

CAROLINA BILLFISH CLASSIC



2022 TOURNAMENT RULES & GUIDELINES

Charleston Harbor Marina
Loyd Weston
(843) 568.5230
(843) 284.7065

Acceptance of Rules | Captain's Meeting

It is the sole responsibility of participating boat owners, captains, anglers, crews, and guests to know and abide by these printed rules. Any rule changes or additions at the **mandatory** Captain's Meeting will take precedence over these printed rules.

Tournament participants enter at their own risk. All sponsors, officials, committee members, and all persons connected with the tournament shall be exempt from liability for loss, damage, negligence, harm or injury suffered by participant, entrant sport fisherman, his/her companions, boat captain, vessels and equipment which may occur during the tournament.

Fishing Days | Times | Weather | Territories

Fishing Days

Thursday, June 23–Saturday, June 25

Boats may compete a maximum of two days. If all three days are non-fishable then Sunday will become a fish day. One day of fishing constitutes a tournament. Any day a participating boat leaves the dock will be counted as a fish day unless withdrawal and/or a lay day is reported by radio to a Committee Boat and/or Charleston Harbor Marina by "lines in" that same day.

Lay Days must be reported to Tournament by emailing lweston@charlestonharborresort.com or Amy Dukes at DukesA@dnr.sc.gov. OR you may text Loyd at 843.568.5230 or Amy at 843.209.9053.

Fishing Hours 8 am - 3 pm each day
Weigh Station Hours 5 – 7 pm each day*

* **The Boat must be within the breakwaters of the marina by 7 pm.**

Overnight fishing is not permitted and no lines or teasers in the water prior to fishing hours. No fishing before 8:00 am or after 3:00 pm during tournament fishing days. **Scanning sonars will be allowed; however, they cannot be used prior to lines in at 8:00 am or after lines out at 3:00 pm.** All boats must return to docks at the end of each day's fishing hours.

Late Hook-ups & Arrivals

Boats must return to Charleston Harbor Marina each day to weigh any fish eligible for the tournament. In the event of a blue marlin hook-up prior to the close of fishing, the fish may be fought to completion outside of tournament fishing hours provided the Committee Boat has been notified. Any landed fish must be weighed in during scheduled weigh-in times unless an exception is granted by the tournament rules committee. If a boat has legitimate mechanical or serious medical problems and notifies the Committee Boat or the Marina of its problem, an extension for that boat's weigh-in may be granted except for the last fishing day. All others must meet scale closing times. Weigh master will be as flexible as possible in allowing all eligible fish to be weighed when an exception has been granted; however, no exception will be made on the last fishing day.

Breakdowns

The Governor's Cup Series does not allow the substitution of boats; however, the Carolina Billfish Classic will allow a substitute of a boat provided:

- 1) the originally registered boat has not entered any fishing lines into the water; and
- 2) the Tournament Director is notified immediately upon realizing need for change.

Weather

In consideration for the safety of all participants, the CBC has adopted the use of a posted NOAA Weather Service "Small Craft Advisory" (winds 25 - 33 knots **and/or** seas 6 feet or higher) to cancel that day's fishing. The tournament director or committee boat captain will announce each day's weather conditions by **6:00 am** on **VHF Channel 71**.

The safety of the participating vessel is ultimately the responsibility of the captain.

Territorial Limits

There are no territorial limits set for this tournament. However, tournament boats must return to Charleston Harbor Marina by the prescribed weigh-in hours to have any boated fish considered for competition. Eligible fish must return on the boat on which it was caught unless an exception is granted by the Tournament Rules Committee.

Angling Rules

All fish must be caught in accordance with all state and federal laws, and under IGFA Rules with the exception of passing rod to qualify to earn SC Governor's Cup points/awards. **In addition, every individual (age 16 and above) aboard the vessel must have a valid official S.C Saltwater Recreational Fishing License in their possession.** After a fish strikes, the rod may be passed to one angler one time as soon as possible. All anglers may have the rod passed one time to them. After the rod has been passed, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod/reel/mainline. Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the crew member or is wound to the rod tip, then the angler may have assistance to catch and release or boat the fish. Series points will accrue towards series awards for these fish. Vessels may provide assistance to other vessels for boating fish. **Violations of state or federal law will lead to disqualification of all fish caught on that fishing day, and the day will be counted as an eligible fish day for the tournament.**

Knowingly fishing on a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD - is defined by NOAA as a floating object(s) that is designed and strategically placed to attract pelagic fish) during a series tournament is prohibited and will lead to disqualification. Burden of proof falls upon the protesting vessel, and clear and convincing evidence must be provided by the protesting vessel to the individual Tournament Rules Committee. Disqualification for fishing on a FAD shall be determined by the Tournament Rules Committee.

Youth Anglers

Any angler who has not passed his/her 16th birthday by April 1 of the current year may fish in the Youth Angler division. Any angler in this category is in this category *only* (i.e. An Angler that is female and under sixteen

years of age on April 1 of the current tournament year is a *Youth Angler*, not a Lady Angler.)

It is the responsibility of the angler to identify a catch as eligible for the Youth angler award. This is typically done at the time of weigh-in.

Junior Anglers

Any angler who has not passed his/her 10th birthday by April 1 of the current year may fish in the Junior Angler division. Junior anglers are eligible for all other awards unless they choose not to follow IGFA rules. Those choosing not to follow IGFA rules will only be eligible for Junior Angler awards. Junior Anglers may be assisted as needed to boat a fish for Junior Angler awards only.

Eligible Species | Points | Disqualifications

Eligible Billfish Species in this tournament are [Blue Marlin](#), [White Marlin](#), [Spearfish](#), and [Sailfish](#).

Other eligible species are [Dolphin](#), [Wahoo](#), and [Tuna](#). To remain consistent with the SC Governor's Cup Series, eligible Tuna Species include Yellowfin, Bluefin, Blackfin, and Bigeye.

[Dolphin](#) - Creel limit - 10 per angler per day with a limit of 60 per boat per day, with a minimum size limit of 20 inches fork length

[Yellowfin Tuna](#) - Creel limit - 3 per angler per day with a minimum legal size of 27 inches curved body fork length
See current federal size and creel limits for other Tuna species

[Wahoo](#) - Creel limit - 2 per person per day
Note: Size or creel limits will automatically be changed in SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series tournaments to reflect changes in federal or state laws.

All registered boats and anglers must be in compliance with vessel registration / documentation and with Federal (HMS Permit) and State Regulations (saltwater fishing license) regarding recreational fishing, as well as SC Governor's Cup Tournament Series Fishing Guidelines.

Per HMS compliance guide published April 2019, anglers fishing from Atlantic HMS permitted vessels and participating in Atlantic billfish tournaments must use only non-offset circle hooks when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. A billfish tournament is

defined as any fishing tournament that awards points or prizes for billfishes, even if billfishes are not the main species targeted in the tournament. Billfish tournament anglers may deploy "J"-hooks only if they are fishing with artificial lures.

Catch and Release

White marlin, sailfish, and spearfish are catch and release only. Tagging is optional and not required for points.

Only blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, and spearfish are eligible for billfish catch and release points. Billfish boated for any reason will not qualify for release points. Scoring for billfish caught and released in good condition is as follows:

Blue Marlin	600 pts	*If Landed, see below under <i>Boating Billfish</i>
White Marlin	300 pts	Release Only
Spearfish	300 pts	Release Only
Sailfish	200 pts	Release Only

A billfish is considered caught and points awarded when **all** the following have occurred:

- 1) the leader is grasped by the crew or the leader is wound to the rod tip (a leader may be no longer than 30 feet);
- 2) the billfish is positively identified through digital photography/videography (if species cannot be determined yet it is identified as a billfish, 200 points will be awarded); and
- 3) the fish is released in a healthy condition and the fish is no longer attached to the boat/line. Boats should attempt to remove the hook or to sever the leader as close as possible to the hook.

Federal regulation dictates: 635.21 (a) All Atlantic HMS fishing gears. (1) An Atlantic HMS harvested from its management unit that is not retained must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water. (2) If a billfish is caught by a hook and not retained, the fish must be released by cutting the line near the hook or by using a dehooking device, in either case without removing the fish from the water.

Boating Billfish

Registered anglers will have the option of boating only Blue Marlin over the course of the event, providing the fish meets or exceeds the prescribed tournament minimum length requirement (105").

Note: 105 inches exceeds the federally

mandated minimum size limit. Should the federal size limit be increased, the minimum size for blue marlin eligible for weighing in S.C. Governor's Cup Series tournaments will be increased automatically to exceed the new minimum size by two (2) inches if required.

Boats earn One Point per Pound and fraction of a pound for their SINGLE Heaviest Blue Marlin weighed. A minimum size has been set for Blue Marlin (105" – measured in a curved line along the body from the fork of the tail to the tip of the lower jaw).

A billfish may not be brought into the boat unless it is to be brought to the dock for weigh-in. Any boated Blue Marlin must be weighed in at Charleston Harbor Marina.

A penalty of 600 points will be assessed against a boat for each blue marlin brought to the dock not meeting minimum SC Governor's Cup Series size requirements.

A penalty of 600 points will be assessed against a boat for each billfish if it is determined that the fish was boated and subsequently released.

Any billfish gaffed or otherwise injured in an attempt to boat the fish will not qualify for catch and release points.

Additionally, if the gaff crosses the vertical plane of the boat in an attempt to land a blue marlin yet it is unsuccessful, the boat will not qualify for catch and release points.

All landed fish are to be iced or refrigerated until such time as the edible tissue can be processed and the carcass disposed of. Boats landing Blue Marlin will have a maximum of three hours to complete this task after the fish is released by Series staff or Tournament officials.

Boats found guilty of wanton waste of fish taken will be disqualified from earning points in tournament.

Points

Prizes will be awarded to the boat accumulating the most points during the competition.

Boat points are awarded at the time of release or landing (boated). Ties between points are broken by the time of release/landing. The date of the

release/landing is based on the boat's fishing day (Day 1 or Day 2).

Prizes will be awarded for the heaviest eligible meat fish species measured to the nearest tenth of a pound.

Reporting Billfish

A tournament committee boat must be notified on the radio immediately after an angler hooks up and releases or boats a billfish. Release and boated times will serve as a tie-breaker. The Tournament Committee Boat will acknowledge the report over the airways and keep a log of all hook-ups, losses, releases, and boated fish. Boats which cannot make radio contact with the Committee Boat for any reason should contact another boat for a relay. Radio failure will not disqualify a participant. (Release time will serve as a tie breaker).

Radio Channels

VHF channel 71 shall be the primary radio channel during this tournament. In addition, an alternate VHF channel will be chosen at the captain's meeting. The primary channel is to be reserved for all official tournament announcements and angler reports of hookups and releases and boated fish meeting minimum requirements. A SSB Channel will be chosen at the Captain's Meeting.

Affidavits & Photographs

For a vessel to qualify any billfish for points, every person aboard the vessel who is 18 years of age or older, must sign an affidavit swearing that all rules and regulations were observed in reference to the described fish. Failure of any person to sign the affidavit, for any reason, disqualifies that fish. To sign an affidavit under false pretenses is an act of fraud punishable under state law.

All affidavits and photos must be submitted and verified to DNR Staff no later than one hour after scales close on the day the fish was caught, except when a medical emergency involving the boat's crew prohibits completion of the form or when a mechanically disabled boat cannot return within the prescribed weigh-in period. In these instances, the forms must be completed and returned within three days of the catch.

A designated DNR check station may be located at the host marina to receive/qualify affidavits and photos/videos. If fishing out of

an alternate marina (other than the host marina), affidavits and photos/videos must be delivered to the DNR check station, or may be submitted via email to Amy Dukes DukesA@dnr.sc.gov. **No call-ins or text messages will be accepted.**

All released billfish must be clearly digitally photographed or videoed (preferable photo would include a visible dorsal fin) by each vessel using a digital/video camera provided by the vessel. The image must include a time and date stamp that corresponds to the time of release recorded by the tournament designated committee boats. Photos/videos must be provided on a removable storage device, and will be used to confirm species identification, release information, and will be used to resolve conflicts or formal protests.

Each boat is required to keep their billfish photography available to the tournament and DNR for up to ten days after the conclusion of the event.

Judging | Protests

Official Tournament Judges

The official tournament judges are the Tournament Rules Committee. Violation of the tournament rules will subject the boat and angler to disqualification from the entire tournament without refund.

Unsportsman-like conduct during the tournament or at any function will be grounds for immediate disqualification.

Protests

Only a registered boat's owner or captain may protest any fish entered in the tournament. All protests must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Director on the day of the protested catch no later than one hour after scales close. The Tournament Director will convene the official Tournament Rules Committee to consider the protest. The ruling of this Committee is final. All protests must be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee of \$1,000. The individual(s) who submit any protest must provide indisputable evidence to prove the infraction.