

52nd ANNUAL SALT LIFE BLUEWATER TOURNAMENT RULES

May 8 - 11, 2024

Northeast Florida Marlin Association Clubhouse – Camachee Cove Yacht Harbor

THIS TOURNAMENT WILL BE FISHED IN COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS, EXCEPT IN THOSE INSTANCES WHEREIN TOURNAMENT RULES ARE MORE RESTRICTIVE.

PART 1 - GENERAL FISHING RULES AND PROCEDURES

CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES:

1. Boats may depart from the St. Augustine or Mayport Inlets.
2. You must be west of the St. Augustine Sea Buoy or Mayport Jetties at 4:30 a.m.

DAYS AND HOURS OF FISHING:

3. FISHING DAYS: All boats must declare their lay day at check-in at the Captains meeting on May 8th. If a boat needs to change it's lay day, it must do so by texting (904) 545-9048 by 9pm the day prior to your scheduled lay day.
4. Lines in at 7:00 a.m. Lines out at 4:00 p.m. each fishing day unless modified by the Tournament Committee because of weather. In case of bad weather, four hours of fishing constitutes a "day" and any one "day" of fishing will constitute a full tournament.
5. No teasers are allowed in the water prior to "Lines In".

EXTENSIONS:

6. Any tournament boat that is hooked up in the last hour of fishing must attempt to notify a committee boat that they are "hooked-up" prior to "Lines Out".
7. If an extension is needed and the fish remains hooked after lines out they shall attempt to notify a committee boat, tournament base on VHF Channel 72 or text (904) 545-9048 as soon as the fish is lost, boated or recorded.
8. Designated Committee Boats will be announced at the Captains Meeting on May 8th.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURES:

9. Boats that have fish to weigh or released billfish must return to St. Augustine Inlet are to come straight to the scales to receive a weigh number and/or releases reviewed.
10. All boats must check-in on VHF Channel 72 when abeam of the St. Augustine Sea Buoy (SA) not later than 6:00pm unless granted an extension.
11. Boats not returning to St Augustine Inlet (only if they have no fish to weigh or no releases) may check in via text to (904) 545-9048.
12. ALL gamefish weighed on Thursday and Friday will become property of the tournament for the Friday night fish fry.

WEATHER:

13. The Tournament Committee has the right to cancel a fishing day due to unsafe weather. If a "Small Craft Advisory" or greater is posted by NOAA on the 20-60 mile forecast at time of checkout, that fishing day is automatically canceled. A "Small Craft Exercise Caution" does not automatically cancel that days fishing, that decision will be made by the Tournament Committee. Anything less than Small Craft Exercise Caution will be considered a fishing day.
14. If a fishing day is terminated after "lines-in" has been announced, the following will apply:
 - a. The cancellation announcement will be made over VHF Ch.72. Boats will cease fishing and proceed to port.
 - b. Any boat that is hooked-up at the time fishing is terminated shall contact a committee boat and will be allowed to continue to fight the fish until it is lost, boated, or released in accordance with the rules entitled "EXTENSIONS".
15. Go or no go decisions will be made by 4am of fishing day. The revised "check-out" and "lines-in" time will be announced at that time.

PART 2 - SPECIFIC FISHING RULES - BILLFISH DIVISION

TACKLE:

1. Teams must comply with all IGFA for Billfish unless otherwise stated.
2. Passing of rods for Billfish will be allowed only once after initial hook up.
3. No wire lines or electric reels permitted for angling.
4. No live bait is permitted for Billfish.
5. Non offset circle hooks only with natural bait for Billfish. J-hooks are permitted with artificial lures.
6. Leader length in all line classes are limited to 30 feet.

SIZE LIMITS:

7. Only boated Blue Marlin will be allowed, they must exceed 105 inches Billfish are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail. Note: This Exceeds Federal Minimum Limits.
8. Blue Marlin brought to the weigh master that are less than the above minimum will not be weighed and are the responsibility of the boat captain.

BILLFISH RELEASE PROCEDURES:

9. To qualify as a "Released" fish and receive points, a photograph or video of the fish must be submitted. The photo(s) must allow the tournament committee to identify the species of the fish and to determine that the fish is "under control" of the crew. "Under control" means that the crew has leader in hand or it is clear that the wind on leader is on the rod.
10. All tournament participants must supply their own digital and/or video camera with a time and date stamp and upload them via the NEFMA Reel Time App. No picture, no date & time on the picture, no points. Failure to comply with this rule will disqualify the fish. The photo(s) must allow the tournament committee to identify the species of billfish. Photos that show a billfish, but are unidentifiable as to the species of billfish, will receive 125 points. Unless otherwise instructed, when the catch is completed, take a picture of the angler who caught the fish. You may be asked, at any time, to take additional photos for verification.
11. A fish may not be removed from the water in its entirety at any time. The head of the fish may be lifted to facilitate its release.

SPECIFIC FISHING RULES - GAMEFISH DIVISION:

12. All fish must be caught on rod and reel (no electric reels). Down riggers, planers, and wire lines are permitted. No line restrictions. Live, dead, and artificial baits are permitted. A fish may be hooked and rod passed to an angler for Gamefish. At that point angler must complete the catch.

MUTILATED FISH:

13. Fish damaged by sharks, other fish, mammals or propellers that remove or penetrate flesh prior to boating or releasing will be considered cause for disqualification. The tournament committee will have sole discretion in the matter, and all decisions shall be final.

PART 3 - SCORING BILLFISH DIVISION - POINT SYSTEM:

1. First Catch Blue Marlin: 450 Points **
2. Blue Marlin: 350 points
3. White Marlin: 125 points
4. Spearfish: 125 points
5. Sailfish: 75 points
6. Swordfish: 75 points

**Only the first Blue Marlin of the tournament is awarded the 450 points.

We will not recognize the first catch for each day of fishing. The first Qualified Catch in the blue marlin category is the only fish that will receive 450 points per tournament.

Points for released billfish are considered awarded at the time of release. In the case of tied points for a billfish category, the boat that accumulates its points first is the winner, i.e., 2 Sailfish released on your

1st day will win over 2 Sailfish released. In the case of tied overall points for the grand prizes, the boat that accumulates its points first is the winner.

GAMEFISH DIVISION - POINT SYSTEM:

Points for Dolphin, Wahoo and Tuna will be awarded as follows; 1 point per pound. You can weigh two of each species per fishing day. The heaviest two fish of each species of the combined fishing days will win.

PART 4 – BREAKDOWN:

1. Any substitute boat must be registered with the tournament director prior to fishing and will be permissible only if the original boat becomes disabled.
2. Any boat taken under tow after "Lines In" is announced will be disqualified for that day's fishing. Boats who return to the dock under their own power may make repairs and continue that day's fishing.
3. The Tournament Committee will assign Assistance Boats if required. However, in the case of an emergency situation requiring rapid response, by the law of the sea, the nearest boat must respond. Do so and contact a committee boat as soon as practicable. The committee boat will then either appoint you as the assistance boat or notify you that one is on the way to relieve you as soon as possible. No designated assistance boat will incur any penalty.

PART 5 - PROTESTS:

1. All protests must be presented to the Tournament Chairman in writing along with \$500 cash prior to the closing of the weigh station on the day of the alleged infraction. The tournament committee will make all decisions, and their decision shall be final. If the protest is upheld, the \$500 will be refunded. If the protest is not upheld, no refund will be made.

PART 6 - DISQUALIFICATION:

1. A boat may be disqualified for a day's fishing or for the entire tournament. If a boat is disqualified for a day's fishing, no fish caught or released on that day shall count for any tournament awards. If a boat is disqualified for the entire tournament, no fish caught or released will be awarded points for any tournament award. Reasons for disqualification include, but are not limited to, unsportsmanlike conduct or violation of tournament rules. The tournament committee will make all decisions, and their decision shall be final. No moneys will be refunded.

PART 7 - POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION:

1. Polygraph Testing: Registered participants agree to submit to a polygraph examination if requested to do so by the Bluewater Tournament Committee. Failure to comply will result in disqualification of the participant and, at the discretion of the Bluewater Tournament Committee, the participants' entire team. Disqualified Participants/Teams or Participant/Teams that fail the polygraph examination forfeit any and all entry money, prizes or prize money, and are refused entry to future Blue Water Tournaments. The decision of the Tournament Committee is final. BY VIRTUE OF SIGNING THE ENTRY FORM, PARTICIPANTS AGREE TO THE FINAL DECISION OF THE POLYGRAPH TEST.

PART 8 - RULES FOR PRIZES - BILLFISH DIVISION:

1. OVERALL (FIRST PLACE, SECOND PLACE): Paid to the top two boats with the most points accumulated for released and weighed-in billfish. The number of places paid may change based on the total number of entries.
2. LADY ANGLER: The lady angler who accumulates the most Points (Boated and Released) will win Top Lady Angler Award plus a trophy. If there is a tie, the lady angler who accumulates her points first wins.
3. JUNIOR ANGLERS: The junior angler that accumulates the most points (Boated and Released) will win Top Junior Angler Award plus a trophy. If there is a tie, the Junior Angler who accumulates his or her points first wins. A junior angler is defined as anyone who is 16 years old or younger.

PART 9 - RULES FOR PRIZES - GAMEFISH DIVISION:

1. OVERALL (FIRST PLACE, SECOND PLACE): Paid to the top two boats with the most points accumulated for Dolphin, Wahoo and Tuna. The number of places paid may change based on the total number of entries.
2. LADY ANGLER: The lady angler who accumulates the most Points will win Top Lady Angler Award plus a trophy. If there is a tie, the lady angler who accumulates her points first wins.
3. JUNIOR ANGLERS: The junior angler that accumulates the most points (Boated and Released) will win Top Junior Angler Award plus a trophy. If there is a tie, the Junior Angler who accumulates his or her points first wins. A junior angler is defined as anyone who is 16 years old or younger.

THESE ARE THE SALT LIFE BLUEWATER TOURNAMENT RULES. ANY LAST MINUTE ADDITIONS OR CHANGES DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE WILL BE FURNISHED, AT THE CAPTAINS' MEETING. All decisions of the Tournament Committee are final and irrevocable. The Tournament Committee will make all Go/No Go weather decisions; HOWEVER, the decision to take the Boat to sea is left to the Captain of the vessel, who is legally responsible for the safety of the vessel and its crew.

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