

NATAL TRIALS - 2004

Each province can select a maximum of four teams of four divers to represent their province at Nationals. In Natal we have three divers per team and sacrifice the fourth team member for a top man to handle the boat during the competition. The selection of these divers is orchestrated by a selection committee made up of the Natal Underwater Union (NUU) Spearfishing Officer and an experienced representative from each of Natal's two largest clubs, Wahoo Diving Club and Durban Undersea Club. The top twelve divers are determined from a series of three competitions called "Trials" held to very strict rules and regulations similar to those of Nationals. **Every diver participating in Natal Trials must be a member of a Club recognized by the Natal Underwater Union. Trials for Natal will be held on 17/31 January 2004 and the 14/28 February 2004.**

- If because of bad weather a trial has to be canceled on the Saturday it then takes place on the Sunday or the following Saturday and if it is still not possible then that trial is postponed till the following month.

Because Nationals take place off boats and World Champs take place off boats so Trials are dived from boats. To eliminate the chance of cheating and in the interest of fairness divers names are drawn from a hat and thus assigned a boat to dive from that day. Only the skippers are sure of which boat they are going to be diving from.

- Each boat is allowed to have a top man to handle the boat during Trials just as would happen at Nationals.
The Entrance Fee for trials is R400.00 This must be paid BEFORE 6 January 2004. To enter phone Andrew Nell 083 2335 128 or Shane Strong 083 799 2679
The R400 will go towards the four teams costs during Nationals and is also a token of your commitment to competing in Trials and at Nationals.
- **Divers are required to phone Shane or Andrew between 5pm and 8pm the Friday before a trial to confirm the dive area, meeting place and time.**
- Remember that a lot of people are getting up early and may be traveling from far to attend a trial so divers can be forgiven for being ten minutes late but will lose one point for every five minutes thereafter.

After meeting divers are drawn onto their respective boats and a meeting place at sea is decided. Once all the boats meet at sea the trial can begin. (No spearing is allowed before this time.) Note that all divers must dive within 40m of their OWN float. Floats must be used at all times when a diver is in the water, must be a readily visible color, be a minimum of 1.5 liters, and be clearly visible in the water during choppy or rough seas.

- A trial lasts for six hours. Any diver seen in the water after the six hours will be disqualified from that trial.

After beaching all divers are required to load their fish into blisks and proceed to the weigh-in. Points are allocated to each divers catch as follows.

- Only two fish per species is allowed. All fish may be weighed in ungutted, you may keep the fish you have shot. (Divers must still bear Parks Board Rules in mind.) **Each fish must weigh a minimum of 1 kg to qualify. Except the following species which need only be 500 grams. Slinger, Goatfish, Halfmoon Rock cod, Dane, Soldier, Blacktail, Scavengers and Butterfish (Two-tone Fingerfin)**
- Only two wrasse and two parrotfish of any kind can be weighed in.

- Seven species that are excluded from competition are Surgeons, Angel fish, Unicorn fish, Batfish, Sea Barbel, Barbel Eel and File fish

- Each fish can earn a maximum of four points (4 kgs)
- One extra point will be awarded for each species.

Example: Two Spotted Rock cod weighing 5kgs and 3.2kgs

4 points for the 5kg fish

3.2 points for the 3.2 kg fish

1 point for the species Spotted Rock cod.

So that one days conditions can be equated to the next days each divers points are calculated as a percentage of the top divers. The top diver scores 100%.

After three trials each divers top two percentages are averaged and thus ranked.

If a diver makes the top twelve in Natal Trials they are divided into the A, B, C and Development Team. All twelve divers are awarded NUU Colors (Dolphins).

For a diver to get Natal Colors (Wildebeest) they must have dived in the A, B or C team at least three times and at least once in the A team or if never in the A team then they must have come in the top ten at Nationals once.

The Natal Underwater Union Awards three trophies each year to competitive divers based on Trials results.

- Anthony Benjamin Trophy for the biggest bottom fish. - 2002 Ryan Burmester 24kg Black Musselcracker.
- Biggest Gamefish Trophy. – Not awarded
- Top of the Log Trophy for overall highest percentage. – 2002 Gary Hazel.

Every 2 years the world Spearfishing Championships take place and the highest ranking Springbok is awarded the beautiful Shaun Atlas Trophy, a Len Jones Bronze of a Red Steenbras, a fish fittingly endemic to South Africa and one we are most proud of.

- 1996 Len de Beer

- 1998 Len de Beer

- 2000 John Girzda

- 2002 Jaco Blignaut

SA National Spearfishing Championships will be held at Stilbaai

(Sat13 to Wed 17 March 2004) Hosted by Southern Cape. This will be two dive days, then one rest day. We then continue with the All African Spearfishing Championships.

World Champs will take place in Chile, France or Venezuela in 2004.

Trials are the first step to Nationals and National are the first step to Springbok Trials so start practicing.

NATAL SPEARFISHING TRIALS 2004 ENTRY FORM

NAME: _____

CLUB: _____

CONTACT NUMBER: _____

ENTRY FEE PAID: _____