

2024 NSU SCHOLARSHIP FISHING TOURNAMENT RULES

*Halmos College of Arts & Sciences and the Guy Harvey Oceanographic Research Center,
Nova Southeastern University*

Captain's Kick-Off – Thursday, April 18, 2024

Fishing Tournament and Awards Dinner - Saturday, April 20, 2024

1. Tournament Rules:

A. General Rules: International Game Fish Association (IGFA) Rules shall apply to the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Scholarship Fishing 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 vessel 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.

B. Licensing: All registered anglers and vessels must comply with all applicable U.S. federal and Florida laws regarding fishing licenses, permits, size limits, bag limits, etc. Infractions of any of these rules will result in disqualification. All anglers participating in the Tournament must also have a valid Florida saltwater fishing license that can be obtained at <http://www.myfwc.com>.

C. Weighmaster: 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 the Bahia Mar resort (**Seawall dockage available during weigh-in and Awards Party. Slips at marina available to be reserved**). The Weighmaster's decision on individual fish weights and species identifications is final.

2. Communications:

The official VHF channel for the Tournament shall be **channel 78**; the 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 cellphone number at the Captain's Meeting that can be used if needed. Radio (or cellphone) relays by other tournament vessels are highly encouraged if radio conditions deteriorate.

3. Tournament Rules for both divisions (billfish and fun fish):

a. Permit: 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 vessels should therefore not independently report their catches that may occur during the Tournament. A photocopy of the NMFS HMS Angling Permit shall be required from each vessel to register for the Tournament.

b. Bait and tackle rules:

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

ii. Line Strength and Leaders – Lines shall not exceed 80-lb. test strength. Leaders (excluding double lines) shall not exceed 15 feet in length.

iii. Hooks – Per NOAA regulations for all billfish tournaments, vessels 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 hook 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 PI70, Diaichi D84Z, and Diaichi 84Z.

iv. Bait – Live bait, dead bait, and lures are permitted. Vessels 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.

c. *Fishing hours:* There is no Bimini Start, and **vessels may leave from any harbor. Vessels will call out to the Committee Boat via the official Tournament VHF channel 78 or Weighmaster's cellphone prior to starting fishing activities.** The official fishing times for the Tournament will be from **7:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., April 20, 2024.** Vessels with fun fish to weigh in, and/or billfish releases to report, must bring their fish and/or their billfish release cards to a Tournament official at the weigh-in at the Bahia Mar Marina **by 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024. Release cards and/or fish to be weighed can be brought in by boat or car (dock space is limited).** Vessels that are fighting a billfish after the "lines out" time must still adhere to the 4:00 p.m. check-in rule if they also have non-billfish fish to weigh for points.

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 vessel with lines in the water other than during the official times will be disqualified from the Tournament, except for an angler fighting a billfish that has been reported and registered with the Committee Boat prior to the "lines out" time.

d. *Boundaries:* The fishing limits of the Tournament shall be the territorial waters of the United States, but no more than 25 nautical 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 in by 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024, in accordance with Rule 7.

5. 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 Weighmaster by 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024. All protests will be considered by the Tournament Committee, whose decisions are final.

6. Weather:

The Tournament Committee may cancel the Tournament if, in its best judgment, unsafe conditions exist at sea for the average registered boat. Notice of cancellation will be broadcast on the Tournament VHF channel 78 at 6:30 AM on Saturday, April 20, 2024. However, the decision of the Tournament to allow fishing shall not be interpreted as any assurance that the conditions are safe for any registered boat or angler. Registered participants must make their own judgments regarding personal safety based on their boat, experience, seamanship skills, and any other relevant factors.

7. 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:

Registration fees will not be refunded for any reason.

11. Promotional Release:

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

BILLFISH DIVISION RULES:

1. 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 – Immediately **after releasing** a billfish, the captain will notify the Committee Boat and report both the species and name of the angler. **The Committee Boat must acknowledge all hookups to be eligible for 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 vessel to relay the information for you. Alternatively, vessels can call the Weighmaster directly with the cell phone number to be provided at the Captain's Meeting.**

b. Release - To be eligible for release points, the captain must obtain an official release number from the Committee Boat after the release. 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.

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 the following values for each species:

- Blue marlin: 400 points
- White marlin and longbill or roundscale spearfish: 200 points
- Sailfish: 100 points

In case of a tie involving two or more vessels in the Tournament after the day of fishing, the vessel with the highest number of points in the billfish category will be the winner. **If two or more of the tied vessels in the Tournament have the same score within the billfish category, then the vessel with the earliest catch time wins (so be sure to call your release in immediately after the release).**

To score an official release, the official time, species, control number, and angler name must be written on each release catch card, which will then be signed by all registered anglers on the boat, as well as the vessel's captain and mate. At the end of the day's fishing, the release catch card must be brought to the official scoring station **at the Bahia Mar Marina 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. **The release catch cards can be brought in by boat or car (dock space is limited).**

An eligible release also requires that the billfish always remains in the water, 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 vessel for any reason will be disqualified from the Tournament.

2. Awards:

Billfish Division awards will be presented in the Individual Angler and Team categories. Additional awards will be given to the first and second place teams with the highest number of points and for the top individual angler with the highest number of points. In the context of awards for individual fish, "top" means "heaviest weight" and "tuna" means solely either yellowfin or blackfin tuna. "Top" for the boat division means most weight.

Billfish Division Awards:

- Highest Points First Place Team
- Highest Points Second Place Team
- Highest Point Individual Angler Billfish Division

FUN FISH DIVISION RULES:

1. Weigh-in:

All vessels with fish to be weighed must proceed directly to the weigh station at the end of the fishing day at the Bahia Mar Marina. The scales will open at 3:00 p.m. Registered vessels with fish to be weighed must be checked in at Bahia Mar resort **(Seawall dockage available during weigh-in and Awards Party. Slips at marina available to be reserved)** by 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024 for the fish to count towards the awards. **Fish to be weighed can be brought to the weigh-in by boat or car.**

2. Individual Fun Fish:

One point per pound will be awarded to any registered vessel landing the following species (10-pound minimum per fish, with each fish weighed to the nearest half pound): cobia, dolphin, king mackerel, wahoo, tuna. In the event of an exact tie, the boat that was first to weigh in their fish will be the winner.

Any mutilated fun 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 fun fish that has been tampered with to increase the weight shall be disqualified and the vessel removed from the Tournament.

No more than **four individual fun fish per species per vessel** can be weighed in to be counted towards the Tournament award point totals. A **maximum of 20 fish per vessel** can be weighed in. All vessels must adhere to current Florida recreational fishing bag limits. To view current bag limits for each species, please visit <http://www.myFWC.com>.

Junior and Pee-Wee Divisions: Any participant who is between their 11th and 17th birthday at the start of the Tournament on Saturday, April 20, 2024 is eligible to compete in the Junior Division. Any participant who has **not** reached their 11th birthday 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 Junior or Pee-Wee Divisions remain the same as for the adult line class and categories. Junior anglers may not be assisted, and Junior angler points will count towards overall vessel weigh-in points. Pee-Wee anglers may be assisted, but Pee-Wee angler points **only** count towards Pee-Wee awards.

Fun Fish Division Awards:

Top Fun Fish Boat
Top Fun Fish Angler
Top Fun Fish Junior Angler
Top Fun Fish Pee-Wee Angler
Top Dolphin
Top Wahoo
Top Tuna
Top Kingfish
Top Cobia

Added Value Entry Levels:

After a boat is registered in the tournament, they will have the option to customize their tournament experience by entering their boat into **ONE OR BOTH** competitions called **Added Value Entry Levels**.

There are a **minimum number of two boats** to enter a particular Added Value Entry Level Category. Billfish releases must be called in.

ADDED VALUE ENTRY LEVEL CLASSIFICATIONS:

- BILLFISH ADDED VALUE CLASS \$2,500/Boat
First and Second Place by release points
Added Value Award total Pool = 85% of entrance fees; 15% of entrance fees go to NSU Scholarships
- FUNFISH ADDED VALUE CLASS \$1,500/Boat

Heaviest weight by each of Dolphin, Kingfish, Wahoo, Cobia, and Tuna

Added Value Award total Pool = 85% of entrance fees; 15% of entrance fees go to NSU Scholarships

EXPLANATION OF ADDED VALUE RULES AND AWARD WINNERS:

Awards:

Billfish Class: Winners are awarded by release points as specified in the Fishing Tournament Rules. Added Value Awards for Billfish are: Top total points boat receives 60% of Pool, 2nd total points boat receives 40% of Pool. If no 2nd place is possible, that pool amount is placed into the total billfish pool. If no billfish are caught, billfish Added Value entrants may request a refund (85% of their fee) or donate it to the scholarship fund.

Each eligible billfish in the Tournament must be registered with the Committee Boat as described in the Rules. Points will be awarded for the successful release of each billfish by the following values for each species:

- Blue marlin: 400 points
- White marlin and longbill or roundscale spearfish: 200 points
- Sailfish: 100 points

In case of a tie involving two or more vessels in the Tournament after the day of fishing, the vessel with the highest number of points in the billfish category will be the winner. **If two or more of the tied vessels in the Tournament have the same score within the billfish category, then the vessel with the earliest catch time wins (so be sure to call your release in immediately after the release).**

Funfish Class: Winners are awarded for each indicated Species by heaviest catch. There is a maximum of 4 fish per species that can be entered. Each fish must be 10 lbs minimum as specified in the Rules. Added Value Species Awards are for the heaviest of each of the 5 species (Dolphin, Kingfish, Wahoo, Cobia, Tuna). Each species is assigned 20% of the Funfish pool. If no fish of a particular species are caught, the pools for each other Funfish species are increased proportionately. Please note that "Tuna" consists of only of blackfin or yellowfin (bonita does not count).

Added Value Entrance Cut Off: No additional entrants will be allowed after the Captain's Meeting at the event party on April 18th. Prior to this, entrants may be made online or in person by cash or credit card.

Awards Payout: Award Payout is made to Winners by NSU check to be sent soon after the Fishing Tournament.

NSU Scholarship Fishing Tournament rules history: 10 August 2007; as amended in September 2009, October 2011, January 2013, December 2013, January 2015, November 2017, November 2018, February 2022, and April 2022, May 10, 2022, and February 15, 2024 for the current version.

David Kerstetter, Weighmaster

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