

SAFA Committee and Club Members

I have received an e-Mail from Johan Jacobs wherein he asks of the SAFA Committee a number of questions about the administration of our Sport. Under the circumstances I think it is very relevant to have such questions considered and answers given and had already given consideration to some of them (see “Is Spearfishing in Crises” on the spearfishing website from which I have received four e-mails, three of which were from overseas.

My responses here are my own ideas and do not necessarily reflect the views of SAFA, although I have discussed many of them with other divers including members of the committee. Since one of the key issues that I see that is hampering our sport is one of communication between the relevant parties, I believe it is appropriate to distribute my ideas as widely as possible and to try and get some consensus on many of the issues which require decisions which will affect the future of our sport.

1. Status and availability of SAFA Constitution

Last year James Lawson-Smith informed me that copies of the SAFA Constitution were not to be found and asked if I could formulate a new one which I did. It was provided before the Nationals at P.E. but not discussed at the AGM at which I was elected President. John Little then told me that he had a copy of the old constitution and subsequently faxed me a copy. I then created an electronic copy of it which I will send to the Spearfishing SA website.. Sadly this copy is out-of-date with the current state of affairs in our sport and in South African Sport in general and will require numerous amendments to bring it up-to-date. I propose to do this and circulate such amendments for approval at the next AGM.

2. Status of webpage communication

As I see it there are three forms of electronic communications available to SAFA besides phones, faxes etc. They are:

- Individual e-mail addresses, which anyone can maintain and use to communicate with other interested spearos. I have many such addresses ranging from the Hibiscus club members, other Natal spearos, those I have obtained at Nationals, SAUU, CMAS including all those Nations who are listed in the Spearfishing section, SANROC and FIPSA.
- A combined list of addresses of the SAFA_Committee and SAFA_List which is maintained on Yahoo by Greg Montano-Lewis and consists largely of the representative from each provincial body, or in the case of the latter anyone who wishes to subscribe to it.
- Spearfishing SA website (www.spearfishinsa.co.za) maintained on a voluntary basis by John Little.

It is interesting to note that although I sent my message of the Crises which I believe Spearfishing faces to the SAFA Committee, I only got a response of any

sort when it was published on the Spearfishing website and then out of the four responses I have received to date, three were from overseas.

3. Status of Development Program

I have personally drafted a memo, (see attached) which has been posted at various lifesaving clubs along the Lower South Coast in the hope of attracting competent “previously disadvantaged” swimmers to our sport. So far the response has been slow. Guyula Plagianni has mentioned an initiative to get “previously disadvantaged” skippers to drive boats at next years Nationals. Other than that I know of no other initiatives in this regard. As you will see further on when I reference the new legislation governing sport in this country it is crucial that we make a concerted effort to include the “previously disadvantaged” in our sport if we do not want further draconian government interference to descend upon us and if we wish to have access to government funding for our development, and the ability to award South African colours to our athletes.

4. International Competition and our Likelihood to Participate in the Future

Here we are faced with a major dilemma.

There are now two International bodies trying to control world spearfishing, CMAS and FIPSA.

The original CMAS, under which falls the Sports Committee and within that the Spearfishing Federation. Its President is Antonio Cruz who I have communicated with on a number of occasions by phone and e-mail, but from whom we have received little or no help. It is a massive body consisting of around a hundred member nations and about 35 Spearfishing Members. It also administers Underwater Hockey, UW Rugby, Finswimming and all aspects of Scuba Diving. This makes it very unwieldy and it does not easily respond to the needs of one small body like ours as I have found out. It however is the only body that has the sanction of the IOC, which may or may not be relevant to us in dealing with our government sports body. We are in fact affiliated to SAUF (SA Underwater Federation) was SAUU who are in turn affiliated to CMAS so in theory all communication with CMAS should go through SAUF. While SAUF have an office in Cape Town manned by a secretary (half-days), the recently appointed president, Frank Slabbert resides in Krugersdorp. He tried to help us with CMAS but this has proved ineffectual.

CMAS sanctions the hosting of a World Spearfishing Championship every two years, this years one was held in Sines, Portugal from 12-17th September and we were not given an invitation to participate as we had not competed in a Zone Championship in 2005. CMAS spearfishing countries are divided into three zones, EURO/AFRICA, AMERICAS and OCEANUS (Australia etc.). Only the top 20 countries from these qualifiers was invited to send teams to Sines. It is costly to enter a CMAS sponsored

competition as besides the entrance fee of around R20000, each participant has to be registered with CMAS as does the team at a further cost of around R1000.

To make an application to host a Zone Championship requires the submission of a detailed questionnaire and Euro 1750 with significantly more to host the World Championships. In any event the calendar for worlds is supposedly full until 2012. (every 2nd year).

In 1999 CMAS banned Spearfishing from its Sports roster, which decision was later overturned by the International Sports Tribunal.

FIPSA is a new body founded last year by a number of nations who were fed up with CMAS. The 10 nations involved in this include Spain, Portugal, Brazil, USA, Australia, Peru and Chile. They hosted their first "World Spearfishing Championships" in Brazil last year on the same dates as our PE Nationals. We were invited to send a team but decided not to as we assumed that we would get an invitation to Worlds in Portugal. CMAS have proposed that the nations who participated in Brazil have been given until the end of 2006 by CMAS to decide which body they wish to be members of. If they choose FIPSA they will be booted out of CMAS.

I have received a number of e-mails from FIPSA, asking us to join them and offering, no qualification participation in their "World Championships" in Cherbourg, France in 2008, allowing us to host a regional competition here in 2007 without an application fee, and participation in two other International Competitions next year.

SAFA needs to decide. I believe as soon as possible and long before next years Nationals what our best course of action is.

The other two issues related to our ability to participate internationally are sponsorship (see below) and the award of SA Colours (Springbok) which I will elaborate on below.

5. SA Spearo ranking System.

This system was devised by Johan Jacobs as part of the selections of this years team for Worlds and I believe it is a good one and should be adopted and maintained by the National selectors for the future. At the request of Craig Heslop, I have asked John Little to post a copy on the Spearfishing website. I have suggested that some weighting be given to the results of other Open competitions held throughout the year.

5. Sponsorships

After the AGM at PE, when I was elected, I drafted a letter asking for sponsorship for our World team and a number were sent out before I found out that we would not be

able to go. Only one semi-positive response from an International Clothing (outdoor) firm was received.

Mark Jackson from PE has proposed a scheme for raising funds via Cell C who offer some form of incentive if we can get subscribers to convert to them. I am awaiting further details.

I have started to investigate how we may be able to get funds from the LOTTO Fund. This seems to be a long term issue but is worth pursuing as other sports bodies (who are battling) have received significant grants.

I think sponsorship is a very, very big problem and will hamper our ability to participate in any International events and to administer SAFA in the best interests of SA Spearfishing.

6. Membership strength at club level

I have no idea how many fee paying club spearo members exist in SA. James Lawson-Smith has a list of those who have paid their R50 at Nationals or at some Open event and who have received a SAFA Card. I think this numbers around 100.

I have proposed that SAFA receives a fee from all club spearos, whereupon they could all become card carrying members of SAFA and it goes without saying that only those card carrying members should be allowed to enter Open Competitions and claim SA Records.

7. SAFA vs SAUU (now SAUF)

I think the answer here is that if SAFA choses to remain with CMAS then they have to remain a member of SAUF, if they join FIPSA then we will probably have to leave SAUF. This may cause some complications for clubs with spearfishing and the other disciplines.

7. Records and Rules to Claim a Record

I would have thought that as this has been going on for many years (since 1960's) that it should be quite straightforward. I do feel strongly that only fully paid up members of SAFA should be entitled to claim records.

8. Budget

As far as I know there is no SAFA budget. James accepted the position of Treasurer from Guyula at the AGM at PE and reported that SAFA had about R17000 in its bank account, most of which was acquired from the running of the Nationals by Southern Kwa-Zulu Natal in 2005 and by him in the form of sponsorship donations. Nothing was received from the running of this years Nationals.

The above amount would not have been enough to pay for the entry fee to World's and since SAFA's major source of income was that from Nationals, unless this is replaced there will not be enough to properly administer SAFA.

My suggestion here is that Teams (competitors are required to pay SAFA a fee in lieu of their keeping their fish in order to participate. This in addition to the entrance fee that they pay the host province for the running of the competition.

As in 6 above I recommend that each spearo member of a club pay SAFA a fee from which they receive a SAFA card, the ability to enter SAFA approved competitions (i.e the OPEN Competitions) and participation in Nationals, besides the representation of their cause on all the relevant forums, e.g. MCM, SAUU, CMAS etc.

9. Nationals Competition Format – Recommended Changes

After the Nationals in 2005 I proposed 7 changes to the SAFA Rules these were sent to SAFA_Committee before PE in 2006 and adopted at the AGM there. They were included in the brochure given to competitors at PE.

Since then I have proposed both here and elsewhere a number of other significant changes including:

- a) Hold the SA Individuals and Team Interprovincials at the same event.
- b) The team event to be over 2 days and based on 30 fish each day, one of each species per team irrespective of which team member shoots them. This proposal is to try and remove the practice of team members swapping fish. It has been tested in Natal and seems to work.
- c) For the Individual, entrants other than those who were selected for their provinces may enter.
- d) The Sections for the team event be A, B, C, Development and Veterans and that teams be that provinces be allowed only one team per section, for next year that provinces be allowed to elect which sections they wish to submit teams (SAFA decision final) and from then on a new system of promotion and relegation be devised which tries to ensure that each section permits like strength against like strength.
- e) As in 6 above a levy on teams to be paid to SAFA.
- f) Host provinces give more attention to the measuring and weighing of fish and the selection of species to be included/excluded in compliance with legal requirements.

10. Local Competition Feedback.

If we could arrive at a situation where all "Open" competitions were required to get sanction from SAFA and thus be included in a "National Calendar" of events then it

would be an easy matter to require the organizers of such an event to feed the results back to the SAFA records officer and/or to the SPEARFISHINGSA website.

11. Media

For the 2005 Nationals in Southern KwaZulu Natal, a video was made by Barret Harvey of XDigital Video Productions which was very good and was flighted on MNet Supersport 13 times including some prime time viewing. Barret arranged the sponsorship for the flightings, and thus those sponsors received the bulk of the exposure. Barret is about to release another spearfishing video which he has been working on for some time and which features some of Jaco Blignaut's epic underwater tussles with big fish. It will also be shown on Supersport. Support Barret and buy a copy of the video.

Attempts to get the daily/weekly print media to publish accounts of spearfishing while not impossible are largely reliant on personal friendships with media correspondents who are mainly interested in only controversial issues like shooting someone's pet potato bass or shallow water blackout.

12. SAMLMA, ORI, MCM

MCM were invited to attend the weigh-ins at Nationals 2005 and 2006 and they were represented. In 2005 they fined (tried to fine ??) one of the competitors for weighing a Natal Wrasse which is on the banned fish list. In 2006 someone (I have heard various versions of who this was) alerted MC that illegal brusher had been landed and they arrived at Mark Jackson's in two trucks to "catch" the culprits. No further action was taken.

Various of our members are in contact with Bruce Mann from ORI who seems to be responsible for proposing most legislation related to spearfishing to government (see below).

I have had no contact with SAMLMA, but am in e-mail contact with Monty Guest from False Bay Underwater Club who seems to represent the SCUBA diving fraternity in their battles against MCM and other bodies over the proclamation of MPS's and permits for Scuba divers to enter them among other matters. He has offered us all help including any dealings we may have with these "official bodies". He has sent me an e-mail which details the state of financial crises at the Marine Living Resources Fund (MLRF) which manages the Marine Environment on behalf of the department of environmental affairs and tourism which is appalling. Little wonder that they appear to be unable to properly manage the marine systems of our country.

In the last few weeks there have been feedback meetings, the agenda of which was:

You are cordially invited to attend a meeting for Boat Launch Site operators and users to receive feedback on the information gathered from the Boat Launch and Catch Registers

in 2005, and plans for the relicensing of Boat Launch Sites in KwaZulu-Natal. Meetings will be held at the following venues and times:

- Durban Skiboat Club on 12 September 2006 @ 6.30pm
- Lobotes Skiboat Club, Tugela Mouth on 14 September 2006 @ 5.30pm
- Skiboat base, Shelley Beach on 21 September 2006 @ 5pm

AGENDA

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| 1. Opening and Welcome | Tandi Breetzke |
| 2. Background | Tandi Breetzke |
| 3. Feedback: KZN Launch Site Registers: 2005
Mann | Pierre Pradervand and Bruce |
| a. General | |
| b. Site specific issues | |
| 4. Questions and discussion
Mann | Pierre Pradervand and Bruce |
| 5. Proposed renewal process | Tandi Breetzke |

Craig Heslop attended the Durban meeting and has provided verbal feedback that spearfishing was discussed there albeit informally. The Shelly Beach one was cancelled due to lack of interest. We were at the Border Open at the time.

13. Topical Issues – For Example – Are we involved with the MCM rumour to ban spearfishing from boats ?

At present I have no idea where this rumour originated from or whether there is any substance to it. Can anyone help here.

14. How do other countries manage spearfishing ?

With difficulty ! To be serious, I have no idea. Perhaps those who have represented South Africa at World's could provide some insight here. In the meantime since I have the e-mail addresses of most of them, I will ask them.

15. What is required to become a combined voice for and on behalf of spearfishing in SA ?

I believe for this to happen, SAFA through its club and provincial structures needs to offer all spearfishermen and women in SA reasons to be members. At present there would be very little reason for someone who did not want to compete in competitions or claim National records to be a member of SAFA. At a club level having access to diving buddies and a place to drink may be enough. In reality representation against most forms of legislation against our sport would be what they seek, however this is a double edged sword. Unless we can truly represent the majority of spearo's and speak with one

voice we have little hope of being heard. For the much smaller population of competitive spearo's there are reasons enough.

This brings me to the end of Johans questions, but I would like to add a couple of other issues.

A. Change of name of SAFA (South African Freediving Association)

I would like to propose that we change this to **South African Underwater Fishing Federation (SAUFF)**. It may then be appropriate to leave SAUF and join the SA National Fishing Body. This would be particularly relevant if we decided to leave CMAS and join FIPSA.

B. SAFA Committee Meeting

We are fortunate that we live in an era of electronic communication, however it is my view that in order to resolve the myriad of issues facing us we need to hold at least one SAFA committee meeting a year which is independent of the AGM and where SAFA could sponsor the costs of delegates travel. There is never time at the AGM which is held to co-incide with Nationals to properly cover all the relevant issues.

C. Other World Spearfishing Events

John Girzda has undertaken to represent us at his own expense at the 5th Spearfishing Champions League to be held in Greece from 27th September to 1st October. We wish him well. He has agreed to try and invite competitors there to compete in our Nationals next year.

D. 2007 Nationals

These are scheduled to be held at Sedgefield (near Knysna) in around the end of April 2008). More feedback on areas accommodation etc. will be forthcoming shortly.

E. SA SPORT AND RECREATION ACT 1998

This is about to be significantly amended to give the government more power than ever to exercise control over sport. Several of the issues which will concern us will be:

- Government has no right to interfere in the selection of teams.
- Has sole right to the granting of permission to award National Colours.
- Requires National Federations to submit statistics annually in April on their training and affirmative action programs.
- Has jurisdiction over bodies wishing to hold International competitions.
- Will fund training and development programs in any sport that provides the proper motivation.