

**Bay Point
Billfish
Open 2023
Tournament
Rulebook**

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Rules are Subject to Change. Changes to the rules and final instructions are given at the mandatory Captain's Meeting which takes place Wednesday, June 28 at 5:30 p.m. at the Conference Center Ballroom.

The entry Fee is \$6,000 per boat and includes four anglers. The Captain and Mate can attend all functions. Each additional angler is \$600.

The Bay Point Billfish Open is a sportfishing tournament where participants agree to fish in a fair and ethical manner. While the tournament does not strictly enforce the use of IGFA rules, it certainly expects that only minor technical differences will be employed by anglers. One noted exception is the allowance that the rod may be handed off one time within the first minute of the fight.

The tournament is offering a \$2.5 Million prize for breaking the blue marlin state record. This prize is limited to the first 80 registered boats.

TOURNAMENT DATES:
Wednesday, June 28th, 2023–Sunday, July 2, 2023

Wednesday June 28, 2023	Registration from 2:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M., Captain's Banquet at 6:00 P.M. Mandatory Captains' Meeting at 5:30 P.M.
Thursday June 29, 2023	Boats depart from Point South Marina at 9:00 A.M. Flare start is at 10:00 A.M. on Panama City Beach Optional Entries Open until 10:00 A.M. (online)
Friday June 30, 2023	Weigh scales open at 4:00 P.M., Weigh scales close at 8:00 P.M.
Saturday July 1, 2023	Weigh scales open at 4:00 P.M., Weigh scales close at 8:00 P.M.
Sunday July 2, 2023	Awards ceremony at 10:30 A.M.

1. Captain's Meeting

- a) The mandatory Captain's Meeting will be held at 5:30 P.M. at the Conference Center Ballroom at Point South Marina on Wednesday.
- b) The captain/owner or designated representative must sign in and be present at the captain's meeting for rule changes and instructions.

2. Permits and Licenses

- a) Participants are encouraged to comply with all Federal and Florida state laws regarding fishing licenses, size limits, bag limits and any other regulations that may apply.
- b) An Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Angling Permit IS required, and participants must be familiar with and follow HMS regulations. For information regarding Federal HMS Permits refer to hmspermits.noaa.gov.
- c) Anglers must obtain a Florida Saltwater Fishing License. For information regarding Florida Saltwater Fishing Licenses refer to myfwc.com/license/recreational/saltwater-fishing/ or call (888)347-4356.

3. Tournament Start

In the interest of true sportsmanship and to keep all participants on as near an equal basis as possible, the start of the tournament will be as follows: All boats must leave from St. Andrews pass. Beginning at 9:00 A.M. on Thursday, a boat parade will head out to the gulf from Point South Marina, west down the beach until the flare starts indicating the start of the tournament. The flare will be fired at 10:00 A.M. Please check out using VHF channel 72. Boats must depart in the water and may not be trailered until returning to the weigh scale at Point South Marina following fishing hours on the last day.

4. Fishing Hours

Boats may begin fishing at 10:00 A.M. on Thursday and continue fishing until the scales close at 8:00 P.M. on Saturday. **All boats, including those with catch & release videos to turn in, must be checked in and inside the designated markers at the scales before 8:00 P.M. on Saturday. Boats may not be trailered during the event and must return to the scales by water.**

One day or part thereof of offshore fishing by one-third of the boats entered constitutes a complete tournament. In the event of inclement weather, the tournament will be completed on the first day that the tournament director and tournament committee declare fishable.

5. Weigh Station Hours

Scales will open at 4:00 P.M. and close at 8:00 P.M. Friday and Saturday. All fish caught during the tournament must be weighed before scales close on Saturday night. Boats checked in and inside the designated markers by 8:00 P.M. on Friday and Saturday will have their fish weighed in order and scales will close immediately after the last fish is weighed. All billfish catch forms for boated and/or released fish must be turned in before closing of scales on Saturday.

6. Acceptable Fish

The following species are eligible for competition when caught by properly registered anglers in accordance with tournament rules:

Eligible for Catch & Release points: Blue Marlin, White Marlin, Sailfish, Spearfish

Eligible for Weigh-in at the scales: Blue Marlin (110-inch minimum LJFL), Tuna (20 lbs. min), Wahoo (20 lbs. min.), Dolphin (20 lbs. min.)

Boated Blue Marlin must measure at least 110 inches in length from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail (LJFL).



No angler or boat may have in their possession more than one blue marlin per day. Any angler in violation of this rule will be banned from further participation in the tournament without a refund.

For each day the scales are open (Friday and Saturday), each boat will be allowed to bring to the scales a maximum of 1 blue marlin, 3 tuna, 3 wahoo, and 3 dolphin.

The tournament committee reserves the right to reject any fish entry because of poor condition or one that does not meet the eligibility requirements set by this tournament.

The condition of the fish will be left to the scrutiny of the tournament committee. THEIR DECISION IS FINAL.

7. Weigh-in Procedures

IMPORTANT: A tail tag with the boat name and angler's name must be attached to each fish before unloading at the weigh scales. These bright orange or green tail tags will be included in your boat information packet at registration.

Tournament scales will be located at the weigh-in dock at Point South Marina. Boats having fish to weigh must be inside the pass and checked in with tournament headquarters by the designated closing time each day for the closing of the scales.

ALL FISH MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE SCALES BY THE BOAT FROM WHICH IT WAS CAUGHT.

A winning fish in any of the categories must be caught and presented at the weigh-in by the officially registered and qualified angler with a tournament tail tag attached to the fish. The angler must remain with the fish until the completion of the weigh-in procedure. The angler must sign the weigh-in statistics sheet to verify the weight, at which time will make the weight official.

FISH WEIGHED AT THE SCALES MAY BE RETURNED TO THE BOAT OR DONATED TO THE TOURNAMENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF RESEARCH AND FEEDING THE HUNGRY.

8. Reporting of Billfish

Each boat is required to record on the **Billfish Scorecard** all billfish boated or released in the order in which the fish are caught. The order of the recorded releases should match the order that appears on the boat's Catch & Release video. The Billfish Scorecard will be available in your boat information packet.

Boated Blue Marlin should be reported within 30 minutes of the catch to tournament headquarters or a committee boat and a confirmation number obtained. Please include the lower jaw fork length in your report.

Committee boats will be utilized but only for conservation and informational reporting. Please contact a committee boat or the tournament weigh station cell number(s) to report boated or released marlin. Prompt reporting of the measured length and girth of blue marlin will help in the effort to minimize the killing of under-sized and non-competitive fish.

To report a billfish be prepared to give the following information to the committee boat or weigh station:

- 1. Name of Boat**
- 2. Name of Angler**
- 3. Species of Fish (Blue Marlin, White Marlin, Spearfish, Sailfish)**
- 4. Time released or boated.**

DO NOT report Tuna, Dolphin, or Wahoo on the Billfish Scorecard.

Names of Committee boats and any changes to communication frequencies will be announced at the Captain's Meeting. Please use alternate frequencies for conversations not related to the reporting of billfish.

NOTE: Your committee boats will be monitoring VHF Channel 72 and weigh station phones 850-341-8877 or 850-380-8961. You can leave a voice or text message regarding the 4 requested items above.

9. Tournament Awards

All Tournament Awards are based on 75 registered tournament boats.

Tournament Awards for Heaviest Fish will be presented to the angler/boat for fish caught in the following categories:

Blue Marlin	1 st	\$75,000	2 nd	\$30,000	3 rd	\$15,000
Tuna	1 st	\$25,000	2 nd	\$15,000	3 rd	\$5,000
Wahoo	1 st	\$25,000	2 nd	\$15,000	3 rd	\$5,000
Dolphin	1 st	\$25,000	2 nd	\$15,000	3 rd	\$5,000

Each Boat can weigh a maximum of 1 Blue Marlin, 3 Tuna, 3 Wahoo and 3 Dolphin per day scales are open.

If no qualifying fish are weighed in a given category above, the cash award assigned to that category will be added to the cash awards of the qualifying fish in the other Categories in a proportional manner as determined by the Tournament Committee. If no qualifying blue marlin is weighed, the cash award for blue marlin will roll down and be divided evenly between Catch and Release and the Tuna, Wahoo, and Dolphin weighed-fish categories.

Catch & Release Awards

Catch & Release Awards will be presented as follows to the boats with the most accumulated catch and release points utilizing video verification.

Combined Release points for Blue Marlin, White Marlin, Sailfish, Spearfish	1 st	\$25,000	2 nd	\$15,000	3 rd	\$5,000
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Top Lady Angler and Top Junior Angler Awards

Awards will be presented to the one Lady Angler and one Junior Angler with the most accumulated points based on the following:

- 2 points per pound for Blue Marlin weighed at the dock.
- 600 points for Blue Marlin release.
- 200 points for White Marlin.
- 150 points for Sailfish, Spearfish, or any unidentifiable marlin release.

If no marlin is brought to the scales or released by a lady angler or junior angler, the heaviest meat-fish and time of weigh-in will be used to determine the prize for top angler in that division.

Note – the \$600 additional angler fee is waived for junior anglers.

10. Optional Entry Awards

Participants may pay an Optional Entry Fee in one or more of the following:

Divisions

CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	5
Catch & Release	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500
Blue Marlin	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500
Tuna	—	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500
Wahoo	—	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500
Dolphin	—	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500
Non-Sonar Catch & Release	—	—	—	\$1,000	—
Non-Sonar Heaviest Fish	—	—	—	\$1,000	—

Non-Sonar Optional Categories: These are winner-take-all categories. Non-sonar catch and release will be awarded to the team with the highest points accumulated using the point values defined in rule #11. Non-sonar Heaviest Fish will be awarded to the team weighing the single heaviest fish from one the categories: Blue Marlin, Tuna, Wahoo and Dolphin.

Additional Information

- Payment of an Optional Entry Fee is not required to compete for overall Tournament Awards.
- 90% of all Optional Entry Fees collected are distributed in the form of Optional Cash Awards.
- Participants who wish to pay an Optional Entry Fee prior to June 1, may pay by personal or company check.
- Participants who wish to pay an Optional Entry Fee after June 1 must do so at Tournament Headquarters, or such other location as may be determined by the Tournament Committee, during the Optional Entry Fee registration hours on Wednesday, June 28, between 2:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M.
- Optional Entry Fees collected after June 1 must be paid in United States Currency, Credit Card or by Cashier's Check.
- Optional Cash Awards for Catch & Release divisions are determined by points according to Tournament Rules.
- Optional Cash Awards for boated Blue Marlin, Tuna, Wahoo, and Dolphin are determined by weight according to Tournament Rules.
- In the event that no qualifying fish are weighed by an Optional Entry participant in a given Division eligible for an Optional Cash Award, 90% percent of all Optional Entry Fees collected for that division are returned to the Participant(s) who paid Optional Entry Fees for that division.
- Optional Cash Awards are distributed 50% to first place, 30% to second and 20% to third for each division. In the event there are less than 10 teams in a division, the payout will be 60% to first place, 40% to second place. In the event there are less than 6 teams in a division, the payout will be winner-take-all for that division.

11. Catch & Release Rules

Billfish Catch Definition

A billfish is considered caught when the leader connection is shown wound to the tip of the rod, or a team member is shown touching the leader.

Billfish Release Definition

The billfish is considered released when, after being caught by the above definition, the rod and angler are shown with the fish no longer connected to the line or the billfish is shown in the water, no longer connected to the line.

Tournament Designator/Identification Marker

Designators will be assigned at the mandatory Captain's meeting. These markers must appear in all video submissions.

Billfish Scorecard

All billfish released or boated must be logged on the Billfish Scorecard in the sequence in which they were caught; scorecards must be signed by the Boat Captain indicating they agree to the information as recorded. Detailed instructions are printed on the billfish scorecard which is included in the team packet handed out at registration.

Video Verification and Points Awarded for Catch & Release

Points for catch and release are awarded when, in the process of the catch and release as defined above, all technical elements are shown on video. Tagging is not required for points and billfish removed from the water or boated will be disqualified.

The video submitted for consideration for points must include the following technical elements:

- Angler fighting fish, including video of rod and reel.
- Cockpit pan of all rods in use. If there is a double hookup situation, verbally declare "double hookup" for the judge.
- Tournament designator.
- The Catch (swivel at rod tip or team member touching the leader).
- Video of Billfish for species identification. (Judges use Dorsal, Anal and Pectoral Fins for fish identification).
- The Release (the Billfish being released or video of the rod and angler with the fish no longer connected to the line).
- Secondary cockpit pan after the release to see the status of all rods.
- AFTER the secondary cockpit pan, a clear video of the GPS date & time is to be used for the official release time. Hold the camera steady for several seconds to allow a clear focus of the GPS Date & Time. This is critical. **GPS must display in CDT.** Show the designator alongside GPS if possible.

Note - Verification Videos become the property of the tournament. Verification videos and billfish scorecards must be turned in to the video judges at a designated video judging location near the weigh station.

Points Values Awarded for Release

Catch & Release placements are determined by points awarded as follows:

- 600 points for Blue Marlin release.
- 200 points for White Marlin.
- 150 points for Sailfish, Spearfish, or any unidentifiable marlin release.

Only billfish caught and released according to these Rules are eligible for Tournament Awards and Optional Entry cash Awards as described herein.

The Billfish Scorecard must accompany the Catch & Release video to the weigh-in dock. The form must include the boat name, angler's name, species, date, and time of release. Catch & Release verification videos and Billfish Scorecard must be turned in to the video judges at the weigh-in dock before the closing of the scales on Saturday, 8:00 P.M.

See section 12 for video tips and recommendations.

12. Special Video Section

Submission of Video Recordings

Verification video recordings must be submitted no later than the closing of the scales on the final day of fishing. Recordings should be submitted immediately upon return to the marina.

All recorded images and sounds become the property of the tournament and may be used by the tournament for display purposes during weigh-in and in future marketing campaigns. Images will be copied from participants' equipment for use by the tournament. This includes SD cards and digital hard drive cameras.

Video Tips and Recommendations

- Use fresh, new SD cards.
- SD-type Sony and GoPro, etc. cameras which generate consumer-type files allowing the judges to quickly copy the recording to a computer that facilitates slow motion and segment-by-segment scoring.
- **Note: Files with .MXF filename extension cannot be opened or viewed by the judges.**
- Judges will not score from your laptop computer or iPad-type tablet.
- Judges will accept more than one video of the same release from a different camera (of the same type), **provided the same previous video requirements are met.**
- If possible and without harm to the fish, have the mating display the dorsal fin on the video at the time of release to assist with identification.
- Underwater video of the release is helpful with identification. Ensure the video is adequately long to allow identification.
- Limit recordings to **only video release recordings from this tournament** with the segments staged and cued and ready for scoring. Know before entering the scoring room where images are located on the recording. Have the SD card ready to be inserted into the scoring computer.
- It is critical the person sent to scoring clearly understands how to provide the video digital media to the scoring judge. One person per team is allowed in video scoring.
- Understand how to properly display the GPS date as well as the time on your boat GPS prior to the tournament. This is critical for tiebreakers.

Remember: Report releases to a Committee Boat on VHF Channel 72 so that we can track them for unofficial reporting to the media and the verification committee. Releases may also be reported to weigh station phones at 850-341-8877 or 850-380-8961.

13. Payment of All Cash Awards

Prior to fishing, each tournament boat must designate a representative payee to receive payment for all cash awards. Payment of Cash Awards is by check. For winners of cash awards, a single check will be written to the boat's representative payee for the combined total of tournament cash awards and optional cash awards. Checks will be written after the Tournament Awards Ceremony on Sunday. The Tournament accepts no responsibility for the distribution of any cash awards, whether tournament cash awards or optional cash awards, between team members.

14. Miscellaneous

Polygraphs

Polygraph tests may be administered at the discretion of the tournament committee. All tournament entries are non-transferable and non-refundable. Payment of the entry fee constitutes a representation by each entrant that he/she has read and fully understands the tournament rules and that he/she will abide by such rules and the decisions of the tournament committee.

Deck Checking of billfish is strictly prohibited

A boated billfish is one that has been partially or totally pulled onto the boat. Boated billfish cannot be released for points. Culling or discarding a previously boated marlin is prohibited. Violation of this rule will result in team disqualification from the tournament, including all categories entered, and forfeiture of all entry fees.

State Records

All cash awards and prizes (award packages) allotted to breaking a state of Florida record in this tournament will be given as follows: Because records may be broken more than once over the course of the tournament, only a single state record award package will be given to the boat with the largest certified fish at the end of the tournament for each species. A state record-certified fish is determined by following all Bay Point Billfish Open rules, all state of Florida, and federal fishing regulations.

Canceled Tournament

If the tournament should be canceled due to any cause beyond the control of the Bay Point Billfish Open, entry fees will be rolled over to the following year, less a pro-rated share of tournament expenses or may be refunded to entrants, less a pro-rated share of tournament expenses as solely determined by the tournament committee. Entrants shall have no claim against the Bay Point Billfish Open for return of said entry fees less pro-rated share of tournament expenses.

Tie Breakers

For Catch & Release Awards: Team placement is determined by the first team to reach the highest total points as verified by the boat's GPS time.

For fish Weighed-in: When there is a tie-in weight for any category of fish brought to the scales, placement is determined by the order of weigh-in at the scales. The recorded time of weigh-in determines placement.

In case of a tie for Top Lady Angler or Top Junior Angler on points: Placement is determined first by the heaviest fish and then by the first angler to reach the highest total points as verified by the boat's GPS time. If it comes down to weighing fish only to determine tiebreaker, placement will be determined by the recorded weigh-in time at the scales.

15. Protests

All protests must be presented in writing along with a \$1,000 deposit by the team captain to the tournament committee no later than 15 minutes after the last fish is weighed and recorded on the final day of the tournament. All entrants agree to abide by tournament rules. Poor sportsmanship will be grounds for disqualification from this tournament. All decisions of the tournament director and rules committee are final. Any violation of these rules resulting in disqualification will result in forfeiture of the entry fee and prize money.

16. Waiver/Disclaimer

It is expressly understood that all participants in this tournament, Bay Point Billfish Open, enter at their own risk and that the Bay Point Billfish Open, officers, sponsors, directors, and all persons connected directly or indirectly with the operation of said tournament, shall be exempt from any liability for libel, slander, loss, damage, negligence, harm, injury or death suffered by any participant, entrant, sport fisherman, his/her companions, boat captains, mates, crew members, vessels and equipment which may occur during or in conjunction with the tournament. By tournament entry, the captain consents that the Bay Point Billfish Open may use without payment or restriction, any photographs in which he/she or any of their crew may appear for any purpose whatsoever; including, but not limited to resale, advertising, commercial or promotional material. The captain and his crew further release the Bay Point Billfish Open, officers and directors, and all persons from injury, loss, or damage which may result. All state record winners must submit to and pass in a conclusive manner, a polygraph examination administered by a licensed polygraphist provided by tournament officials. All entrants agree to submit to a polygraph examination at the request of the tournament committee if there is a conflict involving said entrant. Failure to submit to such an examination will result in the disqualification of the entrant at the sole discretion of the tournament committee.

**ALL DECISIONS OF THE TOURNAMENT JUDGES AND RULES
COMMITTEE WILL BE FINAL**

