

*Fédération Internationale
de Pêche Sportive Mouche*

Sports Fly-Fishing New Zealand – Inc.

COMPETITION RULES - updated June 2026

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BACKGROUND

The first World Fly Fishing Championship was held in 1981. This championship was held under the auspices of the International Confederation of Sport Fishing (CIPS), and administered by the International Federation of Fresh Water Sport Fishing (FIPS-Ed). The annual championships were administered by a Committee of FIPS-Ed until 1988. In 1989, the International Federation of Sport Fly Fishing (FIPS-Mouche) was founded in San Marino as an independent Federation within CIPS. The original FIPS-Mouche Competition Rules were drawn up by the Presidential Board and the Technical Commission following the founding of FIPS-Mouche as part of CIPS in San Marino in 1989 and have been subsequently modified and approved by the FIPS-Mouche General Assembly. The Competition Rules are in place to ensure integrity, a code of ethics, and consistency in organising and conducting FIPS-Mouche championships.

The latest published version of SFFNZ Competition Rules will apply during any championship. If there is any doubt or dispute over any aspect of the Competition Rules, they will be resolved by interpreting the “Spirit of the Rules”.

For convenience, the words "he" and "his" are used throughout this document as a gender-neutral term to include the words "she" and "her" respectively. The words championship, competition, and event may also be used interchangeably to mean the same term.

ARTICLE 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Since sport and competitive angling encompasses such diversity, specifically in the areas of awards and techniques, the Olympic Ideal is used to carry out the mission of FIPS-Mouche. As defined by FIPS-Mouche, "Competition Sport Fly Fishing" is angling among competitors, who are observing a standard approved set of rules with a conventional fly rod, fly reel, fly line, leader, and artificial flies for no financial reward.
- 1.2. Also, as with the Olympic Ideal, FIPS-Mouche Competition Sport Fly Fishing is a doping-free sport in order to promote health, fairness and equality for all competitors worldwide. The championships are designed to foster a spirit of good will and international friendship between all nations.
- 1.3 These rules follow the guidelines/principles of the FIPS-Mouche rules (as updated 2025) with some modifications to suit New Zealand conditions and accepted processes/practices that have been adopted over time.
For example it is accepted practice for a competition organiser to vary a rule on the day of the competition due to weather or other unforeseen events.
- 1.4 The parts of the FIPS-Mouche rules that relate to the hosting of International competitions have been removed to simplify the document. Should SFFNZ host an International event such as a Women's, Masters, Junior or Open world championship the relevant FIPS-Mouche rules should be read alongside this document.

ARTICLE 2: GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1. Competitions may be organised for competitors of any gender, competing together or separately.
- 2.2. Competitions may take place on running or still water.
- 2.3 Age / gender categories as follows:

Category	Definition
SENIORS	Over 18 at any point during the year of competition
YOUTH U-19 YOUTH U-24	Ages 14–17 at any point during the year of competition (U-19 may fish with U-24 but not vice versa!!!) Ages 19-22 at any point during the year of competition
MASTERS	Over 50 at any point during the year of competition
LADIES	Female over 18 at any point during the year of competition

ARTICLE 3: COMPETITION RULES AND MODIFICATIONS

- 3.1 The latest published version of SFFNZ Inc rules will apply during a championship. Certain additions/enhancements/changes to the rules may be specified in Rule Modifications to take into account the regulations, practices and particular needs of the venue.
- 3.2. Last minute changes to the Rules Modifications may only be initiated by the Organiser and the Senior SFFNZ Representative present at the championship. Both parties should agree to the necessity of any last-minute change. (i.e. high wind, lightning, extreme water levels, safety, dirty water, pollution, Lake boundaries...etc).

ARTICLE 4: BANK FISHING COMPETITIONS – (River competitions)

- 4.1. Competition waters shall be divided into beats identified by numbers.
- 4.2. The beats must be numbered consecutively starting from the upstream boundary in running waters.

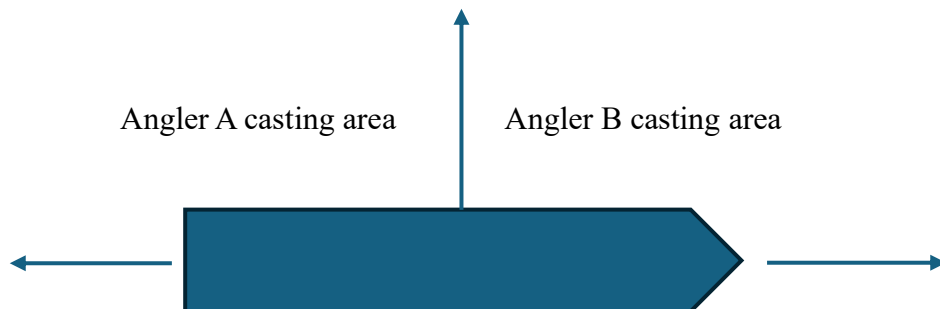
On still waters, the beats must be numbered clockwise. There must be the same number of beats within each sector as the number of competitors.
- 4.3. It shall be the prime objective of the organisers to provide all competitors with equal fishing opportunities. They shall insure that no competitor is either advantaged or disadvantaged by the quality of the beat allocated. In any case, beats shall be a minimum length of one hundred and fifty meters (FIPS-Mouche recommend 200 hundred meters) on running waters, and 50 meters (FIPS-Mouche recommend 100 meters) on still waters. Buffer zones will be provided where possible and must be marked between adjacent beats.
- 4.4. The beats shall be selected in a way that will provide conditions for the controllers to maintain continuous visual contact with the competitor. The controllers shall be adequately equipped for this purpose (rubber boots or waders, safety equipment if necessary). The competition organisers will advise controllers at the briefing session, if they can cross the beat or not.
- 4.5. The organisers are responsible for properly marking all beats and if possible, safe places for spectators to follow the competition. On still waters the beats shall be marked with the strips of warning tape on both sides, that determine also the virtual boundary lines in a water.
- 4.6. A competitor may only cast or fish his flies within the marked boundaries of his beat, and he must remain within the boundaries of the beat during the whole competition session. A competitor may not fish from, nor use, any form of bridge during a Competition Session.
- 4.7. If a hooked fish swims outside of the boundaries of the competitor's beat, the competitor may play the fish from inside his own beat, and it must also be landed within his beat. If a hooked fish swims into the adjacent beat, and the angler in that

beat does not object, then the competitor may play the fish from inside their own beat. If the angler in the adjacent beat does object, the competitor has a maximum of five minutes to bring the fish out of the adjacent beat.

- 4.8. During a championship “bank fishing” session, wading allowed, only the competitor may enter the water within the boundaries of his beat. For safety reasons, if it’s considered necessary by the controller, then the controller may enter the water for rescue. Bank fishing means that there is always contact with the ground, lake bottom or river bottom. Deliberately swimming or floating is forbidden.
- 4.9 Bank fishing competitions (both river and lake) may be angler controlled, these competitions and the rules regarding the running / scoring of these will be set by the competition organiser agreed by the SFFNZ board.

ARTICLE 5: BOAT FISHING COMPETITIONS

- 5.1 There must be the same number (usually 2 competitors) in each boat.
- 5.2 Each competitor has the right to be in command of the boat for an equal amount of time. The decision as to which competitor is initially in command of the boat will be decided by the toss of a coin, or advised by the competition organiser prior to the first session.
- 5.3 The competitor in command of the boat may take all tactical decisions including: on where the boat should be positioned; and whether a drogue is used or not.
- 5.4 Boats must be launched at least ten minutes before the start of the session to give competitors time to arrive by the start time of the session at a position from which they will commence fishing.
- 5.5 No boat may approach within fifty meters of another boat from which a competitor is at the time fishing, except for reasons of safety or necessity. (Note this distance may be amended by the organisers prior to the competition starting)
- 5.6 Competitors while fishing must be seated on the provided seats. A seat cushion may be used if desired. However, ten centimetres is the maximum thickness allowed for a seat cushion.
- 5.7 Netting of fish is the responsibility of the competitor.
- 5.8 A competitor may stand only while netting a fish.
- 5.9 Any fish caught whilst the motor is running will not count as a valid catch, the competitor in charge of the motor must warn the other competitor before starting the motor.
- 5.10 Competitors may only cast into the area allocated to them as per the diagram below.





- 5.11 Rule Modifications may give more detail on how boat fishing will be conducted.
- 5.12 All competitors must always wear a life preserver/personal flotation device (PFD) during a boat fishing session.

ARTICLE 6: DURATION OF EVENTS, SCORING AND PRACTICE SESSIONS

- 6.1 At least three scoring sessions should be provided for all championships. The organiser may conclude the competition after 2 full sessions if the river or lake becomes unsafe/unfishable due to weather events. In all championships, competitors will have the right to fish an equal number of scoring sessions on each type of fishing.
- 6.2 Each scoring session must comprise at least 2 hours and up to 3 hours of fishing as determined by the competition organiser.
- 6.3 The start and finish times for each competition session will be set by the organisers and included in the advance competition notice and briefing.
- 6.4 Competitors must be allowed not less than 15 minutes of preparation time, upon arrival at their beat for each session to assemble rods, prepare leaders, etc. If, for reasons beyond the control of the competitor, the preparation time amounts to less than 15 minutes, compensatory time must be allowed even if it delays the start of the session for this competitor.
- 6.5 Scoring shall be recorded on the appropriate SFFNZ forms provided by the organiser. Each fish must be measured on an official SFFNZ measuring tray. Each fish shall be signed for by the competitor immediately after it is measured and before fishing can recommence. Where a competitor is controlling another competitor in a boat session, both must verify the length of the fish and the controller must sign for the fish.

ARTICLE 7: WHO MAY PARTICIPATE

- 7.1. Any SFFNZ Inc person who has a current membership.

ARTICLE 8: OBLIGATIONS OF COMPETITORS

- 8.1 Participants in competitions authorised by SFFNZ must respect the Competition Rules, Rule Modifications, and comply with the Code of Conduct.
- 8.2 It is the responsibility of each competitor to take all appropriate safety measures, including the wearing of eye protection and life preserving equipment.

- 8.3 Each competitor is required to initial /sign his scorecard after every registered catch. Each competitor is responsible for checking the accuracy of their score card and for confirming this by signing it at the end of each session. After signature, the score card will become a final official document. At the end of the session the competitor may take a picture of their score card.
- 8.4 Any competitor who, during a competition session, requests advice relating to fishing or accepts any material help relating to fishing will be disciplined.
- 8.5 Each competitor must observe the principles of the World Anti-Doping Code and all anti-doping regulations set-up for the Championships.
- 8.6 A competitor is always responsible and accountable for his equipment, and once a session has started, they are the only person to handle and move it within the boundaries of the beat during the entire competition. The competition organiser can authorise controllers to carry the competitors equipment (at the competitors risk) and this should be communicated at the competition briefing.
- 8.7 Smoking / Vaping during the competition sessions rules is as per SFFNZ Smoking and Vaping Policy.

ARTICLE 9: PROTEST COMMITTEE

- 9.1. A protest committee of not less than three members including the organiser shall be appointed before the start of a competition and the competitors advised of its lineup.
- 9.2 At least one member of the subcommittee should where possible currently serve or have previously served on the SFFNZ Board.

ARTICLE 10: RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS OF THE PROTEST COMMITTEE

- 10.1. It is the protest committee's responsibility to;
- Review any reports of infractions (minor rule infringements) and take appropriate action.
 - Receive any formal written (hard copy of via email or text) dispute and take appropriate action as per SFFNZ dispute process.
 - Report all outcomes to the SFFNZ committee.
- 10.2 Disciplinary outcomes may include but are not limited to;
- professional conversation
 - a formal warning
 - reducing or disallowing a competitors session catch
 - event disqualification
 - team suspension
 - removal of funding and benefits
 - future event bans
 - termination of SFFNZ membership

ARTICLE 11: CONTROLLERS

- 11.1 Controller will be responsible for one competitor during bank fishing sessions. It is common practice to run competitions where competitors control another competitor, known as angler/controller competitions.
- 11.2 Controllers will be responsible and accountable for accurately recording on the competitor's scorecard details of each eligible fish, including the length rounded up to the nearest centimetre. The Controller must cross out all unused portions of the scorecard at the end of the session. They must ensure that the Competitor signs the scorecard at the end of the session.
- 11.3 A Controller must measure each fish handed to him by the Competitor, and they do not have the authority to release a fish before measurement.
- 11.4 In case of a dispute, the Controller must keep material evidence for presentation concerning (size, species, etc.) eligibility. A dispute regarding a fish must be recorded on the Competitor's scorecard.
- 11.5 Controllers are not allowed to enter the water during a bank fishing competition. Exceptions to this rule are possible but must be justified and communicated by the competition organiser at the competition briefing.
- 11.6 Controllers are responsible for warning competitors for any violation of the Competition Rules and their Modifications. A verbal warning must be the first course of action, except for serious violations or repeated offenses.

The Controller should record a rule infraction on the Competitor's scorecard or a separate piece of paper if more appropriate.
- 11.7 The arrangements for ensuring that controllers are knowledgeable, competent and conversant with these Competition Rules, and any Rule Modifications are the responsibility of the competitor who engages that controller.
- 11.8 Controllers (who are not regular competitors) may be provided with a checklist stating the task they are required to perform. ("best practice" document supplied by SFFNZ shall be used). Controllers should at least perform following checks: rod length, leader length, distance between knots on leaders, distance between flies, no additions on the line or leader, correct use of droppers, no barbs on hooks, landing net

ARTICLE 12: RANDOM DRAW PROCESS AND ASSIGNMENT OF BEATS AND BOATS

- 12.1 Before the assignment of beats to competitors, all beats and buffer zones must be clearly defined (if possible, by GPS coordinates) and should not be altered during the competition.
- 12.2 The beat of each competitor must be determined by the random draw using an approved SFFNZ method. The random draw is designed to ensure that anglers will not fish any beat in any sector more than once, nor, if mathematically possible, an adjoining beat.
- 12.3 The random draw for boat assignment for each competitor must be decided by a random draw, which must minimize the frequency, ideally to nil, with which

competitors will fish (throughout the sessions during the competition) in the same “boat number” during the championship.

ARTICLE 13: CARE OF FISH CAUGHT

- 13.1. If a competitor wishes a fish to score, he must land it in a net, (both fish and net in the water at point of netting) and **immediately** transport a netted fish submerged (where possible) and pass it in the net to the Controller for assessment of eligibility, measurement and recording.
Once a fish is netted the competitor may not handle it in any way, nor alter the equipment used for capture of this fish. If the competitor does not follow this rule their fish will be registered as invalid catch.
- 13.2. The Controller is responsible for removing the hook, reviving the fish and releasing the fish and shall take care not to damage the fish in any way. If a fish is hooked in such way that it cannot be easily and safely unhooked, the leader shall be cut as close as is practical to the fish, leaving the hook in the fish. The controller shall then release the fish with the least harm possible. As per point 13.3 below the controller can permit the competitor to release the fish if that is the best way to return the fish quickly into the water.
- 13.3. When the Controller is not able to release the fish in the normal way e.g. due to their inability to access the water, the Controller may (for the benefit of the fish) authorise the competitor to release the fish in a suitable place as indicated by the Controller.
- 13.4. If a controller or any other competition official determines that a competitor has negligently injured a fish, that fish will not be scored. The incident must be reported to the event organiser for consideration of further action, which may include removal of points for that fish.
- 13.5 Best practice for catching and releasing potentially undersized fish that are not going to be presented for measuring, is to net them in the normal manner, and release with minimal contact.

ARTICLE 14: COMPETITION BOATS

- 14.1 Boats used during competitions must comply with the current SFFNZ boat policy.
- 14.2 Competitors must provide and wear life preservers/personal flotation devices (PFDs).
- 14.3 Boats must carry a means of signalling (flare) and calling (cell phone) for help in case of emergency.

ARTICLE 15: ELIGIBLE FISH

- 15.1 Eligible fish species and size limits (minimum 20 cm) must be specified in the Rule Modifications. For measuring purposes, the length will be from the tip of the nose to end of the tail (not squeezed together). A fish that is under 20cm is not rounded up to the nearest centimetre and therefore is not eligible for scoring.

- 15.2 Only fish hooked in the mouth area, i.e. in front of the rear edge of the gill cover, will be eligible.
- 15.3 A fish hooked inside a competition session is eligible if it is landed not more than ten minutes after the end of the session.
- 15.4 For a fish to be eligible, it must also be properly cared for and unharmed by the Competitor.
- 15.5 For a fish to be eligible both landing net and fish must be in the water at the point of netting.

ARTICLE 16: COMPETITION FLY RODS

- 16.1 One conventional fly rod, not less than seven feet six inches/two hundred and twenty nine centimetres, not more than twelve feet/three hundred and sixty-six centimetres in length, may be used at one time. Competitors may have spare fly rods with them (carried on their body or bank side assembled), as long as only one line is in the water. **However, when boat fishing, these must not be assembled, nor the reel attached.**
- 16.2 Competitors are responsible for carrying and protecting their own equipment during the competition sessions.

ARTICLE 17: COMPETITION FLY LINES

- 17.1 Any factory made floating, sinking or sink tip Fly Line may be used, except for lead core lines. Every fly line used in a SFFNZ competition shall have a minimum coated diameter of 0.55 mm (0.22"). Only fly lines meeting this requirement are authorised for use in SFFNZ competitions.
- 17.2 Competition fly lines must be a minimum length of twenty-two metres.
- 17.3 Shooting heads are not allowed.
- 17.4 Neither sinking nor floating devices may be added to fly lines.
- 17.5 One single loop is allowed at the end of the fly line, if desired. If a braided or monofilament loop is used to connect the leader to the fly line, the maximum overall length of such a connector may not exceed 10 cm.

ARTICLE 18: COMPETITION LEADERS

- 18.1 A single monofilament or poly leader, tippet included, may be used, with a maximum total length of twice the length of the rod used (except for lake fishing and dry fly sector only).
- 18.2 Leaders may be knotted or knotless, and continuously tapered down or level. A single loop of max. 10 cm length may only be used to connect a leader to a fly line. If the leader is knotted, the minimum distance between the knots is 30 cm, hanging freely.
- 18.3 Neither sinking nor floating devices may be added to the leader

- 18.4 A maximum of 3 micro rings (leader rings) of a maximum outer diameter of 3 mm can be used. A maximum of 3 knots can be joined at a micro ring, they are considered as 1 knot.
- 18.5 A dropper is an equal or smaller diameter monofilament side line to the leader used solely to attach a second or third fly other than the point fly. Only droppers may be used to attach flies whenever more than 1 fly is used by the competitor during that competition. Droppers without fly attached are not allowed. Should a fish break off one of the flies (snagging or double take) during playing the fish this should be seen as “within the rules” and the catch should be registered if eligible.

ARTICLE 19: COMPETITION FLIES

- 19.1 Competitors may use floating or sinking artificial flies
- 19.2 All hooks must be connected directly to the leader/tippet/dropper.
- Weighted flies are permitted, provided the weight which must be hidden within the dressing and may not exceed the bend or eye of the hook. The maximum length of added weight (w) is the distance from the eye of the hook to the farthest point of the bend in the hook.
- A single visible bead, not more than 4 mm maximum dimension, is also permitted. Painting alone does not constitute dressing.
- 19.3 If one fly is used, the length and width of the dressed fly will be at the discretion of the competitor.
- 19.4 A maximum of three flies is permitted which must not be closer to each other than fifty cm, measured eye to eye, hanging freely. The number of flies allowed will be specified in Rule Modifications.
- 19.5 All flies must be attached to the leader in such a way that neither they nor their droppers move or slide along the leader material.
- 19.6 All flies must be dressed on barbless single hooks, tandem flies are not allowed.
- 19.7 If the equipment used and/or flies used are assessed by the controller as repeatedly causing excessive harm to the fish, the use of such flies/equipment may be disallowed by the Controller.
- 19.8 Attractor chemicals and the use of light emitters in flies is forbidden.
- 19.9 Appendages that alter the original concept of an artificial fly or bodies made of moulded/shaped plastic, moulded/shaped silicone or moulded/shaped rubber are banned (moulded/shaped imitations of worms, eggs, baitfish, maggots, twisters...). Rubber or extruded round material, exceeding the bend, shank or eye of the hook is not allowed with exception of maximal diameter 0.53 mm used for leg imitations.
- 19.10 Moulded, extruded or shaped solid part of the fly, made of any floating or air containing material, are not allowed as a visible strike indicator. (*Bung*).

ARTICLE 20: LANDING NETS

- 20.1 The mesh material of a landing net must be rubber/silicon (preferred) or a non-abrasive synthetic or soft cotton material Nets must now be of knotless construction.
- 20.2 While bank (river) fishing the landing nets must not exceed forty eight inches/one hundred and twenty two centimetres in overall length, when fully extended.
- 20.3 While boat fishing the size of the landing nets must be at minimum forty eight inches/one hundred and twenty two centimetres and may not exceed sixty three inches/one hundred and sixty centimetres in overall length, when fully extended.

ARTICLE 21: PROHIBITIONS

21.1 The following are prohibited:

- a) The fishing of competition sectors and reserve waters by competitors or their agents while they are closed prior to the competition, or outside of competition session times.
- b) Unethical, rude behaviour, lack of sportsmanship towards other competitors, organisers or officials.
- c) Any action by competitors, organisers, or officials that would produce fraudulent or biased results.
- d) A competitor, during a competition session, requesting advice relating to fishing from anyone.
- e) A competitor accepting material help relating to fishing from anyone.
- f) The use of cell phones, radio or any other electronic communication methods by competitors during a competition session to relay team information.
- g) The use of a fish/depth finder during a championship.
- h) Use of any prohibited substance(s) constituting doping, according to the anti-doping regulations.
- i) Drinking of alcohol during a competition session.

ARTICLE 22: LOST FISH

- 22.1 In the event of the loss of a fish by a controller before measurement, the competitor will be awarded the average of the points for all valid fish caught in that sector in that session.

ARTICLE 23: AWARDING OF POINTS

- 23.1 For each eligible fish caught a competitor will score one hundred points plus twenty points per centimetre length of each eligible fish. The recorded length will be rounded up to the next complete centimetre for scoring purposes.
- 23.2 An under-sized fish (under the 20 cm eligible size limit) is not eligible to be scored and should not be recorded on a competitor's scorecard.
- 23.3 The competition organiser must specify if an alternative scoring system will be used.

ARTICLE 24: SESSION PLACINGS

- 24.1 All competitors will receive a placing in their group according to the points they obtain on each sector and for each session of a championship.
- 24.2 A competitor who fails to make a valid catch in any session will be awarded a placing equal to the number of competitors in the sector for that session. The same placing will be awarded to any competitor who fails to participate for any reason.
- 24.3 A competitor who is forced to retire for any reason from a session of a championship shall have his catch scored up to that time of departure included in the results. His scorecard needs to be documented at time of departure and signed.
- 24.4 If there is a tie between competitors in the same session in the number of points received, the tiebreaker will be the largest number of valid fish caught. If the tie persists, the competitors will receive equal placings and the placing(s) immediately following will be left blank.

ARTICLE 25: INDIVIDUAL POSITIONS

- 25.1 The positions of teams and individuals will be determined as follows:

Individuals: The first position will be awarded to the individual with the lowest cumulative number of placings, and similarly for all other positions.

- 25.2 If there is a tie for positions between individuals, the first tiebreaker will be the largest number of points received, the second will be the largest number of valid fish caught, and the third will be the largest fish.
- 25.3 If the tie persists, the tied individuals will be awarded equal positions and the position(s) immediately following will be blank.

ARTICLE 26: POSTING OF RESULTS

- 26.1 At the end of the day, after all of the day's results /scorecards have been given to the Organiser, the daily and cumulative results for individuals will be posted within three hours whenever possible.
- 26.2 A delay in the posting of results may occur in the event of an unresolved dispute/ protest during a particular session(s). In such a case, resolution will occur as soon

as possible. A possible change in previous score postings may occur after resolution.

ARTICLE 27: POSTED RESULTS AND OBJECTIONS

- 27.1 The results of the last competition session and final results of the Championship will become final 2 hours after posting, with the exception of an unresolved dispute/protest
- 27.2 The time of posting must be clearly marked on the result sheets.
- 27.3 It is the responsibility of competitors to notify the Organiser of any discrepancy in the posted results, immediately after the discovery and preferably within the provisional period.

ARTICLE 28: FORMAL PROTESTS

- 28.1 A formal protest may be made by a competition official, a controller or a competitor regarding violations of the SFFNZ Competition Rules, Rule Modifications, or the Code of Conduct.
- 28.2 A formal protest must be in writing (hard copy or via email or text) to the competition organiser within 60 minutes of the end of the competition, or to the SFFNZ president/vice president in writing with 24 hours of the end of the competition.

NOTE: The 24 hour time period is to enable results to be finalised in a timely manner, however protests received outside of this timeframe may also be considered at the discretion of the SFFNZ president or vice president.
- 28.3 The protest committee may refuse to accept any protest / complaint if it considers it to be trivial or vexatious in nature.

ARTICLE 29: TITLES AND TROPHIES

- 29.1 The team awarded first place will be designated the Team Champion of that particular championship.
- 29.2 The individual awarded first place will be designated the Individual Champion of that particular championship.
- 29.3 At the closing ceremony the individuals awarded first, second, and third place will receive gold, silver, and bronze medals respectively (as appropriate).
- 29.4 There will be no monetary or substantial prizes awarded as part of any championship.