



2025 Rules & Regulations

Contact

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for clarification & questions.

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For dockage reservations at Pirate's Cove Marina call 252-473-3906 and to reserve a home for Tournament Week contact Pirate's Cove Realty at 252-473-6800.

2025 Rules Changes

All 2025 changes are in

GREEN

1. **Registration** – Will be held on Monday, August 11, 2024 from 4:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. at Pirate's Cove Pavilion. The Captains Meeting will be at 7:00 P.M in the Dinner Tent. A representative from each team shall attend the Captains Meeting as each participant and each team is responsible for knowing the rules including any clarifications or changes made during the Captain's Meeting. All boats must be registered and all entry fees paid for teams to qualify for prizes and trophies. Each Team must enter Category One plus at least two additional Categories, team choice. Boats running late due to weather or breakdown may register up

until 8:30 AM on Tuesday, August 12 with the Tournament Director. Substitute boats are permissible due to breakdown of the original boat; any substitute boat must be registered with the Tournament Director prior to fishing. The tournament reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to deny entry to anyone for any reason. No entries or upgrades will be accepted after Monday after the captain's meeting.

2. **Fishing Days & Lay Day** – There are four available fishing days. Each Team must designate one Lay Day and turn in a Lay Day form signed by a team member by 8:30 AM on their designated Lay Day. Forms can be turned in at the Ships Store Booking Desk, online via the instructions given at registration or to the Scoring Tent the evening prior. Neither boat nor team shall fish more than three of four available fishing days – August 12, 13, 14 and 15. Fishing hours are from 8:30 A.M. to 3:00 PM. No lines or teasers in the water prior to Lines In. No "Omni Directional" Sonar to be deployed prior to Lines In. Any fish hooked prior to Lines Out may be played until captured or released. There will be no exceptions on time. If a boat does not declare a day as non-fishing the tournament committee will automatically count that day as a fishing day for that boat.

3. **Official Clock** – Official tournament time will be GPS time. Each day is a new clock.

In the case of a tie (i.e. 2 boats with 200 points) the boat scoring the tying points earliest in the respective 1st, 2nd, 3rd day of fishing is the winner, regardless of what day in the week the points were scored. This will also be the same for the overall tournament points. (For example, Boat A is fishing their 3rd day on Thursday and catches a fish at 2 pm and Boat B is fishing their 3rd day on Friday and catches a fish at 1 PM. Both boats are tied then boat B is the winner.

4. **Tackle & Etiquette** – All I.G.F.A. rules apply except where noted. If there is a difference between IGFA rules and the rules stated here or modified at the captains meeting, then these rules shall control. A team member who hooks a fish may choose to either fight the fish themselves or pass the rod to another eligible angler. ANY registered angler, captain or mate may hook a billfish. You may make one pass of the rod in the cockpit or from the bridge to the cockpit. ONE PASS ONLY. The Top Angler Award shall be presented to the angler with the most points who has hooked their own fish. This is a trolling tournament. Non-trolling techniques are strictly prohibited. Backing into schools, pitching baits, casting, jigging, use of live bait or live bait teasers are prohibited

5. **Boundaries** – All fish must be hooked within tournament boundaries which are defined as all Atlantic Ocean waters within 75 nautical miles of the Oregon Inlet Sea Buoy; fish can then be played outside boundaries until captured or released.

6. **Releases** – In order to qualify a billfish as a release one of the following conditions must be met: the leader is touched by a team member or the swivel or connection between the double line and the leader (if double line is used, the connection between the double line and the LEADER qualifies) touches the rod tip or the connection between the leader and the main line/double line passes through the rod tip. If a gaff breaks the plane of the covering boards and leaves the cockpit, the team has committed to a capture and the fish will not earn release points.

7. **Anglers** – There are no limits to the number of anglers per boat. All eligible anglers must be registered. Changes/additions made during the tournament must be made before lines in at www.PiratesCoveBillfishTournament.c

om. Professional crew members may hook billfish and pass the rod. Professionals may not score points. Professional crew that will hook and pass the rod must be designated on the entry form as mates or captain; each team is limited to two professional mates and one professional or non pro captain driving the boat. The pro captain may not be substituted for an additional mate. A fish hooked by a professional must be handed off to an eligible angler in a timely manner. A Professional is a person who has been compensated (whether full or part time) as a mate or Captain aboard a Sportfishing boat in the past 12 months. Contact the Tournament Director with questions regarding eligibility.

8. Sonar—The use of sonar is allowed in this tournament. There will NOT be separate Sonar/ Non-Sonar categories for Billfish Points in Daily's or Overall Points. All teams will be scored based on the points schedule listed in our points system. There will not be two 1st Places for Sonar / Non-Sonar teams. The Points allocations allow for a leveling the field. Boats must declare Monday at registration if they are going to fish using a Sonar or NOT using a Sonar. Once declared on the registration sheet, that boat must fish the entire tournament with the choice they made, whether the sonar is used or not. A boat CANNOT change during any day or time of the tournament.

9. Reporting Catch – All billfish releases must be reported to Radio Control on VHF Radio channel 78 (Subject to change/confirm at Captain's Meeting and in Participant Kit). Radio Control will respond with the time of release. If Radio Control cannot be raised confirmation of the GPS time including fractions of a second should be made with another registered tournament boat; boat name should be noted on the scorecard.

10. "Omni Directional" Sonar – Shall be defined as any technology that requires a transducer(s) mounted to a shaft that extends from or through the hull of the boat with the capability to rotate and view the water from 1 – 360 degrees.

11. Points System – All billfish, except captured blue marlin, must be released to earn points. There will be a points handicap for all Sonar equipped boats in the Tournament.

For 2025, our Billfish Points will be scored as follows:

White Marlin, Sailfish, Spearfish and unverified Blue Marlin Release
100 pts non-sonar | 75 pts sonar equipped

Blue Marlin (with video verification)
300 pts non-sonar | 225 pts sonar equipped

Captured Blue Marlin between 400 and 699.9 pounds will earn 1 point per pound. Blue Marlin over 700 pounds will receive 2 points per pound. In order to weigh a blue marlin, it must meet one of the size requirements: 110 inches forked length or 400 pounds. There will be no penalty for a 110+ inch blue marlin that does not meet the minimum weight of 400 pounds, however, a blue marlin must weigh 400 pounds or more to receive points. The penalty for landing a fish that does not meet the minimum requirements of 110 inches, or 400 pounds will be forfeiture of all points for that day plus 200 additional points. A fish may be transferred only if the original boat becomes disabled, a video of the transfer showing both boats and the scorecard must accompany the fish; Blue Marlin must be transported to the official scale at Pirate's Cove Marina by boat only.

12. Scoring –Each boat will receive scorecards at registration; extra scorecards are available at the Weigh Station Scoring Tent. All scorecards must include the day/date, species,

time of release or capture, angler name and special designation (Lady or Jr). The captain must sign the scorecard. If the angler hooks their own fish, this must be noted on the scorecard for the points to qualify for the Top Angler award. Scorecards must be turned in to the Weigh Station Scoring Tent by 8:00 PM each night except on Friday, August 16 at 7:00 PM. Scorecards can be delivered to the Tournament Director after 8:00 PM on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday if the boat is fighting a fish or becomes disabled. Edits to a scorecard are not permitted after the days and times specified above

13. Blue Marlin Category 4 –If no blue marlin are weighed, scoring will revert back to blue marlin release points for teams entered in this category. In order to qualify as a blue marlin, the release of the species must be photo verified by the PCBT scoring staff. Any fish disqualified from this category due to a scoring staff's inability to confirm that it is a blue marlin will not be disqualified from the Overall Release Points for the tournament. Category 4 prize money, based solely on blue marlin release points in the event that there are no blue marlin weighed, will be distributed 70% to the first place boat and 30% second place boat.

14. Photo Verification – The PCBT scoring staff will attempt to verify the species at the Weigh Station Scoring tent. Bring proof of the catch with your scorecard. The following all qualify for verification although video is the easiest form to confirm date/time stamped photography and video and/or dated cell phone photos or video. All photos and videos become the property of PCBT upon completion of scoring. Colored ribbons will be distributed to each boat at registration. The ribbon of the day must show in the video or photo. The video or photo does not need to include the release; this is for species verification only. The color chosen for the day of fishing will be announced at

the daily breakfast and on the Official VHF Channel before Lines In each morning.

15. Weighing Fish – Any fish weighed will be entered on a scorecard by the Weigh master. If anyone wants a fish reweighed it must be done while the fish is still hanging. PCBT follows IGFA rules regarding mutilation. Any fish deemed mutilated shall be disqualified; mutilation is defined as any damage to the fish, prior to landing or boating the catch, caused by sharks, other fish, mammals, or propellers that remove or penetrate the flesh. Injuries caused by leader or line, scratches, old, healed scars or regeneration deformities are not considered disqualifying injuries. The decision of the Judging Committee regarding mutilation shall be final. The Tournament Scales will close for meat fish daily at 8:00 PM and for all meatfish on Friday, August 16 at 7:00 PM. A boat bringing a blue marlin to the scale must pass under the Marc Basnight Bridge by 6:30PM on Friday, August 16.

16. Meatfish – A cash prize and trophy will be awarded to the heaviest Dolphin, Wahoo and Tuna (big eye, yellowfin, blackfin, and bluefin all qualify as “Tuna”) determined by weight. If two or more entries have the same weight, then the largest combination of length and girth shall determine the winner. In the event that this is also a tie the earlier time of weigh in shall determine the winner. Meatfish may be transported to the scales over land by any method.

17. Trophy Awards – Trophies will be awarded to the Daily Top Junior, Junior, Lady and Overall Anglers. Total points for the Top Overall Angler will be calculated only using points resulting from the Angler hooking their own fish and boating or releasing unassisted (no pass of the rod). Ties will be broken by the time/date of catch. Daily Top Junior and Top Lady Angler billfish points will count whether the rod was ‘passed’ or not.

18. Polygraph Testing – Members of any winning team for cash awards in all categories except for meatfish will be subject to polygraph testing. Any registered participant may be asked to submit to polygraph testing by the Judging Committee. Failure to comply with testing will result in the participants' disqualification and, at the discretion of the Judging Committee, their entire team. Participants and/or teams that refuse or fail the polygraph testing as determined by the polygraph analyst will forfeit all entry fees and potential prize money. The decision of the Judging Committee is final – by signing the tournament release participants agree to the results of polygraph test and that the same shall be admit-able into evidence in any arbitration, mediation, or lawsuit.

19. Protest – Any protest must be submitted to the Tournament Director in writing by 8:00 PM, the day of the incident given rise to the protest, and if on Friday no later than 7:00 PM on Friday, August 15, the last fishing day available. The decision of the Judging Committee and of the PCBT shall be final. By paying the entry fees all participants acknowledge having read the rules and fully agree to the decision of the Judging Committee.

20. Prize Money – Prize Money Distribution forms and W-9 forms will be presented to the winning teams at the Awards Banquet. The Tournament Director will be available in the Pavilion on Saturday, August 16 from 8:00 to 10:00 AM to provide additional W-9 forms, confirm payouts and assist in completing Disbursement forms. In keeping with PCBT’s commitment to a higher standard of participant care, undisputed prize money checks will be mailed to the payee within two weeks of receipt of correctly completed W-9 and Disbursement forms.

21. Cancellation Policy – If weather and/or other conditions exist, refunds

will be made via USPS within one month. The decision to cancel will be made by the Tournament Director. 10% of the field of boats fishing at least one day constitutes a tournament.

22. Calcuttas – Each team must enter Category One. Additionally, each team must enter at least three Categories total – Team’s choice. The Tournament will retain 15% of each Category to cover expenses. Teams will receive 8 tickets for all festivities. Teams that intend to utilize “Omni Directional Sonar” must confirm at registration.

Category 1

- \$3,000 Base Entry
- Overall Points – Trophy Top Five
- 50/30/20 split minus 1st release per day \$5000

Category 2

- \$1,500 Meatfish
- Heaviest Dolphin, Tuna, Wahoo
- 1/3 of purse to single heaviest fish of each species

Category 3

- \$3,500 Daily
- Most Points Per Day, 10% Must Fish
- 25% per day – 70/30 split 1st and 2nd place

Category 4

- \$2,500 Blue Marlin
- Heaviest Blue Marlin
- 70/30 or 100 on capture. Purse reverts to 70/30 on verified blue marlin release points if none weighed.

Category 5

- \$2,500 Team Jackpot
- Overall Points
- 50/30/20 split

Category 6

- \$3,500 Daily Winner Take All Jackpot

- Most Points Per Day, 10% Must Fish
- Winner Take All

Category 7

- \$3,500 Winner Take All
- Overall Points
- Winner Take All

22. Lay Day Tournament – In the spirit of sportsmanship and to continue our charitable giving, PCBT will hold a Lay Day Tournament for boats who want to compete while fishing their designated Lay Day. Boats may enter at registration or via the Official VHF Channel prior to 8:30 AM Lines In. The entry fee is \$1000 and will be split equally between the High Point Winner and the charity. All PCBT rules apply except points are for billfish releases only.

23. Hold Harmless Agreement – All participants, vessel owners and pro hoc owners' consent and agree that the federal and state courts for Dare County, North Carolina, shall serve as the sole venue for any and all litigation arising out of participation in the Pirate's Cove Billfish Tournament. In no way shall any participant distressed by any ruling of the tournament recover from the Pirate's Cove Billfish Tournament, Pirate's Cove Billfish Tournament, Inc. or its officers, employees, volunteers or sponsors any sum exceeding his/her registration fee. It is expressly understood that all participants participate at their own risk and hereby release, discharge and hold harmless Pirate's Cove Billfish Tournament, Inc. and its officers, directors, volunteers, sponsors and employees from liability for loss, damage, costs, harm, injury, damage or death suffered by any participant, crew member, observer, vessel or equipment which may occur during this tournament including, but not limited to, any fishing activity, meeting, meal, ceremony or other tournament related event or activity occurring between August 7 and August 21, 2024. The rules

and release shall also be binding on my heirs, executors, administrator or assigns. **By paying the entry fees, my team and I acknowledge that we have read the rules and release and are bound by the same.**