

SFFNZ Dispute and Disciplinary Procedure – (updated 2026)

1. Overview

This dispute procedure applies to all Sports Fly Fishing New Zealand (SFFNZ) members acting in the capacity as a competitor, controller, or official.

While most disputes (protests) arise during competitions, complaints arising outside of the competition environment may also be considered if they impact the integrity or reputation of SFFNZ.

Investigations strictly follow a Natural Justice process. The subject member will receive the complaint, have sufficient time to respond, and hold the right to appeal. All complaints are handled with strict confidentiality and privacy during the active investigation phase. The SFFNZ Committee reserves the right to publicize final outcomes strictly as outlined in Section 6 of this document.

2. Reporting the Issue

- **Competition Protests:** Must be reported to the Competition Organiser within 60 minutes of the specific session or event ending.
- **General Complaints:** Must be submitted to the SFFNZ President or Vice President in writing within 24 hours of the incident.
- **Late Submissions:** Complaints received outside these timeframes require joint approval from the President and Vice President to proceed, based on whether the matter is substantial enough to warrant a formal investigation.
- **Informal Resolution:** Minor matters may be resolved informally via a professional conversation and documented briefly by the organiser.

3. Protest Committee Role

A protest subcommittee of three or more members is established at the start of each competition, and competitors will be notified of its lineup. Where possible

the subcommittee will include at least one current or former SFFNZ Board member.

- **Conflicts of Interest:** Upon receiving a complaint, any subcommittee member with a perceived or actual conflict of interest must stand down and be replaced immediately.
- **Notification:** The subcommittee must advise the SFFNZ president or vice president of the complaint as soon as practical.
- **External Referral:** The subcommittee may refer complex matters to external bodies (such as Sport and Recreation Complaints and Mediation Service – SRCMS) or legal counsel for guidance.
- **Non-Cooperation:** If a member refuses to cooperate with an investigation, the subcommittee reserves the right to proceed and make a determination in their absence based on available evidence.

4. Complaint and Investigation Process

The protest committee may refuse to accept any complaint deemed trivial, anonymous, or vexatious. Once a complaint has been accepted, the process is as follows:

Step 1 – Evidence: The committee gathers the formal complaint, supporting witness statements, and physical/digital evidence.

Step 2 – Notification: The subcommittee chairperson notifies the subject member in writing (via email or text), providing a copy of the complaint and all gathered evidence.

Step 3 – Response: The member is required to provide a response within 48 hours.

- **Fast-track Rule:** For disputes requiring resolution during an event or prior to prize-giving the response window may be shortened to a minimum of 1 hour to preserve the event timeline while maintaining the member's right to be heard.

Step 4 –Deliberation: The committee evaluates all evidence and responses to determine if a rule or Code of Conduct breach occurred.

Step 5 –Outcome: The committee notifies the subject member and the complainant in writing of the outcome, specific breaches, enforced penalties, and the process for appeal.

Step 6 – Appeal: The member or complainant may appeal the decision in writing within 7 days of receiving the notice. For fast-tracked decisions, the appeal must be lodged within 2 hours. The SFFNZ Board (excluding any member involved in the initial Protest Committee) will review the appeal within 28 days. This determination will be final.

Step 7 – Record Keeping: The Secretary securely records the penalty in the centralised, restricted-access SFFNZ digital registry. This record may be factored into future disciplinary determinations if further protests are proven against the individual.

5. Penalties

Disciplinary measures will be proportionate to the breach and include, but are not limited to:

- A formal professional conversation
- A formal written warning
- Reducing or disallowing a competitors session catch
- Event disqualification
- Team or squad suspension
- Removal of SFFNZ funding, grants, and benefits
- Future event bans
- Termination of SFFNZ membership (subject to section 4.7 and 4.8 of the SFFNZ constitution)

6. Publication of Decisions and Penalties

Once a dispute resolution is fully concluded, and all internal appeal periods have been exhausted, SFFNZ reserves the right to publish the final outcome.

- **Scope:** Published outcomes will be limited to objective facts, the name of the member, the specific competition rule or policy breached, and the resulting penalty.
- **Channels:** Publication may only occur via official SFFNZ communication channels, including official results sheets, digital leaderboards, and the SFFNZ Annual Report.
- **Purpose:** To maintain competition integrity, mirror international FIPS-Mouche standards, and ensure transparency for all competing members.