

# OFFICIAL RULES



\* 2020 changes are printed in red.

**1. REGISTRATION** - All boats must be registered with the Tournament Committee and entry fee paid to qualify for prizes and trophies. Any boat may be substituted during the week but must be registered with the Tournament Committee prior to fishing. Registration forms will be accepted at the Big Rock Office, the Saturday Captain's Party or the Sunday Pig Picking. Any boat entered in the Big Rock tournament shall not be entered in another tournament simultaneously, except for 1) NC Governor's Cup and 2) King of the Hill. 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 9:00 am, Monday morning.

**2. RULES MEETING** - At least one person from each boat should attend the Captain's Meeting for the Tournament, which is usually held on the Saturday evening prior to the first day of fishing. Regardless, all participants in the Tournament are responsible for knowing all Tournament Rules, including any changes to the Rules that may take place at the Captain's Meeting.

**3. ROD & REEL RULES** - This is a rod and reel, hook and line tournament. Double line and leader combined may not exceed 40 ft; neither of which may exceed 30 ft. The following practices are illegal in this tournament: a) use of handline or rope attached to the line or leader; b) shooting, harpooning, or lancing; and c) the transfer of any participant from one boat to another to aid in the landing of the fish. Bill rope/"snooter" is allowed. Drones are not allowed in this tournament.

**4. BOUNDARIES** - All boats fishing in Tournament must fish between LORAN coordinates North 40275 and South 39200. All fish must also be hooked within those coordinates.

**5. MANDATORY HOOK REQUIREMENTS** - Non-offset circle hooks are mandatory when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lures. "J" hooks are allowed on artificial lures only.

**6. FISHING TIME AND LAYDAYS** - No lines or teasers are permitted in the water before official fishing hours each day. Official time will be GPS time. Fishing days for all eligible boats shall be any four out of the available six days, captain's choice.

No single boat can fish more than 4 total days during the Tournament. Lay Day forms may be submitted in person at the Big Rock Office, Hatteras Harbor Marina or electronically by taking a photograph of the form and emailing it to [forms@thebigrock.com](mailto:forms@thebigrock.com). Lay Day forms must be submitted prior to 9 AM on the day declared as a non-fishing day. There will be no exceptions on time. If a boat does not declare a day as non-fishing, the Tournament Committee will automatically count the day to be a fishing day for that boat. If you do not receive an email confirmation, please call tournament headquarters to confirm.

**7. REPORTING** - All billfish must be reported to the Tournament Headquarters when hooked, lost, boated or released. Radio frequency shall be VHF CHANNEL 71 and alternate channel 78a. Fish hooked prior to or after fishing hours are not eligible.

**8. QUALIFYING BLUE MARLIN** - To be eligible for prize money, a blue marlin must weigh at least four hundred pounds or measure at least one hundred and ten inches. In the event of a tie by weight, the marlin having the largest total measurement of girth plus length shall be declared the winner. Length shall be measured from the V-notch in the tail to the tip of the lower jaw. No official weigh slip will be given for any disqualified fish. **NC State Law states that you may only boat one blue marlin per day. If no qualifying gamefish are caught in Level I, the tournament will retain the money.**

**IF NO QUALIFYING FISH IS WEIGHED IN LEVEL II, III, IV OR V, THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF THE PRIZE MONEY IN EACH LEVEL WILL BE PAID TO THE BOAT ENTERED IN EACH LEVEL WITH THE MOST RELEASE POINTS. LEVEL VIII WTA TOTAL PAY-OUT WILL BE DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF DAYS THAT A QUALIFYING FISH IS RELEASED.**

## 9. DISQUALIFICATION

Boat will be disqualified from the tournament if:

1. The boat, captain and/or crew violates any rules of the tournament unless otherwise specified in these rules.
2. If a billfish has been boated and not presented to the Weigh Master. A fish is considered boated when any portion of the fish breaks the outside vertical plane of the boat.
3. If a fish escapes before gaffing and is recaptured by any method other than as outlined in the angling rules. No free gaffing allowed.

## 10. 400 POUND PENALTY

Boat will be penalized four hundred pounds from the weight of the largest blue marlin weighed in by the boat during the week by said boat if:

1. Blue Marlin does not meet tournament minimum length and/or weight requirements
2. Fish does not adhere to State and Federal Fisheries regulations
3. The gaff breaks the outside vertical plane of the boat and the fish is not presented to the Weigh Master. When the gaff breaks the vertical plane of the boat, it shows intent to gaff the fish. Under no circumstances can you gaff the fish in order to measure the fish and then release the fish.

## 11. RELEASE POINTS

1. Cash prizes will be awarded to the boats that score the most number of points first. **No release points will be awarded if the gaff breaks the outside vertical plane of the boat. In order to qualify as a release, the billfish must remain in the water. (Federal Law).**

125 Release Points will be awarded:

1. For all billfish including blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, hatchet marlin and spearfish
2. When mate touches the leader before the fish is released and
3. Team turns in a release form provided by the Tournament Committee attested to by signature of the captain and mate or angler on board the boat at the time of the release. This form may be submitted to the OFFICIAL WEIGH MASTER AT TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS, Hatteras Harbor Marina or submitted electronically. Release forms must be turned in no later than 10:00 p.m. on the day the fish is released to qualify. Other than blue marlin, billfish forms may also be photographed and emailed to forms@thebigrock.com. If you do not receive an email confirmation, please call tournament headquarters to confirm. In the event of ties, the first boat to achieve the winning totals shall be declared the winners.

400 Release Points will be awarded for:

1. Blue Marlin if the team provides indisputable video or photo evidence to the Rules Committee. To qualify for the 400 points, teams must turn in a Release Form in person along with the SD Card, Micro SD Card or Compact Flash Card from their camera. Forms and Media Cards can be turned in at the Official Weigh Station in Morehead City or to the tournament representative at Hatteras Harbor Marina. The Media Card and Release Form must be turned in no later than 10:00 p.m. on the day fish is released to qualify. The Media Card must show continuous video or a clear single photo of the mate touching the leader and clear and indisputable evidence that the fish is a blue marlin. It is the responsibility of the participants to ensure that their camera's Clock/Date is set accurately to reflect the time and date of the Releases to qualify for the 400 points. Date and time stamp must be 100% accurate. All videos will become property of the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament. If the rules committee is unable to see indisputable evidence that the fish is a blue marlin, the release will be scored at 125 points. The tournament will NOT allow photos or video from cell phones.

**12. LEVEL V FABULOUS FISHERMAN'S LEVEL** - The Winner of Level V will be the first blue marlin reported and boated weighing 500 lbs. or more. Qualifying fish must meet all tournament rules. All boats participating in this level must be entered in Levels I, II, III and IV.

**13. OUTBOARD LEVEL \$1000** - Entry in this level is restricted to outboard boats only. No inboards, inboard-outboards, jet powered or airboats permitted. No sailboats permitted. Any hybrid or combination engine boat will not be eligible for prizes in this level. To be eligible for prize money, a blue marlin must weigh at least 400 pounds or measure at least 110". If no blue marlin are caught, the winners will be determined by release points. If no billfish are caught or released, winners will be determined by the largest gamefish, (yellowfin tuna, dolphin, wahoo). Prize money for the Outboard Level is a guaranteed purse of a minimum of \$10,000. Prizes will be divided as follows: 50%/first place, 30%/second place and 20%/ third place or 60/40 for two places. Winners may be polygraphed (See Rule #21). All other Big Rock rules are enforced for this level. Entrants must enter Level I and may enter additional levels as stated in Big Rock rules.

**14. FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS** - All vessels and participants shall comply with North Carolina and Federal Fisheries laws and regulations regarding fishing licenses, vessel permits, fishing gear, season size limits and bag limits. Participants shall also adhere to all Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament rules as contained herein.

**15. GAMEFISH** - Winning gamefish will be determined by weight. In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined by the first fish weighed-in. Fish must be in fresh edible condition and fit for human consumption. All gamefish must be weighed in the day they are caught. Hookup time for gamefish should NOT be reported to Tournament Headquarters. Level VI - "Winner take all - dolphin" prize money will rollover to the next year's tournament if no qualifying fish is weighed. Gamefish are defined as yellowfin tuna, dolphin and wahoo.

**16. WEIGH-IN** - All blue marlin and gamefish eligible for prizes must be off-loaded and weighed at the official Tournament weigh station from the boat landing the fish unless authorized by the Weigh Master at the weigh station. The fish must be entered on the official entry form by the Tournament Weigh Master. Blue marlin take priority over gamefish at the scales. The same scales and weigh station will be used for all fish including those entered in the Governor's Cup Series. Gamefish scales will close at 7:00 p.m. during the week and 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. The weigh station is located on the Morehead City Waterfront. All billfish weighed in shall be donated for research. The Weigh Master has the right to refuse any fish in his sole discretion.

**17. PRIZE PAYOUT SCHEDULE** - Prize money checks will be made payable to the person or entity so indicated on the registration form of the winning boat. Social Security number or Taxpayer I.D. number of the recipient must be provided on the entry form. All undisputed funds will be distributed 10 days after the tournament.

**18. PROTEST** - Any protest by any participant against the catch of another participant must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Rules Committee. No protests are allowed against the tournament. Any protest must be received by 9:00 a.m. on the day following the catch of the disputed fish and by 7:00 p.m. on the last day of the tournament. Any member of the Rules Committee or the Weigh Master (in their sole discretion), retains the right to hold and keep any fish deemed questionable by him with respect to being qualified for any prize or cash award. If retention of the fish is refused, the fish is automatically disqualified.

**19. DISPUTE RESOLUTION** - A protest by one participant against the catch of another must be submitted in accordance with Rule 18. All other disputes, controversies, or claims of any kind arising out of or relating to the Tournament (hereinafter,



“dispute” or “disputes”), including, but not limited to, all disputes concerning decisions by Tournament Officials, Boards, or Committees, must be submitted in writing to the Rules Committee no later than 5:00 p.m. on the last fishing day of the Tournament. Failure to submit any such disputes in writing by that date and time shall constitute a waiver and release of any and all such disputes.

In the event of any dispute arising out of or relating to the Tournament in any way, the interested parties shall use their best efforts to settle such dispute by mutual agreement. To this effect, responsible, authorized representatives of the interested parties shall meet, consult, and negotiate with each other in good faith (with or without a third-party mediator, as they may choose) and attempt to reach a mutually satisfactory solution. In the event they do not reach such a solution within a period of five (5) days after the first notice by any party to any other of the existence of the dispute, then without waiving any other provisions in these Rules concerning the absolute discretion and finality of decisions made by the Tournament Officials, Boards, or Committees, the sole and exclusive means for resolution of any dispute shall be the procedures set forth below:

- a) The dispute shall be submitted to arbitration under the North Carolina Revised Uniform Arbitration Act, Chapter 1, Article 45C of the North Carolina General Statutes.
- b) All negotiations, mediations, and arbitration hearings shall take place in Morehead City, North Carolina, or such other places the interested parties may agree upon in writing.
- c) The arbitration shall be conducted by a single arbitrator who is a retired North Carolina state or federal judge or an attorney whose practice experience includes commercial litigation. The arbitrator must be a resident of the State of North Carolina. In the event the interested parties cannot agree upon an arbitrator, the decision shall be made by a Resident Superior Court Judge of Carteret County, North Carolina.
- d) Prior to any arbitration hearing, limited discovery shall be permitted for the purpose of obtaining production of documents and taking depositions. All discovery shall be governed by the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure. All issues regarding discovery requests shall be decided by the arbitrator. All discovery shall be completed within 90 days after the selection of the arbitrator; provided, however, that the arbitrator shall have the authority to extend or reduce the time for discovery in a manner consistent with a general desire for expedited resolution of the dispute.
- e) All fees and expenses for the arbitration shall be borne by the parties equally. However, each party shall bear the expense of said party's own counsel, experts, witnesses, and preparation and presentation of proofs. Only in the case of extreme abuse of the procedure may the arbitrator reallocate such costs and expenses among the parties.
- f) Any arbitral award may be enforced by an action in the Superior Court of Carteret County.

The terms and conditions of this Agreement shall be construed, interpreted, and enforced under the laws and judicial decisions of the State of North Carolina, notwithstanding any principle of conflicts of law. In the event any part of this Agreement shall be declared illegal, invalid, or void, such declaration shall not affect the validity of any of the other terms or provisions of this document.

**20. WEIGHT ALTERATION** - Attempted weight alteration of any blue marlin or gamefish will be subject to disqualification and automatically disqualify the boat from the tournament. IGFA rules apply regarding mutilated fish. The Rules Commit-

tee reserves the right to cut open any fish for inspection of suspected weight altering efforts such as inserted weights, ice, water, etc.

**21. POLYGRAPH** - Polygraph Tests shall be administered to the top money winners, release winners, (captain), and others as deemed necessary by Tournament Officials. Participants must make themselves available for polygraph testing in Carteret County within 24 hours following notice from Tournament Officials. Individuals that are required to take the polygraph test must not consume alcohol or any controlled substance within eight hours prior to the test. A participant's refusal to take a polygraph test or failure to answer test questions in a manner satisfactory to Tournament Officials, in their sole discretion, may result in disqualification. By entering the Tournament, participants consent to the admissibility of polygraph results in any dispute or proceeding arising out of the Tournament.

**22. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TOURNAMENT** - No Level I fees will be refunded. 100% of all other levels will be refunded 14 days after the tournament and following collection and clearing of all funds paid. All refund requests must be received in writing by 12:00 noon Sunday prior to the tournament at Tournament Headquarters.

**23. VIOLATION OF RULES** - Any boat violating any of these Tournament Rules or any boat containing a participant violating any of these Tournament Rules is subject to disqualification from the Tournament (unless another sanction for a particular violation is expressly set forth herein). By participating in the Tournament, all participants acknowledge that all Tournament Rules are material and that disqualification is a permitted and appropriate sanction for any violation of any Tournament Rules. Decisions regarding the interpretation of Rules, violation of Rules, penalties, and the suspension of any Rules or penalties will be made by Rules Committee and/or Board of Directors in their sole and absolute discretion. All decisions by Rules Committee and/or Board of Directors are final and are not subject to further challenge by participants.

**15% OF FEES RETAINED BY TOURNAMENT EXCEPT FOR LEVEL I. (SEE PRIZE SCHEDULE FOR LEVEL I)**

**FISHING DAYS**  
**Available fishing days and hours: (EDT)**

June 8, 2020	9:00 am-3:00 pm
June 9, 2020	9:00 am-3:00 pm
June 10, 2020	9:00 am-3:00 pm
June 11, 2020	9:00 am-3:00 pm
June 12, 2020	9:00 am-3:00 pm
June 13, 2020	8:00 am-2:00 pm

**Scales close at 7:00 p.m. daily for gamefish, 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. Boats may fish four out of the six available fishing days.**

**Rules Committee:** Howard Basnight, Dale Britt, Dew Forbes, Randy Gregory, Randy Ramsey, Casey Wagner  
**Committee Boat:** To Be Announced  
**Weigh Master:** Randy Gregory  
**Tournament President:** Joy Bell  
**Tournament Director:** Crystal Hesmer

**Tournament Headquarters**  
**(opens 6:00 am on fishing days)**

**Entry Fees**  
You must enter Level I before you can enter any other level.