

INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH TOURNAMET RULES

Revised in August 2024

1. MEETINGS, CONTROL ROOM & OFFICIAL NOTICES

A crew and captain's meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 14 at 12:00 PM, at 3:00 PM for IGFA Tournament Observers and an angler's meeting at 4:30 PM on the same day. **All meetings are compulsory.** If someone is not able to attend the meeting for a powerful reason, they should notify the Tournament Committee to make an appointment prior to that date.

The Tournament Control room will be in the Club Náutico de San Juan. At the captain & anglers meeting, the exact location will be announced.

Official tournament notices will be posted on the bulletin board located in the breakfast area. Anglers are advised to check the bulletin board daily for rules and time changes posted by 6:30 A.M. each fishing day.

2. FISHING AREA

The fishing area will be limited in the East to Longitude 65 degrees, 35 minutes West (Near Cabo San Juan) and in the West to Longitude 66 degrees, 25 minutes West (near Vega Baja). No northern limit. All released fish must be reported to control either by VHF radio, cellular phones, satellite phones, or through relays with other boats.

3. DEPARTURE AND FISHING HOURS

On the first day of fishing, boats will leave the pier at 7:15 A.M. and line up from East to West, in front of Buoy # 1, outside the El Morro Entrance, to await the departure signal that will be broadcasted over the radio and by the firing of a flare by the Control Boat. After the start is signaled by the Control Boat, all boats can then race out to the fishing grounds.

On the following days, boats will not depart from the docks before 7:15 AM. However, only if all the anglers are on board, boats can leave the docks at 7:00 AM but cannot proceed beyond the San Antonio Channel until 7:15 AM. Boats failing to comply will be disqualified for the day.

The following fishing hours will be observed:

	Starts	Ends
First Fishing Day:	8:00 AM	5:00 PM
Second Fishing Day:	8:00 AM	5:00 PM
Third Fishing Day:	8:00 AM	4:30 PM

Any changes to the above will be announced at the captain & anglers meeting and will be posted on the bulletin board.

Anglers must be ready at their assigned boats at 7:00 AM. If an angler is not on board 15 minutes before departure time, the captain of the vessel will contact Control and ask whether there is a substitute angler or observer. If there is no substitute, the boat may depart with prior consent from control.

Anglers may not have any lines out prior to the established hour for starting each day nor after the end of each fishing day as stated above.

4. FISH

Only billfish will qualify for the tournament. All billfish must be released.

5. TIME LIMIT

There is a time limit of two and a half (2 1/2) hours for releasing and tagging any fish, including on this time limit the fish hooked on the last day of the Tournament. After the expiration of the time limit, the fish is disqualified, and the angler must break the line. To break the line the angler must lock the spool, so it fails at the knots near the fish and the marlin is not dragging hundreds of yards of monofilament.

6. ENTRY FEES AND FORMS

All anglers must have completed the official registration form and have paid the applicable fee by the end of the last day of Registration.

All participating boats will pay applicable docking fees for the week prior, during and after the Tournament except for those boats that already have a contract with Club Náutico de San Juan.

7. PARTICIPANTS

This is an invitational tournament. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to withdraw its invitation at any time to any team or individual. Anglers must be at least 18 years old before the first day of the tournament. Anglers between the ages of 15 through 18 will be evaluated by a Tournament committee and such committee will decide if the angler may or may not fish the Tournament.

All anglers, by registering to participate in the Tournament, acknowledge the existence of and agree to abide by these Rules and to be bound by all decisions made by the Tournament Committee and/or the Tournament Judges.

8. TEAMS

Each team will consist of three anglers. The Tournament Committee may allow two members of the same team in the same boat, provided the third angler on the boat is from a different team. On boats with four anglers on board and an International Game Fish Tournament Observer (IGFTO) all three anglers on a team could fish on the same boat.

9. SUBSTITUTES

Only one angler per boat per day may be substituted if said substitute is registered (\$50.00 registration fee) as such on or before the last day of registration. Professional captains or mates cannot be used as substitutes.

10. BOATS AND ANGLERS

1. Boats must be at least 30 feet long and equipped for Blue Marlin fishing, including fighting chair and outriggers.
2. Every boat must have at least one fishing mate working in the cockpit.
3. The boat must have a toilet, a/c system and kitchen in good working conditions.
4. Outboards are not allowed on this Tournament. If an outboard boat wishes to fish in the Tournament, it will be evaluated by a Tournament Committee. Such Committee will pass judgment and decide if the boat will be allowed to participate or not.
5. Boats will fish at least three (3) anglers, unless, for special reasons, the Tournament Committee approves otherwise. The boat owner will be allowed two guest anglers on board, and the Tournament Committee may assign a fourth rotating angler. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to assign observers to any boat and rotate any angler, except the boat owner. Boats that will be registered with Observers on board by paying a special fee, are allowed to fish with a Maximum of 4 anglers. Captains and mates cannot be anglers.
6. Anglers must rotate their tackle or position clockwise every hour. Each angler may have only one line in the water and rods must be assigned to each registered angler on board.

11. I.G.F.A. RULES

The International Angling Rules and Release Rules formulated by the International Game Fish Association will apply, if they are not in conflict with other Tournament Rules. For more information go to www.igfa.org.

12. LEADERS AND BAIT

- a. Anglers may use cable, monofilament, fluorocarbon or wire leaders.
- b. Artificial or natural baits can be used.
- c. All artificial baits must be rigged with a single hook.
- d. All natural baits or bait lure combinations must be rigged with non-offset circle hooks.

13. BAIT & SWITCH

The use of the Bait & Switch system will be permitted only under the following rules and regulations:

- a. If an angler on board does not want to fish using the Bait & Switch system on a boat that is doing so, he/she may use bait on the short riggers during his rotation on those positions. No angler can be forced to use the Bait & Switch system.
- b. The system will be used only in the short (flat) lines. The long lines (outrigger lines) will have baits or lures with hooks in them.
- c. Boats using the bait & switch system can use as many teasers as wanted which will be placed anywhere as long as they are in front of the long riggers.
- d. In the boats that have only three anglers on board, or boats with four anglers that wish to fish three riggers with hooks and one pitch bait, the angler at the pitch bait position will have control of all the teasers and any fish that is attracted by those teasers can be hooked using the bait & switch system only by that angler.
- e. In the boats with four anglers on board where two anglers will have pitch baits, each angler will have a side of the boat assigned to him and will be able to pitch the bait only on his/her side of the boat. No angler can place his bait in the side of the boat where the other angler is assigned. Captains maneuvering the boat to move a fish from one side of the spread to the other will be expelled from the tournament.
- f. Teasers will not be placed behind the long riggers. No angler using the bait & switch system will be permitted to drop his bait farther back than where the farthest teaser was located when the fish was first raised.

14. LINES & REELS

Only line complying with I.G.F.A. (IGFA Tournament Line) 50 pounds (25 Kg.) requirements will be used. The committee reserves the right to test any line of any angler. All fish released on any line exceeding the I.G.F.A. requirements for 50 pounds (25Kg.) will be disqualified. Reels with line heavier than I.G.F.A. 50 pound (25 Kg.) will not be permitted aboard any participating boat. Anglers using lighter lines than the required will not be awarded extra points.

Line and Backing

1. Monofilament, multifilament, and lead core multifilament lines may be used.
2. Wire lines are prohibited.
3. Backing is permitted.
4. If backing will be used, at least the first 5 meters (16.5 feet) of line directly preceding the double line, leader, or hook must comply with I.G.F.A. (IGFA Tournament Line) line classified

under the breaking strength for 50 pounds (25 Kg.). This section must be comprised of a single, homogenous piece of line and may not exceed 25-kilogram (50 pound) line class.

No ratchet handle reels such as Duel are allowed, reels designed to be cranked with both hands at the same time and power-driven reels of any kind are prohibited. Reels must comply with sporting ethics and customs.

15. HOOKUP

When an angler has hooked a fish, the other anglers in the boat shall immediately retrieve their baits and remove them from the water.

In case of a double hookup (two fish on two different lines), the first angler to hookup shall have sole control of the boat until the fish is released, tagged, or lost. Control of the boat then passes on to the second angler to hookup who will have the remaining time left from the two and a half (2 ½) hours to release the second fish.

16. REPORTING

All strikes and all fish hooked will be reported immediately to the control center. The report must include the name of the angler, name of the boat and coordinates (Latitude and Longitude to the nearest minute). All fish must be reported by VHF radio, cellular phones, satellite phones, or through relays with other boats.

Another report must be made when the fish is tipped, tagged, or lost. Only authorized radio operators may use the radios.

The radio must not be used to carry on unnecessary conversations. When using the radio be brief and specific. The radio should not be used during the last ten minutes of every fishing day unless it is to report a hooked fish.

17. SCORING

A Modified release format will be used. Points will be awarded as follow:

a. All released billfish will score 250 points each. A billfish will be considered as released (or tipped) when: (1) any member of the crew touches the leader (2) when the swivel, or the leader knot, touches the tip of the rod.

b. If an angler, captain, or crew wishes to tag a fish, it should be done no more than five (5) minutes after it has complied with the requisites established under a released billfish. If the fish has not been tagged after five (5) minutes, it must be released. Tagging billfish will not affect the overall accumulated score of anglers, boats, or teams.

c. All billfish must be released. Boarded billfish will be disqualified, will not score any points and the boat will be disqualified from the Tournament.

d. Any billfish that is mutilated before the fish is tagged and released will be disqualified and will not score any points.

e. The use of gaffs on the fish is prohibited and its use for any reason will disqualify the catch.

f. In case of a tie, the angler, boat, captain, or team first achieving the points will win.

18. COMPLIANCE AND PROTEST

It shall be the responsibility of each Angler to be familiar with these Rules and the I.G.F.A. International Angling Rules, including the new release rules and recommendations. They must test their lines and measure their leaders and double lines. The Tournament Committee is entitled to enter any boat to check equipment. In case of a protest, the protesting angler shall, when aware of the infraction, call-in his intention to file a protest. No later than one hour after arriving at the dock, he shall deliver a written report of the complaint to the Tournament Director.

The Tournament Chairman shall designate a Judging Committee composed of three members. If any of the judges restrains from acting in any specific issue, the Tournament Chairman, or someone else named by him shall act on behalf of the judge or judges that inhibit themselves. The Judging Committee shall have the sole power to decide upon all protests.

All decisions regarding protests and awards will be made by the Judging Committee after review and examination of all pertinent information and, if deemed necessary, testimony from all parties involved. The decisions of the Judging Committee shall be firm, final, and subject to no further review and shall be binding and obligatory for all participating Anglers.

19. AWARDS

Awards for all the points accumulated will be given to individual anglers, boats and teams.

20. SPEED LIMIT

There is a five-mile per hour speed limit in the San Juan Bay.

21. WEATHER

There will be three days of Tournament fishing unless any is canceled due to reasons of weather. One fishing day will make the tournament complete.

22. OTHER

Anglers who are not boat owners are reminded that the boat owners are your hosts and that they have no obligation to supply any personal fishing tackle to any angler. The Tournament supplies every boat with liquor, beer, refreshments, and other minor necessities. All other equipment must be supplied by the angler.

All participants in the tournament enter at their own risk. By registering as an angler in the tournament, the angler holds harmless the Club Náutico de San Juan and the International Billfish Tournament, its officers, managers and directors, its sponsors and donors and all persons connected directly or indirectly with the operations of the tournament from all liability for libel, slander, loss, damage, negligence, harm, injury or death suffered by any participant, entrant sport-fisherman, their companions, boat captain, crew members, family members, vessels and equipment which may occur during or in conduction with the tournament.

Club Náutico de San Juan, its Directors, and the International Billfish tournament Committee in no way will regulate, establish the rules for, or control any money pools or any other kind and in no way will they judge, adjudicate, award, or mediate in any controversy related to money pools or betting of any kind. Any angler or person participating in any money pool and/or any betting of any kind during the tournament, hereby releases and hold harmless (in the most extensive, inclusive and embracing meaning of said terms), Club Náutico de San Juan, its Directors and the International Billfish Tournament Committee from any responsibility and/or liability and/or claim and/or action in any way related to the formation, organization, execution and development of said money pools and/or betting and/or in any way related to the awarding and/or selection of a winner in any pools or betting. If any such pool is formed or any kind of betting is conducted or performed, be it anglers or captains of the participating boats or any other persons, said will participate in the pools or betting at their own risk.