

Opening statement

Thank you all for attending this important Congress. I look forward to important discussions and efforts for the advancement of global sports fishing.



Youth Report

Each year I asked one simple question: **“Who will fish for your country in the future?”**

Such a question leads to many other questions:

- Does your national Federation have a youth program?
- What avenues are in place to mentor your next generation of competitors?
- If no youth engagement, who will fish for your country in the future?
- If you have a youth program - Are you sharing your program with a country that does not?
- Why are there so many countries that participate in seniors but not in youth events?
- Why do the many federations show no interest in engaging the young people?
- Who will be the future anglers to compete in the World Championships?

These questions remain unanswered by a great majority of our CIPS member nations and federations.

We must remember that today’s youth are our future members, youth are our future leaders and conservationists, and youth will someday sit in our seats to continue the work and programs we have created and maintained.

I have hoped that our member federations would embrace youth engagement, many simply do not have the resources or are unwilling to make such efforts as I have proposed. Wanting to lead by example - I flew to Italy and America and produced three Youth Components at 3 FIPS world championships. I understand the time and resources of what I am asking in the name of youth sports fishing. I did the work and now ask that others continue this work.

Let’s Be Inclusive

I now ask for organizers to include young people in the events they host. **Show youth the excitement of sports fishing.**

“To all FIPS world championship organizers, please include a youth component during your championship event. This component can be chosen from 3 levels of engagement: small, medium, or large. Small will equate to 5-20 youth, medium will equate to 21-50 youth, and large will equate to 51 or more youth persons engaged.”

Please see the 3 examples I have provided, and I hope that this inspires my fellow organizers to include a youth element into the events they host. **For the Federation leaders, I hope these examples will inspire you to require having a youth element in the championships within your countries.**



Youth Components at World Championships

All world championships have a host community, town or city. This community has a population of youth that can be engaged at various levels. I personally understand the amount of work it takes to organize a world championship, and engaging youth does not have to be an extra burden. It is an OPPROTUNITY to give back to that host community, to showcase sports fishing to area youth, showcase the CIPS & FIPS brands, and remind everyone that fish are a valuable resource.

Small Youth Component: 5-20 youth participants

- Youth can be flag bearers at the opening ceremony.
- Youth can hand out lunches on fishing days.
- Youth can give out the attendee bags during team accreditations.

Here are photos of a very simple activity for youth inclusion at a world championship – as flag bearers.



Medium Youth Component: 21-50 youth participants

- Provide a learning opportunity for youth by having a small area with tables to showcase the sport and tools being used during that championship.
- An educational area that provides youth information about local waters and angling opportunities.
- Provide an on-hands fishing opportunity along a local lake or pond to catch and release fish.

The Youth Fly Fishing Championship in Italy, showcased fly fishing, tying, and casting to local youth in the area.

- **Fly Tying Tables** Youth will see how flies are tied, how flies imitate the local bugs, and will be given fly souvenirs.
- **Casting Station** Youth will see anglers casting and learn from them how to cast a fly rod and cast at fun targets.
- **Fly Gear** Tables with fly fishing and fly-tying gear will be laid out for kids to guess what an item does and how it is used.

***This could easily have been stations for Tackle, Casting, and Bait for any angling discipline.**



Large Youth Component: 51+ youth participants

- Provide a learning station for youth and parents to get started in sports fishing.
- Have local fishing agencies set up informative stations promoting conservation and stewardship.
- Have fishing stations with trained guides teaching catch and release fishing and equipment handling.

The 2022 Black Bass World Championship provided a Youth Day, supported by the city of Columbia, SC, South Carolina state fishery departments, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This allowed for a secondary goal to be reached for exposing US government agencies to the CIPS and FIPS - brand, scope of efforts, and globe influence in sports fishing. **The event at Columbia Canal and Riverfront Park had over 450 youth attendees. There were educational learning tables, vendor tents, pro athletes, fishing games, and 15 fishing stations.**



These Small, Medium, and Large Youth Components have been tried and tested.

The Youth Commission has physically completed and produced all the above components to test the burden and resources required by the championship organizer. I have successfully showcased all 3 youth component levels and will be available to support and discuss components with any organizer that reaches out for support.

Let's Be Good Influencers

What is an influencer?

“An influencer is a person who is regarded as an expert within their field. People trust their opinions, and thus their endorsements carry a considerable amount of weight. “

Everyone sitting here today is an influencer for sports fishing. You are personally committed to sports fishing success. I am asking you to be a good influence on the youth in your country. Pass on your knowledge and passion to your future athletes.

Statistics

CIPS current membership: Nations = 79 and Federations = 104.

Nations Competing in Youth World Championships from 2018 – 2024.

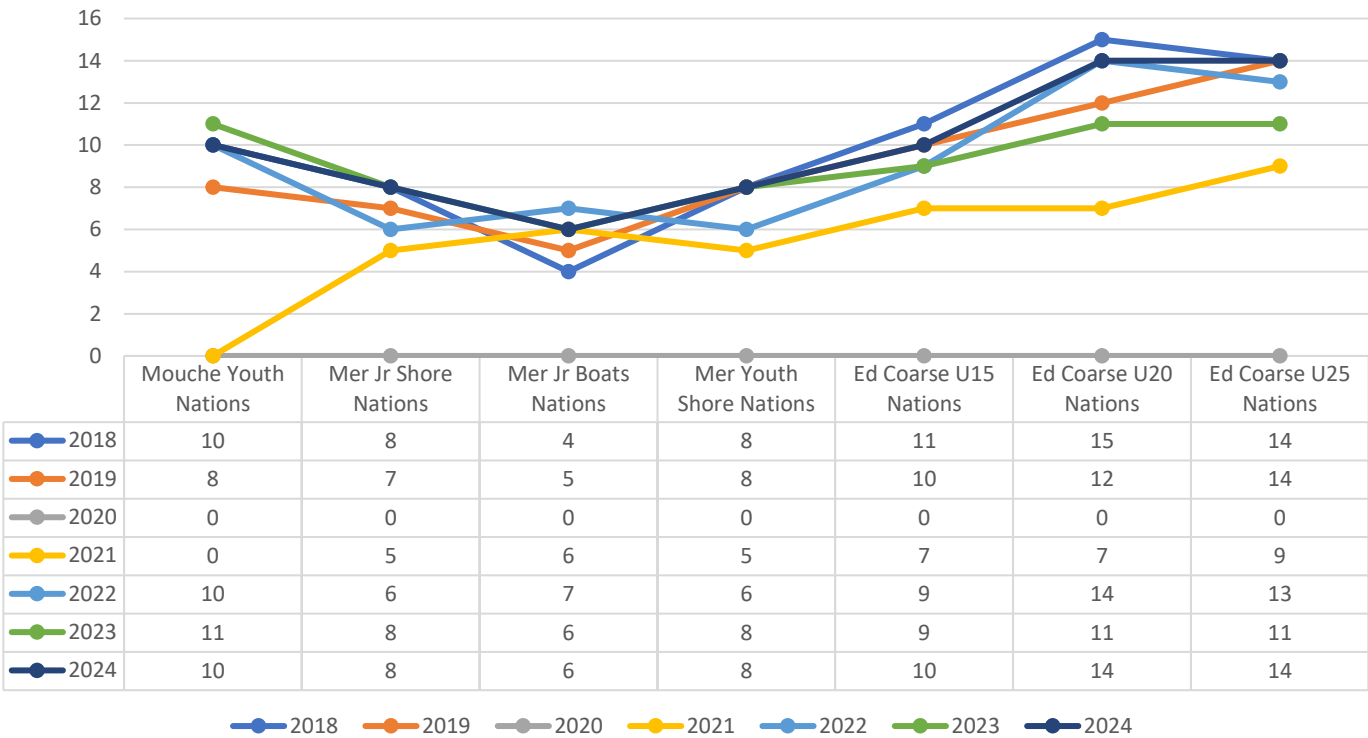
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- ✓ Montenegro
- ✓ Netherlands
- ✓ Poland
- ✓ Portugal
- ✓ San Marino
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- ✓ Slovakia
- ✓ Slovenia
- ✓ South Africa
- ✓ Spain
- ✓ USA

Total of Nations competing in Youth World Championships from 2018 – 2024 = **22 participating nations.**

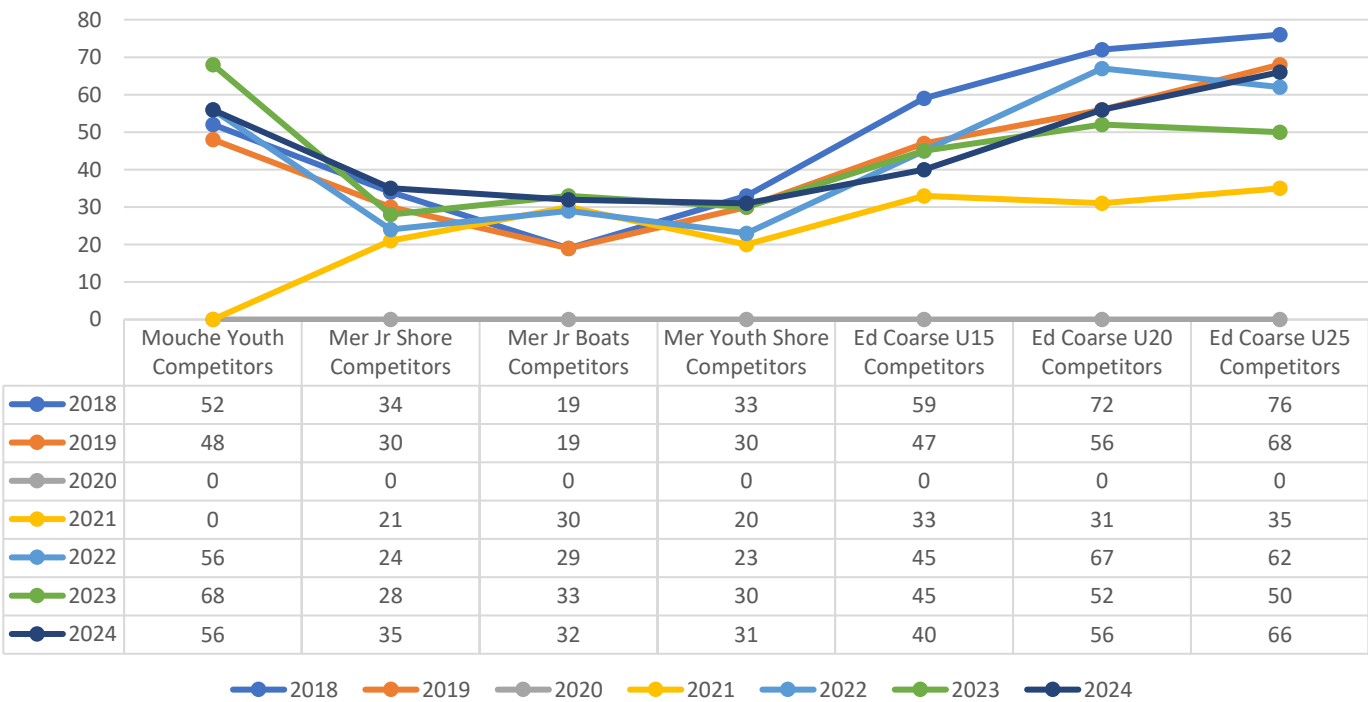
Total CIPS member nations = **79 member nations**

Total of nations that have not attended a Youth Championship since 2018 = 57 nations.

Nations Competing in Youth Championships



Anglers Competing in Youth Championships



Partnering With Other Nations

I am pleased to announce that through the combined effort of Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the United States, the first Tri Nations Bass Championship was held and completed successfully. Zimbabwe National B.A.S.S. Federation hosted the inaugural Tri Nations Cup at Mazvikadei Dam, Zimbabwe 10-12 December 2024. 36 youth anglers, 12 per nation arrived and enjoyed fishing and camaraderie with fellow youth anglers.

Team Standings: **1st South Africa. 2nd place Zimbabwe, 3rd place USA**



To the 3 nations that participated in the Tri Nations Bass Championship in Zimbabwe – THANK YOU.

Nations that are competing in FIPSeD, FIPS Mer, and FIPS Mouche Youth Championships – THANK YOU.

Nations that are not attending youth championship, PLEASE do your best to send a youth team to participate in a Mer, Mouche, or ED Youth Championship.

In Closing

For organizers to include youth into their program, at any level, will show youth the excitement and comradery of sports fishing world championships. For nations to breed their next generation of competitive anglers, participating in youth world championships is important to their development.

Remember:

- Your actions today will result in your team's future success.
- Include youth in your nation's angling efforts.
- Be a good influencer to today's youth.
- And keep asking..." *Who is fishing for your nation in the future?"*

Thank you,



John Knight
CIPS Vice President
Youth Commission

