

We have had three handgun nationals a year for so long that it has become almost untouchable to change the format. How about a short history of the national level matches?

About 25 years ago we had three sets of nationals, the A nationals for the top shooters, the B nationals for the not so top shooters and the Springbok Trials for those in contention for the world shoot. This was eventually changed as there were just too many matches to attend [4-5 a year] and it seemed that most of the shooters attended most of the matches in any case. The present system of three nationals was then instituted, mainly to have fewer matches and allow competitors to focus, and to enable us to have a log of shooters to be able to select teams at short notice. This was in the days of sanctions and we never knew when the opportunity for a team to attend an international match might arise. This system has carried over till today with the original reason not being valid any more.

There have been at least two formal proposals for less nationals and appropriate selection for teams for the world shoot in the last five years.

Today we have neverending whining about rising entry fees. Practical shooting is a sport like any other sport with its attendant operational costs. This is a fact of life. How many of us pay hundreds of rands for rugby tickets or for other sporting events in an instant and then whine about the cost of our handgun matches? Changing the way we compete at national level will influence the cost of attending nationals as well as the selecting national teams. We are not unique; other regions have the same problems. Most IPSC regions have only one national level competition a year but more level III matches on a provincial level. They also don't have problems selecting national teams once every three years, so why should we?

I support Phil in this, our system of handgun nationals needs a serious overhaul.

Daan