TOURNAMENT RULES
Nova Southeastern University Fort Lauderdale Billfish Tournament
February 27-March 1, 2014

Tournament Rules

1. General Rules: International Game Fish Association (IGFA) Rules shall apply to the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Fort Lauderdale Billfish Tournament (the Tournament), except where they are inconsistent with the rules that follow, in which case these Tournament rules shall apply. Anglers, crews, and captains are expected to be familiar with the IGFA Rules. To count for points, a registered angler must hook, fight, and bring the fish to the boat unaided by any other person. No one other than the angler may touch the rod prior to the fish counting as a release or capture.

Junior and Pee-Wee Divisions: Any participant who is between their 11th and 17th birthday at the start of the tournament is eligible to compete in the Junior Division. Any participant who has not reached their 11th birthday by at the start of the tournament is eligible to compete in the Pee-Wee Division. Any participant competing within the Junior or Pee-Wee Divisions must remain within their respective division for the length of the tournament. The tackle requirements for both divisions remain the same as for the adult line class and billfish categories. Junior anglers may not be assisted and Junior angler points will count towards overall boat points and releases. Pee Wee anglers may be assisted, but Pee Wee angler points only count towards Pee Wee Awards.

All registered anglers and vessels must comply with all applicable federal and Florida laws regarding fishing licenses, permits, size limits, bag limits, etc. Infractions of any of these rules will result in disqualification. The NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Angling Permit can be purchased at http://www.nmfspermits.com or by phone at 888-872-8862. In accordance with federal fisheries regulations, the results of the Tournament will be reported directly to NMFS; registered boats should therefore not report their catches during the Tournament. A photocopy of the NMFS HMS Angling Permit shall be required from each boat to register for the Tournament. All anglers must also have a valid Florida saltwater fishing license that can be obtained at http://www.myfwc.com.

The Tournament committee will appoint an official Weighmaster, who will oversee all activities at the central weigh-in location. The weigh-in location will be at Bahia Mar Marina. The Weighmaster’s decision on individual fish weights and species identifications is final.

The fishing limits of the Tournament shall be the territorial waters of the United States, but no more than 25 miles offshore. Registered anglers may fish as far north or south as they wish, but any vessel with fish to be weighed in must be checked into Port Everglades Inlet by 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 1, 2014 in accordance with Rule 7. Vessels with no fish to weigh-in, but billfish release cards to turn in, must visually check in to Hillsboro Inlet or Port Everglades Inlet by 4:00 pm on Saturday, March 1, 2014. There will be a tournament official at the Hillsboro Inlet Park finger
docks that will take delivery of both the release cards and the required digital still or video of the actual billfish release. If visually checking into Port Everglades with release cards, please proceed to weigh-in dock to deliver the release cards and the digital still or video directly to the tournament Weighmaster by 4:30 on Saturday, March 1, 2014. Boats that are fighting a billfish after the “lines out” time must still adhere to the 4:00 pm check-in rule if they also have non-billfish to weigh for points.

2. Communications: The official VHF channel for the Tournament shall be channel 78. An alternate channel will be 74. The primary VHF channel shall be reserved for official Tournament announcements and participant reports of catches and releases to the Committee Boat. The alternate channel should be used for all other communications between Tournament participants. The Weighmaster will also provide a cell phone number at the Captain’s Meeting that can be used if needed. Radio relays by other tournament boats are highly encouraged if radio conditions deteriorate.

3. Bait and Tackle:
   
   a. Number of Anglers and Lines—Only registered anglers may fish in the Tournament, with a maximum of six anglers per boat. Unregistered anglers may not substitute for registered anglers during the Tournament. Each boat may fish up to six lines in the water at any one time, regardless of the number of registered anglers on board.

   b. Line Strength and Leaders—Lines shall not exceed 80-lb. test strength. Leaders (excluding double lines) shall not exceed fifteen feet in length.

   c. Hooks—Per NOAA regulations for all billfish tournaments, boats must use only non-offset circle hooks when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations; a list of approved circle hook models is included below. Tournament anglers may only deploy “J”-hooks with the use of artificial lures. Modifying these circle hooks in any manner, or using a non-approved circle hook model, may be grounds for disqualification. A photo of the hook/lure/bait combination used must be taken following the release of any billfish.

   Approved models are: Mustad Ultra Point Demon Circle Fine Wire 39951R, Mustad Ultra Point Demon Circle Fine Wire 39951BLN, Mustad Ultra Point Demon Circle Fine Wire 39954BLN, Gamakatsu 2214, Gamakatsu 2213, Eagle Claw Lazer Sharp L2004ELF, Precision Saltwater Billfish P170, Diaichi D84Z, and Diaichi 84Z.

   d. Bait—Live bait, dead bait, and lures are permitted. Boats must supply their own bait and/or lures. Registered anglers and crew may fish for live bait at any time during the lines-in period of the Tournament. Live chumming is prohibited.

4. Fishing Hours: Check out will be from 6:00-7:00 a.m. through Port Everglades Inlet or Hillsborough Inlet; there is no Bimini Start. However, the official fishing times for the Tournament will be from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Vessels must pass back through Port
Everglades Inlet by 4:00 p.m. if they have fish to weigh-in. Vessels with no fish to weigh in, but billfish release cards to turn in, must visually check in to either Hillsboro Inlet or Port Everglades Inlet by 4:00 pm on Saturday, March 1, 2014. There will be a tournament official on the Hillsboro Inlet Park finger docks that will take delivery of release cards and digital still or video. If visually checking into Port Everglades with release cards, please proceed to weigh in dock to deliver the release cards and the digital still or video to the Weighmaster at the weigh station by 4:30 pm. Vessels must display their individual vessel number at all times during the Tournament.

No baits, teasers, or chumming with whole or cut baits are allowed in the water before the official start of the fishing day. Official announcements of “lines in the water” for the beginning of the fishing day and “lines out of the water” for the end of the fishing day will be issued on the official Tournament VHF channel 78.

All registered anglers on any boat with lines in the water other than during the official times will be disqualified from the Tournament, with the exception of an angler fighting a billfish that has been reported and registered with the Committee Boat prior to the “lines out” time.

5. Billfish Reporting and Release Rules: All billfish fishing in the Tournament will be catch-and-release only. Any vessel retaining a billfish will be disqualified from the Tournament.

a. Reporting—As soon as possible after hooking a billfish, the captain will notify the Committee Boat and report both the species and name of the angler. All hookups must be acknowledged by the Committee Boat to be eligible for Tournament points. The Committee Boat will provide you with a release number. If you cannot communicate with the Committee Boat by radio on the primary channel, ask another boat to relay the information for you. Alternatively, call the Weighmaster directly with the cell phone number to be provided at the Captains meeting.

b. Release—To be eligible for release points, the captain must obtain an official release number from the Committee Boat after the hookup. In accordance with IGFA Rules, and notwithstanding the release rules detailed below, a billfish shall count as a release if the swivel attaching the leader to the line touches the tip of the rod or a member of the crew touches the leader.

All teams must provide their own digital still or video camera to verify releases. The camera must show the correct digital still or video frame. To score an official release, an identifiable photo must be taken of the fish showing the number card and date-time stamp. After the photo is taken, the official time, species, control number, and angler name must be written on each catch report affidavit, which will then be signed by the registered angler and the boat captain. At the end of the day’s fishing, the camera, catch report affidavit, and all photo or video footage of the fish must be brought to the official scoring
station by 4:30 p.m. for verification of the official release points. Failure to do so
will result in disqualification of the catch and no points will be awarded.

An eligible release also requires that the billfish remains in the water at all times,
although the head may be brought out of the water to facilitate removal of the
hook prior to release. Any billfish that is removed from the water for display
purposes or brought into the boat for any reason will be disqualified from the
Tournament.

6. Honor System and Official Protests: The Tournament will be conducted on the Honor
System. However, protest forms will be available in case of complaints. All protest
forms must be signed by the team captain and filed with the Weigh master by 5:00 p.m.
on Saturday, March 1, 2014. All protests will be considered by the Tournament
Committee, whose decisions are final.

7. Weigh-in and Awards: Tournament awards will be presented in the Individual Angler
and Team categories. Additional awards will be given to the first and second teams with
the highest number of points and for the female angler with the highest number of points.

Billfish Division:
Highest Points First Place Team
Highest Points Second Place Team
Highest Point Individual Male Angler Billfish Division
Highest Point Individual Female Angler Billfish Division
Highest Point Individual Junior Angler Billfish Division
Highest Point Individual Pee-Wee Angler Billfish

Fun Fish:
Top Boat – Fun Fish Division
Largest Individual Fun Fish Junior Angler
Second Largest Individual Fun Fish Junior Angler
Largest Individual Fun Fish Pee-Wee Angler
Second Largest Individual Fun Fish Pee-Wee Angler
Largest Individual Dolphin, King Mackerel, Wahoo, Blackfin Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna, and
Cobia

All boats with fish to be weighed must proceed directly to the weigh station at the end of
the fishing day. The scales will open at 2:00 p.m. Registered boats with fish to be
weighed must be checked in through Port Everglades Inlet by 4:00 p.m. on Saturday for
the fish to count towards the Tournament awards. Registered boats with only billfish
release cards and digital still or video to turn in can also elect to clear Hillsboro Inlet by
4:00 pm on Saturday, March 1, 2014. Vessels choosing this option must turn both the
release cards and the digital still or video to the Tournament representative that will be at
the Hillsboro Inlet Park finger docks. Fish to be weighed must be delivered to the weigh
station at Bahia Mar Marina by the capturing boat.
In case of a tie involving two or more boats in the tournament after the day of fishing, the boat with the highest number of points in the billfish category will be the winner. If two or more of the tied boats in the Tournament have the same score within the billfish category, then the boat with earliest catch time wins.

a. Billfish—Each eligible billfish in the Tournament must be registered with the Committee Boat as described above. Points will be awarded for the successful release of each fish by species.
   i. Blue marlin: 400 points
   ii. White marlin and longbill or roundscale spearfish: 200 points
   iii. Sailfish: 100 points

b. Individual Bluewater Fun Fish—One point per pound will be awarded to any registered boat landing the following species (10-pound minimum per fish, with each fish weighed to the nearest half pound): cobia, dolphin (mahi), king mackerel (kingfish), wahoo, blackfin tuna, and yellowfin tuna. Fun Fish should be called in to the committee boat when boated with name of angler and species. In case of a tie, the earliest boated fish will be the winner.
   i. Any mutilated fish will not be counted in the Tournament scoring. “Mutilation” does not include the normal wear-and-tear involved in captures with high-speed trolling or gaffing. Any fish that has been tampered with to increase the weight shall be disqualified and the vessel removed from the tournament.
   ii. Individual tail tags will be required by the Weighmaster to be attached to each weighed fish, which must be signed by the captain and labeled with the boat name. Tail tags and zip-ties will be provided to all vessels at the Captains Meeting.
   iii. No more than four individual fish per species per boat will be weighed in to be counted towards the Tournament award point totals.
   iv. A maximum of 10 fish per boat can be weighed in. All boats must adhere to current Florida recreational bag limits. To view current bag limits for each species, please visit [http://www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com).

8. Weather: The Tournament Committee may cancel any tournament day if, in its best judgment, unsafe conditions exist at sea for the average registered boat. Notice of cancellation for the day will be broadcast on the Tournament VHF channel 78 at 6:30 am. However, the decision of the Tournament to allow fishing for the day shall not be interpreted as any assurance that the conditions are safe for any registered boat or angler. Registered participants must at all times make their own judgments regarding personal safety based on their boat, experience, seamanship skills, and any other relevant factors.

9. Liability: It is understood that all participants enter the Tournament at their own risk and that they, individually and collectively, thereby assume all risks which may be involved in participating, particularly those hazards due to weather or at-sea conditions. Participants fully understand that they may, at any time, elect not to continue
participating when they deem the hazards too great. The Tournament Committee, sponsors, organizers, and anyone else directly connected with the Tournament shall be exempt and is hereby released from any liability for loss, damage, negligence, harm, or injury suffered by any participant, entrant, sports angler, their companions, boat captains, crew members, vessels, and equipment which may occur during the tournament.

10. Registration fees will not be refunded for any reason.

By your presence at this event, you are granting your permission to use your name and any and all photographs/video taken of you, your family, or your boat for the promotional use of the Tournament without compensation or restriction.


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NSU Oceanographic Center