplication and to be aligned as much as possible with previously agreed versions (1991). In addition we want to ensure that our A section rules recognise and encourage the interchange of our competitors with other nations (particularly New Zealand) and that our rules in no way disadvantage or discriminate against them when they come to our shores.

These rules are for national Australian spearfishing competitions and the selection of National Australian teams and there are other documents for administration (Bylaws dated March 2005 and a Strategic Plan– see www.auf-spearfishing.com.au) and an AUF Constitution (www.auf.com.au).

SECTION 1- ORGANISATION

1.1 – ORGANISATION AND OFFICIALS

The Australian Underwater Championships will be an annual event.

The National Spearfishing Chair shall provide final authorisation of the Host State body's selected Competition Director (CD) to be responsible for the running of the Championship's events. The CD shall appoint a local committee and officials. Officials may also compete.

The officials and their suggested roles are:

1. Competition Director – oversees the running of the events, provides risk assessment, conducts safety briefings, manages the Disputes Committee, tabulates scores.
2. Sign On/Off Clerk and Timekeeper – verifies memberships, eligibility
3. Weighmaster and scribe- identifies, weighs competitor's fish, records scores

1.2. TITLES AND TROPHIES

Championships and trophies to be awarded are:

Australian OPEN Spearfishing Championship	
Australian MASTERS Spearfishing Championship	55 years +
Australian VETERAN Spearfishing Championship	45-54 years
Australian SENIOR Spearfishing Championship	25-44 years
Australian INTERMEDIATE Spearfishing Championship	18-24 years
Australian JUNIOR Spearfishing Championship	15-17 years
Australian SUB JUNIOR Spearfishing Championship	under 15 years
Australian LADIES Spearfishing Championship	

Australian STATE-TEAM (4 divers) Championships
 Australian INTERPACIFIC PAIRS Spearfishing Championship
 Australian FINSWIMMING Championship
 Australian SUPERDIVER Championship
 Australian FILMFISHING Championship
 Australian most meritorious fish
 Australian largest fish

All trophies will be returned to the CD in time for the next annual competition.

All trophies shall remain with the individuals (except internationals 1.3.4) who shall engrave them, repair them where necessary and forward them to the next host state in time for the next National Titles.

1.3. ELIGIBILITY AND VISITING / OVERSEAS COMPETITORS

- 1.3.1 The competitions shall be open to any individuals who are financial members of the AUF or an eligible International visitor as per 1.3.3
- 1.3.2 Competitors under the age of 15 may only compete with the approval of the CD.
- 1.3.3 Individuals of teams from other countries may be permitted to compete provided they are affiliated to CMAS and make application to the CD and pay any relevant fees.
- 1.3.4 All perpetual trophies won by overseas competitors shall not leave Australia however the winner's names will be recorded on them. They will also be entitled to any prizes offered for that category.

1.4. PROTESTS AND DISPUTES COMMITTEE

- 1.4.1 Protests during the Championships shall be handed in writing along with a protest fee (Appendix 1) to the CD no later than one (1) hour from the time of posting of the official results for the protested event or heat.
- 1.4.2 The Dispute Committee shall comprise the CD and appointed State or International Team Managers or their duly designated proxies (each will have one vote).
- 1.4.3 The Dispute Committee's decision will be final.
- 1.4.4 The protest fee will be refunded if the protest is upheld.

SECTION 2- GENERAL RULES

2.1. SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Individuals

Competitors for spearfishing and filmfishing must have the following safety equipment at all times during the competition:

- 2.1.1 Personal float with positive buoyancy of not less than 7 kilograms (and no maximum size: but float cannot be used to transport a diver e.g. kayak) and principally coloured either yellow, orange or red with reflective tape and with a clearly displayed flag attached as per (2.1.3). Competitor's number/tag must be attached to the float.
- 2.1.2 International Code Flag A (blue/white) of minimum size 300x250mm with its base a minimum of 200 mm above the surface of the water.
- 2.1.3 Whistle and signalling mirror of at least 50 mm x 50 mm.

- 2.1.4 Sheathed diver's knife on the competitor's person.
- 2.1.5 Other safety equipment such as use of smoke flares, safety sausages or electronic shark shields shall be permitted.
- 2.1.6 Weight belt fitted with quick release buckle.

Boats

- 2.1.9. In Australian Underwater Championship events held in the open sea, a minimum of two (2) safety boats shall operate simultaneously within the competition area. All safety boats must have a radio or other effective means of communications fitted which is capable of contacting emergency groups through the other dive boats or shore base.
- 2.1.10. Competing divers are to brief boat drivers about the event safety requirements, risks, rules and emergency procedures.
- 2.1.11. Whenever a dive boat has divers in the water – whether either at anchor, whilst tending to divers, or whilst in the process of leaving an area with other divers in the water shall display an International Code flag "A", measuring a minimum of 600mm x 500mm in a prominent position mounted at least 1m above the boat's gunwale.
- 2.1.12. When operating in the area within a 100m radius of divers in the water, the maximum permissible speed shall be 4knots.

2.2. COMPETITOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.2.1 Behaviour of competitors which brings the AUF into disrepute shall initially be reviewed by the Disputes Committee. The committee will have the power to determine an appropriate penalty (including disqualification for a heat or the entire competition).
- 2.2.2 If the matter is serious, they may refer the matter to the AUF Board to determine a more greater penalty (fine – see Appendix 1, or reasonable costs based on damage, cancel AUF membership).
- 2.2.3 Competitors shall compete as individuals (except in a pairs event).
- 2.2.4 Every competitor must attend the competition briefings.

2.3 COMPETITOR'S SPEARFISHING EQUIPMENT

- 2.3.1 All fish must be captured by the competitor using rubber-powered spear, speargun or similar device, or by hand. Guns fired by the discharge of compressed or explosive gases into water are forbidden.
- 2.3.2 Berleying is only permitted using fish species that have been obtained in the water at the competition site during the hours of the event. Invertebrate species (such as sea-urchins) may be eligible if included in the B-section rules.
- 2.3.3 Fish speared whilst in traps, nets or on lines shall be ineligible for the weigh-in.
- 2.3.4 No breathing aid other than a snorkel shall be permitted.
- 2.3.5 Competitors must be immersed in the water at the time of spearing of any fish.

- 2.3.6 Assisted catches are ineligible for any score. An assisted catch is one where another person contributed muscular power or equipment towards the catch. The use of caddies during the course of the competition is illegal.
- 2.3.7 A diver must remain within 30 metres of their floats when he/she is at or near the surface of the water.

SECTION 3- SPECIFIC RULES

3.1 Spearfishing

Locations and days

- 3.1.1 Maps of designated competition areas will be provided to competitors (within 14 days before the start of the National Championships).
- 3.1.2 The individual championships will be run over 2 or 3 days (usually 3). The pairs championships will be run over 1 or 2 days (usually 1).
- 3.1.3 Each day of competition will be between 4 to 6 hours duration.
- 3.1.4 The competition will be a 'swim competition' with all competitors starting in a designated start/finish area
- 3.1.5 For land based events a competitor may get out of the water outside the designated area after 3 hours (and may walk but use no other equipment e.g. backpack, car).
- 3.1.6 The timekeeper will signal the start and finish.
- 3.1.7 No competitor is allowed to spear fish in the designated areas within 14 days prior to the start of the National Championships.

Scoring and eligible species

- 3.1.7 The minimum fish weight will be 500 grams or as agreed by both the AUF Spearfishing Commission and the Host State body running the Championships (and then given in B-section rules).
- 3.1.8 There will be only one Weighmaster per day of competition and any marginal fish will be checked for the minimum weight on certified scales.
- 3.1.9 Scoring shall be 100 points per species plus 10 points per kilogram for eligible species with a maximum weight for each species of 15kg.
- 3.1.10 Should any competitor's fish presented for weighing is thirty percent (30%) or more below the minimum weight, a penalty of 105 points (which is equivalent to 100 points for a species and 5 points for a 500 gm fish) shall be deducted from the competitor's score.
- 3.1.11 When preparing the eligible species list (B section rules) for the competition the CD must refer to the National Chair for advice and ensure that no fisheries or marine park limits or regulations are infringed.
- 3.1.12 The CD and Host State body shall take into consideration the area, abundance and edibility of various fish in setting eligible species lists (B section rules).
- 3.1.13 The CD may designate that some species should be gutted to maintain edibility quality.

Spearfishing (Pairs)

The rules for individual Spearfishing shall apply except that two competitors must use one float with 2 rig-cords, consisting of one of a maximum length of 4m and the other 30m maximum length (these are based on Interpacific Rules).

- 3.1.14. During the competition members of each team may not be more than thirty (30) metres apart.
- 3.1.15. The diver on the surface must remain within four (4) metres of the float/plat, be holding the tethered line and must not dive.
- 3.1.16. Each diver shall provide a safety watch over his/her partner.

B – section (also known as local rules)

These are the local rules prepared by the CD, Host State body and the local committee and endorsed by Disputes Committee and shall include the scoresheet, ineligible and protected species, penalties, possible locations, times, administration and any other relevant information.

3.2. Super Diver

- 3.2.1 Competitors must compete in three nominated events- spearfishing, finswimming and filmfishing.
- 3.2.2 Scoring shall be on a numerical basis, and based on individuals placing in the event.
Example- 3 competitors
1st – 3 points
2nd 2 points
3rd- 1 point

Example- 35 competitors
1st – 35 points
2nd – 34 points etc
- 3.2.3 In the event of a draw the competitor with the highest placing in the Spearfishing competition will be determined to win the Super diver event.

3.3 Filmfishing

- 3.3.1 At the pre-dive briefing, competitors will be issued with a disposable camera.
- 3.3.2 The event is meant to closely parallel the conditions governing a spearfishing event. A competitor seeks to take still photographs of up to 20 different species of fish or invertebrates. Each photo is allocated points (1- easy, 5- difficult) on the degree of difficulty of photographing with additional points for framing.
- 3.3.3 A score sheet of acceptable species will be published with the B Section Rules and will be selected by the Organising Committee as representative of the local species and selected to form a suitable score sheet for this competition. Points for different species will reflect the relative difficulty of capturing the species on film.
- 3.3.4 A species must be in its natural habitat and photographed by the competitor below the surface of the sea. Photographs of species in nets, hooked on lines, in containers or aquaria, out of the water or speared, will not be accepted.
- 3.3.5 Berley shall not be used. During the duration of the competition, a competitor cannot have in his possession any marine life.
- 3.3.6 The competitor is allowed twenty (20) frames after the start point of the film as specified by the event organiser. Blank frames are still counted in this number. Each frame scores only once. The start point of the film will be of the competitor taken by the event organiser.
- 3.3.7 The 3 Judges (a fish expert, a photography expert, AUF member) will decide which fish is the subject of the photograph, and then award points as per the Score Sheet for that species. Each species listing on the Score Sheet can be used only once. Should the same species be photographed a second time, it will score no points.
- 3.3.8 Each photo is awarded additional points for FRAMING as follows:

FAR DISTANT (just recognisable)	Nil
MID RANGE	0.5 point

CLOSE RANGE (well framed) 1 point

The procedure at the conclusion of the competition shall be as follows:

- 3.3.9 After signing off, a competitor shall have up to 30 minutes to give his exposed film to the clerk, having labelled it first in the manner required by the event organiser.
- 3.3.10 Photos shall be returned to the competitor after judging.

3.4. Finswimming

- 3.4.1 Fin Swimming shall be defined as the self propulsion in water of a competitor equipped with fins (flippers). There shall be no fin restrictions on size or material. Optional equipment shall include: masks, goggles, snorkel, and neoprene exposure clothing.
- 3.4.2 Individual open competitive events shall be held over distances of between 200 and 500 metres.
- 3.4.3 All competitions shall be conducted in open water and it shall be the responsibility of the CD to ensure that the distances and markers are correctly set up and checked both prior to and at the conclusion of the events.
- 3.4.4 The style of swimming shall be by fins only (no use of arms for propulsion). The start and finish points must be clearly obvious to competitors.

SECTION 4 **INTERPACIFIC AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

4.1 Selection Criteria for Inter Pacific Spearfishing Competitions

- 4.1.1. Selection Criteria for Inter Pacific Spearfishing Competitions
 - a) Select a team from participants in the Australian Spearfishing Championships preceding the Inter-Pacific Titles.
 - b) Nominate the top 10 available spearfishermen ranked after the first three days of the competition.
 - c) Request they pair up according to complementary ability. Similar spearfishing styles are preferable but not critical.
 - d) Top ten available spearfishermen may choose to dive with a spearfishermen outside of the top ten available, but not outside of the top twenty available.
 - e) To calculate the InterPacific teams take the total of the three individual percentages of three days of the Australian Championships for the top diver of each pair.
 - f) Then take the percentage of each pair in the selection spearfishing day (swim-off) and multiply this by 3.
 - g) Add e) and f). Pairs shall be ranked according to highest score first.
- 4.1.2. The same selection principle should also apply to teams for women, juniors and possibly mixed pairs if there is to be such a competition in the future, which coincides with the Interpacific.
- 4.1.3. To ensure divers get an opportunity to practice together, women and juniors should preferably swim together at the swim-off, but this should be subject to considerations of risk management and levels of experience.

4.2 Selection criteria for World Championship participation

- 4.2.1. The Underwater Fishing teams may be selected from the top 10 competitors from the results of the most recent previous Australian Spearfishing Championships.

- 4.2.2. The Team Manager shall simply notify the best placed competitors in order of finishing based on the number of competitors required for the upcoming international event.
- 4.2.3. If notified competitors withdraw or are unavailable, the next placed person would be asked until all positions are filled.
- 4.2.4. Where all positions are still not filled, the Team Manager may approach competitors based on results of most recent previous National Championships or other events. In this case the majority of National and State or Territory Spearfishing Commission Chairperson must agree based on one (1) vote per Chairperson.

DEFINITIONS

AUF: Australian Underwater Federation

Australian or National - Championships or Competition

Competition held annually between members of the Federation, hosted by a State Branch or State Commission in order of rotation and encompassing one or all of the various sporting activities of the Federation.

B Section Rules: Rules governing the various competition events (spearfishing, filmfishing and finswimming) as customised by the responsible Organising Committee to suit the Championship local area.

Berleying: Deliberate spreading of food matter in the water to attract target species for Underwater Fishing (Only allowable in the spearfishing events and not any filming events)

Bylaws: The administrative rules of the National Spearfishing Commission. This includes: purpose, elections, voting, meeting, membership, awards, reports, finance.

CMAS: Confederation Mondiale Des Activities Subaquatiques
(World Underwater Federation of which the AUF is an Affiliated Member)

Super Diver:

The competitor in the Australian Underwater Championships who has competed in a multitude of events and gained the greatest points according to a scoring system.

Club: Organisation affiliated with a State Branch or Spearfishing Commission of the Australian Underwater Federation.

Commission: Body approved by the Federal Board and under the responsibility of a Federal Board to control, represent or act for and/or on behalf of a specific aspect of underwater activities.

Film Fishing Competition: Free diving competition in which competitors take still photographs of target species to gain points according to a scoring system based on difficulty of capture and framing.

Federal Board: Controlling body of the AUF consisting of the Federal Executive, Executive Officers and Commission Chairpersons.

Finswimming: Competition race over a fixed distance in water, by the self-propulsion of a competitor equipped with a fin or fins placed on the feet.

Free Diving: Diving below the surface of the water by using only one's lungs as the air supply.

Member: Person financially registered with the Federation.

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Open: Event, Competition or Championships in which any CMAS Member may compete.

Policy: Rules fundamental to the aims and objectives of the Federation.

Rules: Rules and Regulations of the Australian Underwater Federation.

Skindiving: All underwater activities administered by the Federation.

Spearfishing: Catching a fish while freediving with a rubber-powered speargun

State Branch: State Branch and/or Territorial Branch affiliated with the Federation.

Tethered: Lashing, stowing or stringing of captured fish close to the body.

Spearfishing Competition: Free diving competition to capture fish with a speargun.

APPENDIX 1

Fee schedules

1. Protest fee will be \$50 (see 1.4.1)
2. Maximum penalty will be \$500 (see 2.2.2)
3. Australian team member deposit will be \$200 (see 4.4.1)

APPENDIX 2

4.3. Interpacific/Worlds Managers responsibilities

- 4.3.1. Obtain information about the forthcoming venue, locations, maps, weather, visibility, water temperature, eligible species, score sheet, competition rules, penalties, etc.
- 4.3.2. Compile a list of relevant species and some study information on each species as might be available on the web (e.g. www.fishbase.org) including photographs.
- 4.3.3. Compile a document of all relevant information regarding the competition including estimated costs based on current rates for accommodation, food, airfares, car hire, boat hire.
- 4.3.4. Check which equipment may be used during scouting e.g. scuba, underwater scooters, GPS and sounding devices may be used in scouting but not during the competition.
- 4.3.5. Supply a training schedule for the selected team members at least two months before competition.
- 4.3.6. Co-ordinate the departure of team members so as to allow for sufficient time to acclimatise and scout in preparing for the competition.
- 4.3.7. Explain a fair system by which the final team will be selected and structured for each days fishing. Such a system should not allow for individuals to work against one another as the team effort is that which will ultimately count. Divers should be selected upon merit before the competition starts and the reserve may replace one of the divers on the second day.
- 4.3.8. Prepare a list of applicable size limits by species by weighing fish and measuring their sizes at a local fish market. Such limits by species to be marked on each competitor's

spearguns so that they cannot become confused during the competition and/or receive penalties as a result.

- 4.3.9. Attend all meetings which have a bearing on the competition and ensure that team members are informed and get access to available boats and equipment, so they are not disadvantaged in any way by competing nations or the organisers.
- 4.3.10. Make sure that divers are giving themselves the best chance of performing well by eating sensibly and taking enough water and food to sustain them during the competition.
- 4.3.11. Manage the teams on the water on each day of the competition making the best possible use of local knowledge, skills and experience. Communicate with each of the divers through whatever methods are allowable under the rules. Direct spearfishermen to areas where other divers are having success and keeping them informed on ways in which they can improve their performance.
- 4.3.12. The manager should keep a close eye on proceedings before and after the weigh in.
- 4.3.13. Provide a feedback report and photos to the AUF Spearfishing Commission within one month of returning from the titles.

4.4 Team Responsibilities

- 4.4.1. Pay a deposit (Appendix 2) to team manager to confirm selection.
- 4.4.2. Provide for sufficient time to be away so as to allow for acclimatisation and scouting. It is best that teams travelling to World Titles have at least 2 weeks prior to the competition in which to scout.
- 4.4.3. Work with the manager by completing checklists so that he can evaluate the knowledge and awareness that the team has of what to expect.
- 4.4.4. Maintain a high level of fitness in the lead up to the competition. Follow guidelines in training specified by the team manager. Attend as many competitions in the lead up as possible and dive as often as possible.
- 4.4.5. Raise funds through raffle draws, functions, sponsors, sale of t-shirts, etc.
- 4.4.6. Arrange appropriate clothing including dress Jacket with Australian colours.
- 4.4.7. Work with the manager to ensure the team has the best chance of performing well.
- 4.4.8. Accept the manager's decision as to which combination of divers to field on any particular day and regard such decision as in the interests of the team and not the individual.

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This version of the NATIONAL COMPETITION RULES was endorsed by all state Chairs and national spearfishing Chair on 4th June, 2007.



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