



## ACCEPTANCE OF RULES

### CAPTAINS 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 Captains 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

FRIDAY, MAY 19TH - SATURDAY, MAY 20TH

This is a “**BEST OUT OF TWO DAYS**” Event. Boats are permitted to fish both days of this event. (Tournament weather regulations still apply) When turning in the day two affidavits and photographs/videos you must formally indicate which ONE of the boats eligible fish days are to be **WITHDRAWN** from the tournament. (You have until 7:00 PM to do so)

**\*FISHING HOURS 8 AM - 3 PM EACH DAY\***

**\*WEIGH STATION HOURS @ TOLERS COVE MARINA 5-7 PM EACH DAY\***

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. No sonar can be deployed before lines in at 8:00 am. All boats must return to docks at the end of each day's fishing hours.

## LATE HOOK-UPS & ARRIVALS

Boats must return to Toler's Cove Marina each day to weigh any fish eligible for the tournament. To keep down boat traffic there will be a provided skiff to pick up the angler and their fish from the water way and transport them to the weigh-in. If a boat has legitimate, mechanical or serious medical problems and notifies the Committee boat 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.

## WEATHER

In consideration for the safety of all participants, the **HMV Lowcountry Cup** 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 Toler's Cove Marina by the designated weigh-in hours. Eligible Fish must return on the boat which it was caught in or by the provided skiff accompanied by the angler.

## ANGLING RULES

All fish must be caught in accordance with all state and federal laws, and under IGFA Rules.

**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. **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 (2023) 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 as of 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. Tournament award will be calculated in release points and a point per pound for their largest meat fish. T-W-T Youth Billfish Release solely calculated on billfish release points.

## 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 54 per boat per day, with a minimum size limit of 20 inches fork length

*\*Minimum weight of 20lbs for a Dolphin to qualify for tournament or TWT\*\* This minimum weight applies to all dolphin categories except for Youth Angler\*\**

[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 follow 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.

## CATCH RELEASE

Blue Marlin, White Marlin, Sailfish, and spearfish are catch and release only. Tagging is optional and not required for points. Scoring for billfish caught and released is as follows:

BLUE MARLIN	600 pts	Release Only
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.

## **POINTS**

Prizes will be awarded to the boat accumulating the most points during the competition. Boat points are awarded at the time of release. Ties between points are broken by the time of release. The date of the release is based on the boat's fishing day.

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 a billfish. Release 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, and released 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 tiebreaker.)

## **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 of fish meeting minimum requirements. A SSB Channel will be chosen at the Captain's Meeting.

## **AFFIDAVITS & PHOTOGRAPHS**

A picture of Affidavits, Photos/ Videos must be uploaded to the tournament app located in the reel time app or be dropped off at the DNR Check Station located at the weigh-in.

Tournament will provide release affidavits with your tournament package. For each release an affidavit needs to be filled out and signed by the fishing crew. The affidavits need to be dropped off at the DNR check station or uploaded to the Reel Time App by 7:00 PM of each fishing day.

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 the closing of the weigh scales 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 will 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 uploaded to the Reel Time App.

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 uploaded to reel time app 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. Un-sportsman-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.

## **HMY YACHT SALES**

**Tia Mazziotta, Events Director | 7 Lockwood Drive | Charleston, SC 29401 Cell: 843-998-1637 | [Tmazziotta@hmy.com](mailto:Tmazziotta@hmy.com)**