

**35th Annual North Carolina Ducks Unlimited
Band the Billfish Tournament Rules
www.ncdubillfish.com**

1. **REGISTRATION** - All boats must be entered and all fees paid prior to fishing to qualify for prizes, trophies and awards. In the event of mechanical breakdown after the start of the tournament a substitute boat may be allowed. Any change of vessels from the original registration must be submitted and approved by the Tournament Committee and will be allowed only if the original boat becomes disabled. Failure to receive approval will result in disqualification. Any request to withdraw a boat and receive a refund of category funds only must be received in writing by 9:00 am on Thursday.
2. **RULES MEETING** - All boats must be represented at the Captain's Meeting held on July 19, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Big Rock Landing. All participants are expected to have read and comply with the rules, including any changes that may take place at the Captains Meeting, and agree to comply with them. Signature of the entry form constitutes acknowledgement of rules compliance.
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. **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.
5. **FISHING TIME AND LAY DAYS - Participants choose 2 of the 3 following days:**
Day 1 - Thursday, July 20, 2023 - 9:00 – 3:00 PM
Day 2 - Friday, July 21, 2023 – 9:00 – 3:00 PM
Day 3 - Saturday, July 22, 2023 – 8:00 – 2:00 PM

Lay Day forms must be submitted prior to start of fishing time of the declared Lay Days. Completed Lay Day forms can be photographed and emailed to _____
mshouse@localfirstbank.com or texted to 910-358-5080.

Gamefish scales will close at 6:30 p.m. on Day 1, Day 2, and 5:30 p.m. on Day 3. **Scales do not close for blue marlin boated before or after lines out.** However, once the fight is over, the captain must make every effort to get to the weigh-in as quickly as possible.

No vessel or team is to deploy any lines, teasers, dredges, chum or bait prior to the official starting times or after the daily stop time. The use of omnidirectional sonar technology will not be permitted before official fishing hours each day. Official Fishing time is Continuous GPS time

6. **REPORTING** - All billfish must be reported to TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS when hooked, lost, boated or released. Radio frequency shall be **VHF CHANNEL 71**. Fish hooked prior to or after fishing hours are not eligible.

Official weigh station will be the Big Rock Weigh Station unless other weigh stations are designated by the Rules Committee.

7. **BOUNDARIES** - All fishing will be done between Loran coordinates North 40275 and South 39200. Any fish hooked up outside these boundaries will be disqualified.
8. **SCORE SHEETS** - Score sheets must be turned in before the scales close each day at the tournament headquarters located at the Big Rock Weigh Station. Score sheets showing catch and daily points (in categories) must be signed by the team captain and the boat captain. Score sheets will be in the captain's bag and will be available at the tournament headquarters daily at the Big Rock Weigh Station. Score sheets can be emailed to mshouse@localfirstbank.com or texted to 910-358-5080 prior to close of the scales each day.
9. **WEATHER COMMITTEE** - There is no Weather Committee. The choice to fish is by team or captain's discretion.
10. **QUALIFYING BLUE MARLIN** - To be eligible for prize money, a blue marlin must weigh at least 400 pounds or measure at least 110 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.

Billfish which meet a minimum (110" or 400 lbs.) to 499 lbs. will be awarded 1 point per pound. Billfish which weigh 500 lbs. to 699 lbs. will be awarded 2 points per pound. Billfish weighing 700 lbs. and over will be awarded 3 points per pound.

IF NO QUALIFYING FISH IS WEIGHED IN LARGEST BLUE MARLIN CATEGORY, THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF PRIZE MONEY WILL BE PAID TO THE BOATS ENTERED IN LEVEL I UNDER THE SAME PAYOUT RULES OF LEVEL I.

11. **RELEASE POINTS** - In order for a billfish to be counted as a release, a member of the fishing team or crewmember must touch the leader or the leader touches the rod tip. To be considered a release, the crew cannot have attempted to boat or gaff the fish. A fish is boated when any portion of the fish breaks the plane of the boat. A released Blue Marlin will be awarded 400 points. All other released billfish will be awarded 150 points. All billfish are to be released except those in excess of 110" fork length or 400 pounds.

Any billfish gaffed or boated to determine if it meets minimums is a taken fish and is not eligible for release points.

12. **Photo Verification** – The NCDU Band the Billfish scoring staff will verify the species at the Weigh Station Scoring tent. Bring indisputable video or photo proof of a blue marlin with your scorecard to the Rules Committee. **Video/photo proof must be presented to the Rules Committee by 7:00 pm on the day the fish was caught.** 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. **The video or photo does not need to include the release; this is for species verification only.** All photos and video become the property of NCDU Band the Billfish upon completion of scoring. Boats not able to present indisputable video or photo evidence of a blue marlin that is time/date stamped will be awarded 150 release points (same as white marlin or sailfish).

13. **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 NC Ducks Unlimited Tournament rules as contained herein.

All participating boats must adhere to state and federal regulations to qualify for prizes. Atlantic Tuna/ HMS Permit Required - Automated Permitting System - 888-USA-TUNA (872-8862). Permits may also be obtained at www.hmspermits.noaa.gov All participants must adhere to the North Carolina Coastal Recreational License. Call 1 -800-682-2632 or DMF 1-252-756-7021 for information.

14. **GAMEFISH** - All fish must be weighed in on the day they are caught and must be in fresh edible condition fit for human consumption. **One wahoo, tuna (yellowfin, bigeye) and dolphin may be weighed by each boat per day. The total poundage of these fish will serve as tie breakers for awards and prizes in the Level 1, Level 2 and Daily Points Categories.** Only one of each species of fish per boat can be weighed per day. Gamefish to be weighed may be transported to the weigh station by chase boat or on board the boat on which the fish was caught with the daily catch report and a member of the fishing team. Gamefish only break ties and cannot win anything by themselves except the designated Gamefish categories. The largest dolphin can count in both the Gamefish and the Largest Dolphin Categories. If no qualifying gamefish are caught in the Gamefish category, the tournament will retain the money.

Gamefish (tuna/dolphin/wahoo) of the boat will serve as tie breakers for Youth and Lady Angler.

Weighed gamefish remain the property of the boat on which they were caught.

15. **PRIZE PAYOUT SCHEDULE** - If there is only 1 winner in Level I or Level II categories then they take 100%, if only 2 winner's prize money will be split 60% - 40%. If no winners in Level I and Level II, then those respective monies will be returned. If one or two of the gamefish species are not weighed in, then that winning money will be pro-

rated between the other winners in the Gamefish Category.

You must enter Level 1 to enter Level 2!!

Tournament winner is the boat with the most points. Prizes will be split if there is a tie after gamefish tiebreakers.

All Prize monies will be mailed to the respective winners within 10 days of the completion of the tournament.

16. **DAILY POINTS RELEASE CATEGORY** – The top boat each day will be awarded 1/3rd of total amount entered in the Daily Points Category. Tiebreaker will be aggregate of Gamefish caught on that day (see rule 14 above). 10% of boats entered in the tournament must fish to qualify for Daily winnings.
17. **NON-SONAR RELEASE CATEGORY** – Entry into this level is restricted to: A) Boats without omnidirectional sonar technology OR B) Boats equipped with, but choose not to use, omnidirectional sonar technology. Prize payouts will be awarded for total weekly release points. Prize money is winner take all.
18. **OUTBOARD LEVEL \$500** - 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 as follows: 50%/first place, 30%/second place and 20%/ third place or 60/40 for two places.** Winners may be polygraphed. All other NCDU Billfish Tournament rules are enforced for this level. Entrants must enter Category #1 Tournament Entry and may enter additional levels as stated in NCDU Billfish Tournament rules.
19. **POLYGRAPH** - All money winners shall be subject to a Polygraph test (captains or mates only) at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. Refusals to take the test will result in immediate disqualification. Any candidate who is impaired by drugs or alcohol will immediately cause their boat to be disqualified.
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 Committee reserves the right to cut open any fish for inspection of suspected weight altering efforts such as inserted weights, ice, water, etc.
21. **PROTESTS** - Protests must be submitted in writing and turned in to the tournament officials before 6:30 p.m. on Day 1, Day 2, and Day 3 or within 1/2 hour after the fish is officially weighed, whichever is later.

Any decision by the Tournament Rules Committee will be **FINAL**.

22. **BINDING ARBITRATION** - In the event the Tournament Organizers/Rules Committee cannot render or refuses to render a final and binding decision with respect to any dispute, claim, difference, or controversy under review, the matter shall be resolved by binding arbitration under the commercial arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association. The decision rendered in arbitration shall be in writing and shall be final and binding upon all parties. The parties shall have no further recourse, except as provided for by the commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Once the decision is rendered, it will produce the effect of “res judicata” and the parties shall fully comply with the decision without delay. The participants specifically waive any right to a trial by judge or jury.

*Rules may be changed by tournament committee. Any changes will be announced at the Captains Party meeting July 19, 2023.

23. **DISPUTE RESOLUTION** – A protest by one participant against the catch of another must be submitted in accordance with Rule 16. 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 interest 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.

24. **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.