



Sport Fly Fishing New Zealand Minimum Standard for Boats

13 September 2022

Introduction

1. SFFNZ lake competitions rely on the use of boats that are provided by SFFNZ boat-owning members. Boats come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and configurations, and while all anglers appreciate the fact that owning a boat comes at a significant cost for the boat owners, there is also an expectation that boats entered in competitions being run by SFFNZ are fit-for-purpose.
2. As a result of a number of incidents and complaints over the last several years, the SFFNZ committee decided to introduce a minimum standard for boats, which is to be applied for all SFFNZ competitions. This document sets out those standards.

Guiding Principles

3. When coming up with the minimum standard for boats, the committee adopted the two key principles:
 - a. **Safety:** Boating, especially on some of New Zealand's larger lakes, can be dangerous. Anglers paying to compete in a SFFNZ competition do so with the expectation that the boat (and boat owner) that they will be paired with on each session, is safe.
 - b. **Comfort:** Boats, and anglers, come in all shapes and sizes. Anglers should have the reasonable expectation that the boat that they are allocated to sit in for three hours should be of a reasonable level of comfort. This includes being able to accommodate two anglers, with enough room to be able to cast unimpeded, and for the equipment needed to sustain an angler for a session (which includes a net, a measuring tray, and a tackle bag or box per angler).

Minimum Standards

4. Noting the guiding principles outlined above, the following are the minimum standard for all boats entered in SFFNZ competitions:

- a. **Minimum length:** No boat shall be less than 11ft (3.4m) in length. A number of New Zealand's lakes can become rough at very short notice (for example – Lake Rototaira in session three of the 2021 National Pairs), and boats smaller than 11ft are deemed unsuited when carrying two anglers in rough conditions.
- b. **All boats must have seats:** All boats must have seats for two anglers. A seat consists of a base, and a back-rest. Seats may be of any construction, padded or unpadded, and have either a fixed or collapsible back rest. Boats that simply use a squab, or involve anglers having to sit astride a plank do not meet this standard.
- c. **Seats must be fixed in place:** Each boat must have seats that are fixed in place – either permanently (for example – pedestal seats), or temporarily. The key principle here is that the seats should remain in place during the competition, and should not be able to move or tip over, or come out of place. Seats mounted on planks and placed across the gunwales of a boat are acceptable, providing that:
 - i. The planks are fixed in place so they cannot move, tip, or slide during competition.
 - ii. The seats being mounted at this height do not adversely affect the centre of gravity of the boat, and make it become unstable when anglers shift their weight. Of note, this method of mounting seats should not occur on boats with a length 13ft or less, as it will make them inherently unstable.
- d. **Boats must be stable:** Boats should be stable enough for anglers to feel safe when fishing from them, or while under way. The main way this is achieved is through ensuring a low enough centre of gravity, especially in smaller boats that have a narrower beam than some of the larger boats. Boats should not tip considerably when an angler shifts their weight (for example – when leaning over the side to net a fish).
- e. **Boats must be free from damage, and mechanically sound:** All boats must be free of damage that may impact their reliability or safety during competitions. This includes not taking on large amounts of water above what would normally be expected when boating, and having an engine that is reliable, and serviced regularly.
- f. **Boats must carry safety equipment:** As a minimum, each boat must have a signal flare, a bailer, a secondary means of propulsion, and a painter (bow rope) to enable towing, and the skipper is to ensure their boat partner is aware of the

location of these items. Both anglers are to carry some form of communications (phone, VHF radio etc).

- g. **Boat skippers must be competent:** The responsibility rests with the skipper to ensure they know how to operate their boat in a safe fashion, and that they are familiar with local maritime regulations that exist on the waters that we fish. This includes “driving to the conditions” and being able to exercise sound judgement when making decisions that may put their boat and fellow angler at risk (for example – not to venture too far from shore if the conditions become rough).
- h. **Additional equipment:** All boats must be suited for loch-style fly fishing, in particular, all boats are to be equipped with a drogue. All boat owners must also ensure they have a spray system (weed sprayer is a good option) suitable for decontaminating their boat prior to it being launched on the first day of competition.

Application of Minimum Standards

5. These standards take effect from the 13th of September 2022. The committee has a good understanding of the boats of our current members, and those whose boats do not meet the standards above will be written to, outlining the current issue with their boat, and where practicable, the steps that they should take to make it compliant with these regulations.

6. For all new boats being entered in SFFNZ competitions after this date, owners will be asked to provide photos to the competition sub-committee to show that the boat meets the above standards, and will be subjected to a visual inspection on the first day of the competition.

Complaints

7. Should an angler feel that the boat they are in does not meet the minimum standard as detailed above, then they are to raise it with the competition organiser, who will refer it to the protest committee who will make the final decision based on what it deems is fair and reasonable (especially as it relates to comfort – which is subjective).

Amendment to the Minimum Standards

8. Any amendments to this standard will be decided by the SFFNZ Committee, and advertised via normal communication channels.