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**BOHICKET MARINA
INVITATIONAL
BILLFISH TOURNAMENT
2017**

TOURNAMENT RULES & GUIDELINES

GENERAL RULES

1. Applicable Rules and Laws: IGFA rules shall apply to this tournament and are made a part of these rules and guidelines with the exception of passing the rod. Participants are requested to review these International Angling Rules prior to the start of fishing. In addition, all federal and South Carolina Game Laws shall apply except where noted.

2. Fishing Days: The tournament fishing days are Thursday, May 11 through Saturday, May 13. Boats may compete a maximum of two out of three days. If all three days are non-fishable then Sunday will become a fish day. One day of fishing constitutes a tournament. Any day that a participating boat leaves the dock will be counted as a fish day unless withdrawal is reported by radio to a Committee Boat and/or Bohicket Marina by "lines in" that same day. Fishing hours are 8 am - 3 pm each day (GPS Time). 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.

All fish must arrive in Bohicket Marina aboard the boat on which they were caught, unless special permission is granted by a committee boat or a Rules Committee member.

Late Hook-ups & Arrivals: Boats must return to Bohicket Marina each day to weigh any fish eligible for the tournament. In the event of a billfish 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 a tournament official. 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.

3. Weather: It is the Captain's discretion to fish on any given day, however, if Small Craft Advisories are posted on local NOAA Weather Radio at 6:00 am, that day will not be a tournament fishing day. The tournament director or rules committee member will announce each day's weather conditions at 6:00 am on VHF Channel 71. *In consideration for the safety of all participants, all Series tournaments have 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. Tournaments must set a specific time that can be no later than 6:00 am when a "Small Craft Advisory" will cancel that day's fishing. The safety of the participating vessel is ultimately the responsibility of the Captain.*

4. Eligible Species: The eligible billfish species in this tournament are Sailfish, White Marlin, and Blue Marlin. Other eligible species are Dolphin, Wahoo, and Tuna. Tuna are only eligible if caught aboard a boat which has a current Federal Tuna Permit.

5. 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.

6. Territorial Limits: There are no territorial limits set for this tournament. However, tournament boats must return to Bohicket Marina by the prescribed weigh-in hour to have any boated fish considered for competition. Eligible fish must return on the boat on which it was caught unless there is a hardship circumstance and that boat has received prior approval from a committee boat or Tournament Official. If a hardship circumstance exists and prior approval was not granted, the tournament committee will then decide if a catch is eligible. Affidavits and photos/videos must be submitted to DNR staff or a designated tournament representative by the close of the weighing scales on the day the fish was caught. 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 may be submitted via e-mail to Amy Dukes (DukesA@dnr.sc.gov); affidavits may be faxed to the host marina (843) 804-4146. No call-ins or text messages will be accepted. Additionally, the original affidavits and photos/videos must be submitted by the close of the weighing scales on the final fishing day for the catch to be eligible for any tournament awards or prizes.

7. Weigh-In: The weigh station will be located at the head of the Fuel Dock at the Bohicket Marina. All boats with fish submitted to be weighed or with release affidavits should proceed directly to the weigh station at the head of the fuel dock. It is not necessary for boats to travel to the weigh station to turn in release forms. They may be delivered by hand to the weigh master, but must be delivered prior to weigh station closing. Boats choosing to bring fish to the weigh scales by cart may do so only if fish are accompanied by the angler who caught the fish from the vessel on which it was caught and that vessel is docked in Bohicket Marina. Weighing a fish and accepting release affidavits do not constitute a final decision on the legality or acceptance of the fish or the release. Whether the fish or the release qualifies for consideration under the tournament prize categories will be determined by the IGFA rules and the tournament rules committee.

8. Protests: Only a registered boat's captain or owner may protest any fish entered in the tournament. All protests must be delivered in writing to the weigh master on the day of the protested catch no later than one hour after scales have closed and within thirty minutes on the last day of fishing. All protests will be considered by tournament officials, whose decisions are final. There is a \$300.00 charge for registering a protest. If the protest is validated, the \$300.00 will be returned.

9. Liability: 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 companions, boat captain, vessels and equipment which may occur during the tournament.

10. Rule Changes: Any rule changes or additions at the Captain's Meeting will take precedence over these printed rules.

11. Polygraph: Polygraph tests will be administered at the sole discretion of the Tournament Committee. Refusal by any participant will result in disqualification.

CIRCLE HOOKS

Effective January 1, 2008, The National Marine Fisheries Service regulations require anglers fishing from HMS permitted vessels and participating in Atlantic Billfish tournaments to use only non-offset circle hooks when deploying natural baits or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. The regulations allow the use of J-hooks (the hook-type traditionally used in this fishery) with artificial lures in tournaments, and do not impose hook requirements on recreational fishermen fishing outside of Atlantic billfish tournaments.

Definition of a circle hook with regard to Atlantic Highly Migratory Species: a circle hook is a hook originally designed and manufactured so that the point of the hook is turned perpendicularly back toward the shank of the hook to form a generally circular or oval shape. Note: To determine if a circle hook is non-offset, the hook must lay flat on a surface on each side, without the hook shank angle lifting one side up off the flat surface.

BILLFISH RULES

1. Catch and Release: Bohicket Marina encourages all participants to release their billfish. The Point System for this tournament is in keeping with the Governor's Cup Billfishing Series standards. In the interest of promoting conservation, White Marlin and Sailfish are CATCH & RELEASE ONLY. Tagging is optional and not required for points. 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) that encourages catch and release fishing. A billfish shall be considered a "catch" when the leader is brought within the grasp of the mate or the end of the leader is wound to the rod tip. A leader may be no longer than 30 feet. A billfish is released when the hook is removed or the leader cut as close to the fish's mouth as possible and the fish is freed in a healthy condition. In keeping with Governor's Cup Rules, only billfish that have been considered "Catch & Release" are eligible for tournament points. Billfish boated for any reason will not qualify for release points.

2. 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"). Boats will earn One Point per Pound for the **SINGLE** heaviest Blue Marlin weighed. The length of the billfish is to be determined by measuring from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.

Minimum Qualifying Sizes:

Blue Marlin	105 inches
White Marlin	Catch and Release Only
Sailfish	Catch and Release Only

NOTE:

(The Blue Marlin size minimum exceeds the Federally-mandated minimum by 6 inches and under federal regulations, no blue marlin may be brought on board a vessel under 99" in length.)

Prizes will be awarded to the boat accumulating the most points during the competition. In the event of an exact tie, the boat accumulating the most points *first* will be the winner.

Money and prizes will be awarded only for winning categories, one fish per category.

A penalty equal to the catch and release points for that billfish will be assessed against a boat for each billfish brought to the dock not meeting minimum size requirements. All landed fish are to be iced or refrigerated until such time as they are released by tournament officials to the boat after which the edible tissue is to be processed and the carcass is disposed of. Boats landing Blue Marlin will have a maximum of three hours to complete this task. Boats found guilty of wanton waste of fish will be disqualified.

A billfish may not be brought into the boat unless it is to be brought to the dock for weigh-in. Any billfish gaffed, harpooned 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, the boat will not qualify for catch and release points.

Any white marlin or sailfish boated will be disqualified. All catch & release efforts on white marlin and sailfish must be attempted outside of the vessel. Billfish boated for any reason will not qualify for release points. 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 2) as opposed to the tournament fishing day (day 1-2-3). If a tie still remains, the boat fishing in the most Series events will be declared the winner.

3. Reporting Billfish: A tournament committee boat must be notified on the radio immediately after a registered 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, tag and 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.) Those boats not notifying a committee boat will be given the latest time as a release time.

4. Catch and Release Scoring: Anglers and Boats will receive the following points for each catch and released fish:

Blue Marlin	600 points
White marlin	300 points
Sailfish	200 points

Each boat will be provided, at its request, with official Governor's Cup Released or Tagged and Released Billfish Affidavit or Landing Billfish Affidavit forms which must be completely filled out. **Affidavits swearing that all of the rules and regulations were observed in reference to the described fish must be signed by every person on board the boat that is 18 years of age or older.** Failure of any person to sign the form, for any reason, disqualifies that fish. Release affidavits must be delivered to the weigh master on that day of fishing for the release to count.

To sign an affidavit under false pretenses is an act of fraud punishable under state law. Affidavits must be completed the day the catch and release or catch occurs, and given to the weigh master or a tournament representative (wildlife biologist) before that day's weigh scales closing, 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.

Affidavits and photos/videos must be submitted to DNR staff or a designated tournament representative by the close of the weighing scales on the day the fish was caught. In the event of a mechanical failure a boat may request another tournament vessel hand deliver the affidavit and photography on their behalf. 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 may be submitted via e-mail to Amy Dukes (DukesA@dnr.sc.gov); affidavits may be faxed to the host marina (843) 804-4146. No call-ins or text messages will be accepted. Additionally, the original affidavits and photos/videos must be submitted by the close of the weighing scales on the final fishing day for the catch to be eligible for any tournament awards or prizes.

In addition, all released billfish must be clearly photographed (preferable photo would include a visible dorsal fin) at time of release by each vessel using a digital 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 must be provided in jpeg format on a removable storage device, and will be used to confirm species identification, release information, and will be used to resolve potential conflicts or formal protests. Each boat is required to keep their billfish photography available to the tournament and DNR up to ten days after the conclusion of the event.

Prizes will be awarded to the boat accumulating the most points during the competition. In the event of an exact tie, the boat accumulating the most points *first* will be the winner.

5. **Meatfish:** Money and prizes will be awarded only for winning categories, one fish per category.

TUNA/DOLPHIN/WAHOO RULES

1. **Reporting:** Meat fish do not need to be reported to the committee boat.
2. **Scoring:** Prizes will be awarded for the heaviest eligible meat fish species measured to the nearest tenth of a pound. (Eligible species of tuna include Yellowfin, Bluefin, Blackfin and Bigeye tuna) All fish must be brought to the weigh station via boat or dock cart. The tournament encourages the release of smaller meat fish self-imposed "bag limits".
3. **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.
4. **Rules Changes:** Any rule additions or changes at the Captains Meeting will take precedence over these printed rules.
5. **Breakdowns:** The Governor's Cup Tournament does not allow the substitution of boats; however, the Bohicket Tournament will allow a substitute of a boat provided the originally registered boat has not entered any fishing lines into the water.

Creel limits for dolphin are 10 per angler per day with a limit of 60 per boat per day, with a minimum size limit of 20 inches fork length. Creel limit for yellowfin tuna is 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. Creel limit for wahoo is 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.

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 or awards. **After a fish strikes, the rod may be passed to one angler one time as soon as possible. All anglers, including Youth Anglers (under sixteen years of age on April 1 of current tournament year) and Lady Anglers (females over sixteen years of age on April 1 of the current tournament year), may have the rod passed one time to them. After the rod has been passed, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod.** Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the mate 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 toward Series awards for these fish. Vessels may provide assistance to other vessels for boating fish. Any deviation from these guidelines will lead to disqualification.

YOUTH ANGLERS

Any angler who has not passed his/her 16th birthday by April 1, 2017, 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, 2017, may fish in the junior angler division. Junior anglers will be 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 the junior angler awards. Junior Anglers may be assisted as needed to boat a fish for Junior Angler awards only.