

2026 NZSFC YOUTH NATIONALS' RULES

3-18 APRIL 2026

Please note that no sharks will be weighed in the Youth Nationals.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The New Zealand "Youth Nationals" shall form the arena in which young anglers from throughout New Zealand compete, club against club and angler against angler for the honour of winning various trophies and titles that have been offered for this tournament. The emphasis is on participation and friendly competition within a set of rules.

The 'Council' will determine the rules and conditions that will apply to this tournament.

The 'Council' will determine the dates and hours of fishing the tournament.

In addition to the NZSFC Youth Nationals Tournament Rules and Conditions, the following will also apply:

The NZSFC Fishing Rules and Regulations are incorporated as tournament rules. Only fish caught in accordance with these Fishing Rules and regulations and within the intent of these rules will qualify for the tournament, except as explicitly stated otherwise.

All current New Zealand Laws and Regulations regarding the taking of fish in New Zealand territorial waters.

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council reserves the right to use any information received by it through results sheets of the **YOUTH NATIONALS TOURNAMENT** for publicity, statistical, or other purposes that may be beneficial to the Council or its membership.

1. JUDICIAL COMMITTEE

A Judicial Committee will be appointed prior to the tournament starting. The Judicial Committee's decisions shall be final on all matters pertaining to the contest, and any controversy arising over interpretation of these rules. Any dispute relating to the weight of a fish must be lodged with the weighmaster prior to the fish being removed from the weigh station. All other disputes

must be lodged in writing and emailed to the tournament secretary within 48 hours of the tournament ending. The judicial committee may delay the final results if any dispute requires further investigating. Final results will then be announced, with no subsequent protests or disputes being accepted.

2. SAFETY

A Parent/Guardian is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of each entrant and must act in the best interests of the entrants at all times during the tournament to ensure the suitable care and protection of the young people. **A responsible person (such as a skipper) can be delegated to care for entrants – this person must be over the age of 18 and approved by the Parent/Guardian for each entrant.**

Although the Tournament has been arranged for 2 weeks, it is the Guardian and skipper's responsibility to determine that on any one day, the sea conditions and weather forecasts are safe for fishing, including for his/her boat to put to sea or fishing location. The Tournament is being run nationwide and the fact that boats / fishing, may be in one area/region, is not to be taken as an indicator that it is safe to fish in any other area. It is each Guardian / Skipper's responsibility to ensure that the boat they intend to participate in is capable of putting to sea safely, and that any fishing location is safe for the entrants to fish that they are responsible for.

It is the Skipper's responsibility to ensure that the boat carries minimum legal safety equipment and flotation aids, including the requirements of local Coastguard/Harbour Board, or any other local body that has assumed control over the waterways and ocean that the angler intends to fish in.

Each boat must have a reliable means of communication, with the expectation that they can make contact, or be contacted at all times. Each Boat must return to port, or report to their base each day. Any club who is made aware of a Skipper who has put to sea against the advice or directions of one of the authorities named above, or who has not met minimum

safety requirements in equipment must report the matter to the Tournament Secretary, and the Judicial Committee will consider the complaint and can disqualify the angler. Any such disqualification will also disqualify any catches previously weighed by that angler for the Tournament.

Land Based, Kayak, and personal Watercraft anglers will suffer the same penalties if they are found to have ignored advice from officers of surf lifesaving clubs operating in the area.

3. INFRACTIONS

Any person, club, boat skipper or crew, guilty of infraction of the rules could be disqualified from participation in this or any other NZ Sport Fishing Council contest.

4. ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Entrants may or may not be members of an affiliated Club.

All clubs being represented in the Youth Nationals Tournament must be affiliated to, and be financial members of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Inc. For the Club to be considered financial their fees must be paid and in the NZSFC account prior to the Tournament commencing.

There are two age categories in this Tournament:

- Primary – **ages 0 - 12 years** (under the age of 13 at the conclusion of the tournament)
- High School – **ages 13 - 17 years** (under the age of 18 at the conclusion of the tournament)

All anglers must have access to a copy of the rules for the Youth Tournament and it is the responsibility of each Angler (and associated caregiver as appropriate) to ensure that rules are followed at all times. Guardians must also help with this as appropriate.

A signed entry form and disclaimer accompanied by the appropriate entry fees must be lodged with the club the angler is fishing for, before an entry is valid.

5. REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$5 per angler (inclusive of GST) for affiliated members (and non-members entering with affiliated members), must accompany **the official entry form and be paid to the club the angler is representing.**

All anglers must register **at the headquarters of the club they are going to represent** in the tournament. Correct registration is the angler's responsibility.

All anglers must be registered, and registration fees paid **before** they commence fishing. New anglers can register after the tournament has started but registrations must be completed, and registration fees paid, and the Tournament Secretary notified **before** they commence fishing.

6. CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

All participating clubs must have a nominated recorder, who will be the official contact for the Tournament Secretary for all matters relating to the tournament.

For the 2023 Youth Nationals the preferred method of receiving and transmitting results will be by email. Council would expect all clubs to make a serious attempt to comply with this preference.

All participating clubs must have an email address to receive and transmit results and other information between the club and tournament secretary.

All catches must be relayed to the tournament secretary within 48 hours of the catch. A day being 5 pm to 5 pm (see rule 9).

Daily catch results must be transmitted to the Tournament Secretary not later than 5.00 pm each day and be certified as true and correct. (Certifying will eliminate the need to send catch certificates in) **Nil returns are just as important as positive returns!**

Final catch results must reach the Tournament Secretary prior to 8 pm on the last fishing day of the tournament. The results for the last day will be sent as the last day results but Recorders and Anglers will have 24 hours to check that all fish have been entered and recorded correctly (by 8pm the following day).

Tagged fish must be reported as soon as possible after the fish has been tagged but must not be notified to the Tournament Secretary until such times as the card has been sighted electronically or physically by the Club the angler is fishing for unless prior arrangements have been made. All tagged fish must be reported by the club to NZSFC by 8 pm on the final day.

All affiliated clubs must provide courtesy weighing and email reporting to all anglers fishing in the tournament in line with Rule 13.

Clubs who have anglers fishing away from their home base should make every effort to make sure they are aware of their obligations under Rule 13.

Clubs must provide competent weighmasters to officiate during the clubs weighing times.

Clubs should hold a pre-tournament briefing to make anglers and skippers aware of their responsibilities as regards all aspects of the tournament – Local Coastguard/Harbour rules, radio frequencies and weigh station times.

Clubs must have available copies of the Council booklet for Skippers / anglers to purchase or copies of the rules so there is no excuse for anglers to be ignorant of the rules.

In the case of land-based anglers, at any one time, all members of the group who are fishing together must, be on a stretch of uninterrupted foreshore, must be in sight of a parent/guardian or responsible person, and without the use of aids, be close enough together to be able to call to one another.

In the case of Kayak and Watercraft anglers, They must have all prescribed safety equipment deemed appropriate for Kayak and Watercraft users, and be supervised by the Parent/Guardian or responsible person over the age of 18.

Fish should be weighed from the boat they were caught from, whether on their boat trailer or in the water. Fish can't be transferred to another boat any time for the purpose of weighing the catch except in exceptional circumstances. For safety reasons only, a fish maybe transferred to take to a weigh station as long as the boat on which the fish is caught is

in sight of weigh station, or within one nautical mile of the weigh station. The only other exceptions are if the angler(s) are changing boat because of availability, or in an emergency i.e. a breakdown.

It is the angler's responsibility to make themselves familiar with the rules.

Anglers must nominate a responsible person **over the age of 18 years** on the registration form who is responsible for their care and wellbeing.

7. ANGLERS

Anglers nominate a Club that they are representing and cannot change Clubs they represent during the Tournament once registered.

There must not be less than two people on the boat/shore at any one time and in the interests of safety at least one person should be over the age of 18 years – this person must be a responsible person for the care and safety of the anglers with them.

8. FISHING DAYS AND TIMES

The tournament will run for 16 days (Due to Easter Friday being included), finishing on the last Saturday of the April School Holidays. Anglers can start fishing at 6 am on the first day. All catch cards must be sighted by a weighmaster or recorder by **4 pm** on the final day.

Daily results will be first published on the Monday after the start of the competition and going forward every 48 hours until the end of the competition.

There is "no lines out of the water" time, an angler may fish until such time as they believe that if they land a fish they can have their catch card for weighed fish sighted by a weighmaster of the club weighing the fish **by 4pm** on the final day. There is no playing out of fish after **4pm** on the final day. All fish must be reported to NZSFC by the Club the angler is fishing for by 8 pm on the final day.

9. AREA

The tournament will be fished in that area of water bounded by a line 200 miles from New Zealand's two main islands. The provisions of Rule 14 reporting of catches, Rule 11 Weighing, and Rule 2 Safety, must be adhered to.

10. WEIGH STATION AND EQUIPMENT

All fish must be caught on rod and reel only (handlines are permitted only for the catching of bait). All fish must be weighed in the line class of the line manufacturers rating of the line used, noting that for Section B and C 'All Tackle', there are no line classes. **Where no line class is recorded, it will be assumed to meet the requirements of 'All tackle' and only be eligible in Section B and D. For all other sections, all tackle must comply with NZSFC Fishing Rules and Regulations.** Only non-offset circle hooks can be used targeting Billfish when using live and dead natural baits.

All fish must be weighed, or Tag cards presented at the official weigh stations for the tournament i.e. weigh stations are as listed in the front of the NZSFC yearbook, plus any others notified to and accepted by the tournament secretary prior to the tournament.

All tackle and equipment used in the capture of the fish shall be presented to the weighmaster for inspection. The timing of the presentation/ inspection is dependent on if the fish is weighed or Tagged (refer below to Section 10a and 10b). In the event that any of the tackle or equipment is incomplete or cannot be presented to the weighmaster, **(exception - please see note in 10b Tag & Release regarding hooks cut free)** the catch will be deemed incomplete, and the fish will not qualify for the tournament.

Any matters where the weighmaster cannot make a final decision on, they are to notify the tournament secretary in writing within 24 hours explaining the situation, so the judicial committee can make a final call on the eligibility of the catch for the tournament.

10a. Weighing

All fish must be weighed within 36 hours of being caught.

All tackle and equipment used in the capture of the fish shall be presented to the weighmaster for inspection at the time of weighing.

Weighmasters have the right to inspect any gear on the boat at any time of weighing.

10b. Tag and Release (T & R)

Tag cards must be sighted either physically or electronically by the Club the angler is fishing for, within 36 hours of being tagged, noting that the closing time for all submissions is 4 pm on the final day.

All tackle and equipment used in the capture of a T & R fish **MUST** be presented to a weighmaster or IGFA Rep for inspection when the hardcopy Tag card is submitted.

For all Billfish and Sharks - in the event the hook cannot be safely removed or in the best interests of fish welfare, it is acceptable to cut the leader as close as practically possible to the hook and release the fish, the trace must still be presented to the weighmaster for inspection / measuring along with all other tackle and equipment.

All Tag cards must be accompanied by photographic evidence of the Tag clearly inserted into the caught fish. This may be a still photo or video. Failure to provide photographic evidence which confirms the placement of the Tag and species of the fish will result in the tagged fish being removed from the tournament.

Where Tags have been submitted electronically, the original Hardcopy card must be submitted (including equipment inspection) within 24 hours of the tournament ending. Failure to hand in any tag card within this timeframe will result in the tagged fish being removed from the tournament.

11. FORMULA BASIS

The formula is the weight of the fish times 100 divided by the line weight for weighed fish.

Tagged and released points are as follows:

- **Blue & Black Marlin, Broadbill & Striped Marlin** - 600 points
- **Spearfish** - 100 points
- **Shark** - 100 points
- **Tuna (yellowfin, bluefin, bigeye, butterfly)** - 150 points
- **Yellowtail** - 25 points

These tag and release points are regardless of line weight (but must be within the line weights referred to in 15 (Species Section 1).

Points are gained by:

For Blue & Black Marlin, Broadbill, Striped Marlin, Shortbill Spearfish, Tuna, Shark and Yellowtail **all tagged fish will score points along with the top 3 scoring fish weighed, excluding sharks. Only the top 3 scoring Mahimahi, Albacore, (Skipjack, & Slender Tuna combined), Snapper, Kahawai, Trevally, Gurnard and Blue Cod will count in their sections.**

12. COURTESY WEIGHING

All clubs must provide courtesy weighs for all anglers fishing the Youth Nationals. They must also provide recording and reporting of catches to the angler. It is the Angler's responsibility to ensure that the copy of the weighsheet is submitted to the club that they are fishing for. (The general rule should be that visiting anglers should have available to them, the same hours of weighing and reporting services, as a local angler).

All participating anglers wishing to use the courtesy weigh facility of another club must abide by the rules and conditions for weighing at the host club as though they were a member of that club. **It is the visiting anglers' responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with any such rules and conditions.**

ALL PARTICIPATING ANGLERS WISHING TO USE THE COURTESY WEIGH FACILITY OF ANOTHER CLUB MUST INFORM THE HOST CLUB AS SOON AS SUCH A REQUIREMENT BECOMES APPARENT.

Any anglers intending fishing away from their home base and intending to use courtesy weigh facilities must inform prospective hosts in advance and make their intentions known.

Weigh sheets used for courtesy weighing must be from the club providing the courtesy weigh. Two forms must be filled in, prior to weighing of the fish. One weigh sheet is for the club providing the courtesy weigh, and the other is for the angler to take back to their club for their records. This is the angler's responsibility.

If the words > courtesy, consideration, and common sense < are kept to the fore courtesy weighing should not present a problem

13. REPORTING OF CATCHES

All fish (Species Section 1 only) must be reported as soon as possible after being boated, to the weigh station or club where the fish is expected to be weighed, giving the following details: Angler, Species and the time boated.

All fish tagged and released must be reported as soon as possible after the release but must not be reported to the Tournament Secretary until such time as the tag card has been sighted either physically or electronically by the club the angler is fishing for. Please refer to rule 11b Tag & Release for final handing in of tag cards and tackle and equipment checking for tag & released fish.

14. SPECIES

Part 1

To be fished in the following line classes:

60 kg, 37kg, 24kg, 15kg, 10kg, 8kg, 6kg, 4kg, 3kg, 2kg, 1kg

- Blue & Black Marlin
- Broadbill - 90kg or larger
- Striped Marlin
- Shortbill Spearfish
- Mahimahi
- Shark - tagged only (blue shark, bronze whaler, hammerhead shark, mako shark, thresher shark, tiger shark, porbeagle).
- Tuna - (yellowfin, bluefin, bigeye, butterfly).
- Yellowtail

Part 2

To be fished in the following line classes

- All tackle (any line Class) – Section B Heaviest fish and Section D Length only**
 - 10kg, 8kg, 6kg, 4kg, 3kg, 2kg, 1kg – All Sections A - G inclusive**
- Tuna
 - Slender & Skipjack
 - Albacore
 - Snapper
 - Kahawai
 - Trevally
 - Gurnard
 - Blue Cod

15. CATCH RESTRICTIONS

Each angler can weigh a maximum of 3 fish per species per day for the Tournament apart from Sharks. The 3 fish restriction applies to Length for Points fish also.

Minimum weights and lengths for fish in all sections are:

Blue & Black Marlin

Weighed - Must equal or exceed 90 kg

Tag & Release - No minimum

Broadbill

Weighed - Must equal or exceed 90 kg

Tag & Release - No minimum

Striped Marlin

Weighed - Must equal or exceed 90 kg

Tag & Release - No minimum

Shortbill Spearfish

Weighed - Must equal or exceed 10 kg

Tag & Release - No Minimum

Mahimahi

Weighed - Must equal or exceed 4 kg on line weights 15kg and above. On line/tippet weights 10 kg and below there is no minimum fish weight

No Tag & Release

Shark (all species as listed under 15. Species)

Only 1 shark per angler per day may be weighed

Tag & Release - 122 cm or 4 feet

Tuna - Bluefin, Bigeye and Butterfly

Weighed - Must equal or exceed line/tippet weight

Tag & Release - No minimum

Yellowfin Tuna

Weighed - Minimum weight is 15 kg online 15 kg and above. On line weights 10 kg and below the fish must equal or exceed the line weight

Tag and Release - No minimum

Yellowtail

Weighed - 75 cm in length or greater

Tag & Release - 75 cm in length or greater

Albacore, Snapper, Kahawai, Skipjack & Slender, Trevally, Gurnard and Blue Cod

(No Tag and Release)

Minimum MPI legal length (where applicable)

Note: Shark (All Species as listed) – Tagged – 122 cm or 4 ft (it is not intended that anglers or crew should risk injury trying to measure sharks to the millimetre but should use the best possible estimate using any practical aid eg a mark on a gaff handle or length of cord).

SECTION A

Champion New Zealand Youth Anglers – Individual Anglers

The most meritorious catch on the formula basis for a **fish scoring the highest points**.

This is for weighed fish only, tagged fish not included. (15 Champions for each age category). IGFA Line Classes Apply.

SECTION B

NZ Champion Heaviest Fish Youth Angler – Weighed Fish

The winner will be the angler with the **heaviest single fish for each of the fish species**. (15 Champions for each age category).

SECTION C

Overall Champion Angler

There will be 1 Champion Angler (One for each Age Category).

The winning angler will be the angler scoring the **highest aggregate number of points from the scoring fish from each of the fifteen species (maximum 15 fish, 1 per species) – NZ Wide. Tagged fish included** IGFA Line Classes Apply.

SECTION D

Length Section

The winner will be the angler with the longest fish in each of the following species:

Albacore, Kahawai, Snapper, Skipjack, Trevally, Yellowtail, Gurnard and Blue Cod

- Fish in this section will remain in this section only
- Fish must be released so they can't be kept and weighed in for another section in the Youth Nationals Any fish that qualifies as a NZ Record will be added to the NZ Record section.
- (8 Champions for each age category)

SECTION E

Tag And Release Section

The winner will be the angler tagging and releasing **the most fish in each of the seven species sections**, namely Blue & Black Marlin, Broadbill, Striped Marlin, Shortbill Spearfish, Shark, Yellowtail & Tuna. (7 Champions for each age category). In the event of more than one angler tagging and releasing the same number of fish, the winner will be the angler who tagged his last fish first. IGFA Line Classes Apply.

Only fish tagged with the Council approved tags will count.

Released fish not tagged do not count.

SECTION F

Top Club - Interclub Competition

An Interclub competition is to be held in conjunction with the tournament. The following rules relate to the Interclub:

There will be 1 Interclub Champion and age categories are merged into one.

The winning club will be the club scoring **the highest aggregate number of points from the scoring fish from each club for each of the fifteen species (maximum 15 fish, 1 per species)**. IGFA Line Classes Apply.

SECTION G

Club Champion Angler

There will be 1 Champion Angler per club (One for each Age Category).

The winning angler will be the angler scoring **the highest aggregate number of points from the scoring fish for each of the fifteen species (maximum 15 fish, 1 per species) within each Club**. IGFA Line Classes Apply.

SECTION H

Fun Or Funny Photo

Best still photo or video taken by or with an entered angler included during the tournament showing fun or a funny moment. (One for each Age Category). Entries to be submitted by the NZSFC application. If the app is not available, then to secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz and judged by the panel of judges.

SECTION I

Marine Photo

Best Marine still photo or video taken by an entered angler during the tournament. Photos to include the marine environment. (One for each Age Category). Entries to be submitted by the NZSFC application. If the app is not available, then to secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz and judged by the panel of judges.

Where an angler has not used equipment that is in accordance with NZSFC Rules and Regulations (**such as an undetermined line class or non-conforming leader/hook configuration**) then fish weighed will remain eligible for Section B (Heaviest Fish) and Section D (Length) (only). The Youth Nationals are intended to encourage participation.

All other fish sections (Sections A, C, E, F and G) **MUST** follow NZSFC Rules and Regulations.

NOTES FOR RECORDERS

NUMBER ONE RULE: PLEASE READ THE RULES

1. All Clubs must appoint a Recorder who is willing to check the results each evening – especially those clubs with anglers fishing away from home
2. Please remember that **Anglers must register with the Club they will represent.** If they intend to fish from another location/ Club they must still register with their club they intend to represent.
3. The Angler Details sheet needs to be emailed to the Tournament Secretary as soon as details are to hand.
Results must be sent within 48 hours of the fish being weighed. Results for Tagged fish should be sent when the card has been sighted either electronically or physically within 36 hours by the Club the angler is fishing for unless prior arrangements have been made.
4. The Results Schedule needs to be emailed to the Tournament Secretary prior to 5 pm. All fish weighed, and tag cards sighted (physically or electronically) that day must be written on this sheet. Results after 5 pm will go into the next day's tally (except on the final night of course). **A 'Nil' return by phone or email speeds up the results – very necessary on the final night.**
5. Result Sheets are certified correct by the Recorder; it is therefore important that the Recorders check all results as they come out each night. **All Tag cards must be sighted by the Club the angler is fishing for and reported only when they have been sighted either physically or electronically.**
6. Anglers can join the Tournament at any stage during the contest. Please ensure the 'extras' are emailed to the Tournament Secretary on a Details Sheet.
7. To make life simple if you have any further entries, or other queries it would be appreciated if these were dealt with during the day to leave the evening free for results to be processed.
8. **Once the tournament has ended, each club will be invoiced based on their number of entries. This payment is to be forwarded to the Secretary, NZSFC, PO Box 54242, The Marina, Half Moon Bay, Auckland 2144, or paid by direct payment to NZSFC bank account as soon as possible after the club has received an invoice from the Secretary**
9. **Recorders and Anglers have 24 hours after the Tournament finishes to check that all their fish have been entered and are correct.**