



## 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

#### THURSDAY, JULY 4TH - SATURDAY, JULY 6TH

Boats may fish all three eligible days of the tournament. Each day, the captains must turn in their daily catch report and declare which two days they are counting towards the tournament by 7pm on Saturday July 6th. One day constitutes a tournament. However, if all three days are non-fishable then Sunday will become a fish day.

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

**\*WEIGH STATION HOURS @ TOLERS COVE MARINA\***

**BM Weigh-In Opens @ 10 AM | 5-7PM Weigh-In**

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

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. Boats must return to Toler's Cove Marina each day to weigh any fish eligible for the tournament. 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 **HMY 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 South Carolina and federal laws, and under IGFA Rules with the exception of passing rod to qualify to earn GCBS 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 the disqualification of any fish caught on any fishing day where the violation would apply. **Any day when the violation would apply will be counted as an eligible fishing day for the tournament(s) and the GCBS. 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 (2024) 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 or on the billfish release/landed affidavit.

## 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 Billfishing 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

[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 Billfishing Series Fishing Guidelines.

## CATCH RELEASE

Blue Marlin can be landed or released. Scoring for blue marlin landed is one point per pound and fraction of a pound. White Marlin, Spearfish and Sailfish 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
WHITE MARLIN	300 pts
SPEARFISH	300 pts
SAILFISH	200 pts

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 to species through digital photography/videography (if species cannot be determined yet it is identified as a billfish, 200 points will be awarded)
- 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 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. Ties will be based on the time the fish is weighed.

## **REPORTING BILLFISH**

A tournament committee boat must be notified on the radio immediately after an angler hooks up and releases a billfish. 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**

Affidavits must be completed the day the catch and release or landing occurs, 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 ten (10) days of the catch and release. The boats fishing, including boats out of other marinas or ports, must hand-deliver to tournament headquarters or email to Series staff ([GovCup@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:GovCup@dnr.sc.gov)) the completed official GCBS Released/Tagged and Released Billfish Affidavit, digital billfish release images, and required licenses and permits prior to the close of the weighing scales on the day of catch with the exception as noted above.

The Tournament will provide release affidavits with your Tournament packet that you will receive at the Captain's Meeting. A picture of Affidavits, Photos/ Videos must be uploaded to the Tournament in the reel time app or dropped off at the DNR Check Station at the weigh-in.

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 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.

## **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 submits any protest must provide indisputable evidence to prove the infraction.