



# Blue Marlin

GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP



# 2026 TOURNAMENT OFFICIAL RULES

*Rules are subject to change.*

**July 14 - 19, 2026**

Final Rules will be presented at the Captains Meeting on Thursday, July 16th, 2026.

(v.1)



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## SECTION 1

# TOURNAMENT ENTRY & REGISTRATION

### TOURNAMENT ENTRY\*

Tournament registration is \$9,000

Now through May 31: Early bird discount of \$1K = \$8,000

June 1st through June 30th - \$500 early entry discount = \$8,500

July 1 through close of registration at 9pm July 15th = full registration fee of \$9,000

### REGISTRATION

- Teams may register via Catchstat at [bmgc.catchstat.com](http://bmgc.catchstat.com)
- Teams may pay the entry fee in full or submit a \$1,000 nonrefundable deposit upon registration.
- Entry payments can be made via check, wire transfer or credit card. You will find these details on Catchstat as part of your registration.
- Tournament entry balance is due by July 15th, 2026.

\*Blue Marlin Grand Championship reserves the right to refuse application or entry into the Tournament at its discretion with or without cause.

## SECTION 2

# TOURNAMENT FORMAT, PAYOUT & OPTIONAL CASH AWARDS

### TOURNAMENT FORMAT & PAYOUT

The Tournament format will be split between weighed Blue Marlin, Catch and Release, and Gamefish.

**40% of Total Tournament Payout** will be paid to Weighed Blue Marlin.

Places: 1st (50%), 2nd (30%), 3rd (20%)\*

**40% of Total Tournament Payout** will be paid to Billfish Catch and Release.

Places: 1st (50%), 2nd (30%), 3rd (20%)\*

**20% of Total Tournament Payout** will be paid to Gamefish. Split evenly between Tuna, Dolphin and Wahoo.

Places: 1st (50%), 2nd (30%), 3rd (20%)\*

\*If only two eligible fish in a Tournament entry category are weighed, the payout will be split 1st Place (60%) and 2nd Place (40%). If only one eligible fish is weighed in a category, that fish sweeps the category. If no gamefish are caught in a category, the total Tournament Cash Awards for the category will be evenly distributed between the remaining two categories then paid 50%/30%/20% (1st – 3rd)



## OPTIONAL CASH AWARDS:

Teams may enter Optional Cash Awards categories online before the Tournament at [bmgc.catchstat.com](http://bmgc.catchstat.com) or at Check in/ Optional registration at the Orange Beach Event Center on Wednesday, July 15th, from 3:00 - 9:00 PM.

\*\*\* New this year – optional entries may be submitted online only after the close of registration until the start of the captains meeting Thursday morning, July 16th at 9am.

## OPTIONAL CASH AWARDS PAYOUTS:

Optional Cash Awards entry fees will have a 90% return.

Places: 1st (50%), 2nd (30%), 3rd (20%)\*\*

\*\* One team entered will be refunded in full, two teams entered will be 60/40 split, and 3 or more teams will be the standard 50/30/20 split.

Dailies rules: "Daily" optionals will run for each day of the tournament (Thurs, Fri, Sat). There will be a one-time buy in for all 3 days at \$7,500. The prizes are split evenly for each day and will be paid out for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place each day. If there is no winner, the prize money will roll to split evenly between the following days. All Daily Jackpot winners will be determined by Catch and Release scoring judges at the end of the tournament. Teams entered in the daily jackpots must report all catches by 9:00 PM on Thursday & Friday and 5:00 PM on Saturday.

## SECTION 3

# DETERMINATION OF TOURNAMENT WINNERS

The heaviest Blue Marlin weighed will be awarded 1st place in the Weighed Blue Marlin Tournament Payout and will be Tournament Champion. 2nd and 3rd place follows sequence according to heaviest weighed.

If a team catches multiple Blue Marlin on separate days/ trips:

Each fish will be eligible to place in the Weighed Blue Marlin Tournament Payout category. Each fish will be weighed and scored independently.

If no eligible Blue Marlin are weighed, Tournament entry fees for weighed Blue Marlin will roll over to Catch & Release.

The Junior angler award is scored by accumulated weighed billfish points and catch and release points.

In the event no billfish are weighed or caught with release points awarded, the Junior angler award will be decided by heaviest gamefish weighed. (Junior anglers must be age 15 and under at the day of weigh in.)

## SECTION 4

# TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 15TH

3PM – 9PM Team Check-in & Optional Cash Awards Entry Held  
at The Orange Beach Event Center

### THURSDAY, JULY 16TH

Final online only optional cash awards entry ends at 9AM

**9AM Mandatory Captain's Meeting** Held at The Orange Beach Event Center

**10:01 AM** Tournament Departure from The Wharf Marina *Grocery Isle* will lead the fleet from The Wharf through Perdido Pass.

Boats departing from other marinas in Orange Beach will fall in line.

The Tournament will officially begin with a shotgun start at **12PM** on VHF 78.

### SATURDAY, JULY 18TH

#### **6:00PM Tournament Return Demarcation Line**

Tournament boats must return to The Wharf weigh-in through Mobile Pass and must be visually confirmed by Tournament spotters at the official demarcation line between ICW markers #103 & #104 at Sailboat Bay by 6 PM.

Boats not inside demarcation line by 6 PM will be ineligible to weigh-in or submit Catch & Release video. Boats may not return to the Wharf via Perdido Pass.

### SUNDAY, JULY 19TH

9AM Tournament Awards Breakfast in the Orange Beach Event Center.

## SECTION 5

# TOURNAMENT ELIGIBLE FISH

The following species and size limits of gamefish, when caught in the Gulf of Mexico per all Tournament Rules, will be eligible for Tournament awards. The use of dart gaffs and harpoons is prohibited.

| Species                   | Min Weight / Length | Limit                   |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Blue Marlin               | 110"                | 1 per boat per trip/day |
| Dolphin                   | 20 LB               | 3                       |
| Tuna (Yellow Fin, Bigeye) | 50 LB               | 3                       |
| Wahoo                     | 20 LB               | 3                       |



- No Tournament boat may be in possession of more than one Blue Marlin at a time.
- Culling/ Discarding of previously caught billfish is prohibited.
- Blue Marlin removed from the water for the purpose of deck checking will be disqualified.
- Weighed Blue Marlin 110 inch minimum length. Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL). The length of a fish as measured from the tip of its lower jaw to the fork of the tail (over body of fish measurement method).
- Video back up of all boated Blue Marlin is recommended.

## SECTION 6

### BILLFISH CATCH & RELEASE RULES & SCORING

Billfish are considered caught when the leader connection or swivel touches the tip of the rod or the mate or other team member touches the leader.

Billfish removed from the water or boated and deck checked will be disqualified.

Verified video releases are scored:

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Blue Marlin  | 501 Points |
| White Marlin, Spearfish, Sailfish, Unidentified Billfish | 150 Points |

## SECTION 7

### CATCH & RELEASE VIDEO VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Video must be captured on a digital video camera and must include:

- Angler fighting fish, including video of rod and reel.
- Cockpit pan.
- Tournament designator, which is the same for the entire Tournament.
- Video of swivel at rod tip or mate touching the leader.
- Video of Billfish for species identification.
- Video release of Billfish.
- Secondary cockpit pan.
- Clear video of GPS date & time of release. Hold camera steady for several seconds to allow clear focus of GPS Date & Time. GPS must display in CDT.

If the video shows the time of release but no date:

The GPS time as recorded will be used and the last date of Tournament fishing is used as the official release date.

If the date is shown but no release time:

The date as recorded will be used and the time of check-in at the official demarcation line (#103 & #104) Sailboat Bay is used as the official release time.

## SECTION 8

### TIEBREAKERS

- The earliest times and dates will be the determining factor in breaking a tie.
- Blue Marlin weighed on Friday will break a tie with Blue Marlin weighed on Saturday.
- On Saturday, times recorded at the demarcation line will be used to break Blue Marlin and gamefish ties.
- Catch and Release Tiebreaker: ties are broken by the team to reach the total amount of points first as verified by the boat's GPS time.
- Demarcation times will also be used for catch and release video scoring ties in the event of missing GPS date/times.

## SECTION 9

### WEIGH-IN SCHEDULE FRIDAY, JULY 17TH

Note: Boats must return through Mobile Pass.

WEIGH SCALES OPEN 7 AM – 8 AM

'Early-Bird' weigh-in. Blue Marlin (gamefish accompanied by a Blue Marlin will be weighed). To schedule a Friday morning weigh-in, teams must call and receive a confirmation from the Tournament committee by 9 PM on Thursday, July 16th.

WEIGH SCALES OPEN 5PM–7PM

Check-in at Sailboat Bay not required on Friday.

The boat must be clearly in sight of weigh dock by 7 PM to be eligible for weigh-in.

## SECTION 10

### WEIGH-IN SCHEDULE SATURDAY, JULY 18TH

WEIGH SCALES OPEN 5PM– 8 PM

or until last eligible fish waiting in line.



## SECTION 11

### WEIGH-IN PROCEDURE

- Each fish to be weighed must be tail tagged with the boat and the angler name before the fish leaves the boat. Tail tags will be provided and completed by staff upon your arrival at weigh-ins.
- All fish must be off-loaded and weighed at The Wharf central weigh-in station.
- Fish to be weighed must be in fresh condition, not frozen nor mutilated in any such manner.
- The weigh-in committee, led by Weigh Master Craig Martin, has the final decision and authority to disqualify a fish for poor condition or mutilation. Mutilation is defined per IGFA Angling Rules:
- Mutilation to the fish, prior to landing or boating the catch, caused by sharks, other fish, mammals, or propellers that remove or penetrate the flesh.
- All mutilated fish must be disclosed prior to arrival at weigh-in.
- Fish to be weighed or catch and release videos may not be transferred from one Tournament boat to another.

Tournament officials may alter the weigh-in sequence.

## SECTION 12

### BILLFISH VIDEO VERIFICATION PROCEDURE

- Only teams that have successfully cleared the demarcation line at Sailboat Bay, on Saturday, July 18th by 6:00 PM, will be eligible to have video scored.
- Video Verification order may be prioritized for teams with multiple Blue Marlin releases.
- One team member shall accompany videos to be verified with completed Verification Billfish Catch Cards to video verification at The Marina Office.
- Verification Billfish Catch Cards must be completed, legible, and signed by the captain before arrival at the video verification area. Incomplete or non-legible Catch Cards may cause loss of place in line until corrected.
- Multiple fish may be recorded on the same video, but the Catch Card should reflect the official release order.
- Videos must be digital, preferably on an SD or micro SD card. Videos must be able to be transferred from your video device to a laptop computer for viewing.
- If your video was verified by the Video Verification team prior to your return (either through an email link or CatchStat upload) you still must bring your Catch Card for sign-off by the Video Verification team on your return to the Wharf.
- The team representative will sign a video scorecard accepting the video judges scoring as final.
- Video Verification will conclude with the closing of weigh-in or after the last eligible team waiting in line video has been judged.



## SECTION 13

# POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION

Blue Marlin Grand Championship winning captains will be polygraphed. Failure to comply will result in disqualification of the participant and, at the discretion of Tournament Officials, the participant's entire team. Disqualified participants and/or teams forfeit any and all entry money, prizes, or prize money and will be refused entry to future BMGC Tournaments.

## SECTION 14

# SPORTSMANSHIP AND ANGLING RULES

Safety first! Participants agree to adopt a "safety first" approach at all times during the Tournament and to immediately report any unsafe behavior to Tournament Organizers/Rules Committee.

Participants agree to compete by IGFA rules with one exception: Rod may be transferred (handed off) one time within the first minute of the fight.

In the spirit of fair competition, and the reasonable conservation of GOM billfish resources, Participants agree to use their best effort to notify the tournament of each billfish boated and/or released in a reasonable timeframe.

It is Participants' responsibility to comply with all Federal and Alabama state laws regarding angling rules, fishing licenses, permits, size limits, bag limits and any other regulations that may apply.

Participants are assumed to have all necessary permits, licenses and/or registrations required by law. However, it is not the responsibility of the Tournament officials or directors to verify that all required permits, licenses and/or registrations are acquired by anglers participating in the Tournament. Failure of a winning angler to have obtained any or all required permits, licenses and or registrations shall not be the basis for a protest to be filed under the Tournament Rules or for a fish to be disqualified.

For information regarding Alabama Saltwater Fishing Licenses refer to

<http://www.outdooralabama.com/licenses/saltwater-recreational-licenses>.

For information regarding Federal HMS Permits call 877.376.4877 or refer to

[www.hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://www.hmspermits.noaa.gov).

## SECTION 15

# VIDEO SUBMISSIONS RELEASE

Recordings of video images and sounds become the property of the Tournament. The Tournament may use these for any purpose in any media format, including but not limited to Tournament television, radio, social media, print, television series, advertisement, or future marketing campaigns.

## SECTION 16

# WEATHER AND COMPLETED TOURNAMENT

Teams and participants should make their decision to fish based solely on their own judgment of prevailing conditions, vessel seaworthiness, and captain and crew's seamanship skills. Participation of at least one-third of the registered Tournament fleet constitutes a completed Tournament. Participation, as mentioned above, shall be defined as boats which pass the official line of departure demarcation which will be the Perdido Pass Bridge.

## SECTION 17

# TOURNAMENT CANCELLATION POLICY

If the Tournament should be cancelled due to any cause beyond the control of the Blue Marlin Grand Championship, Tournament entry fees will be rolled over for one year less Tournament deposit. 100% of optional entries will be refunded.

## SECTION 18

# WITHDRAWALS

Withdrawals from the Tournament before 5:00PM, Wednesday, July 15th will be eligible to be refunded 100% of their Optional Entries and Tournament entry fees less the \$1,000 deposit. There will be no refunds of Tournament entry fees, deposits or optional entries after the above set time.

## SECTION 19

# PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO IMAGE RELEASE

The Participants specifically agree and consent to the use of any photograph, video recording, or audio recording in which they appear or are heard, by the Tournament Committee, Wharf Entertainment Properties, LLC, Wharf Retail Properties, LLC, Blue Marlin Grand Championship, LLC, Wheels Up Special Events, LLC, or Coastal Marina Management, LLC for any purpose whatsoever including, but not limited to, resale, advertising, and promotional material without compensation or restriction of any kind.



## SECTION 20

### TOURNAMENT RULES DISPUTES

Tournament Rules Disputes are disputes of Tournament Rules set forth above. All disputes, protests, claims, differences, or controversies relating to any aspect of the Tournament Rules must be submitted to the Tournament Organizers/Rules Committee no later than 30 minutes following the closing of weigh-in on Saturday, July 18th or are deemed waived. All such disputes must be presented in writing along with a non-refundable fee of \$1,000 cash. Failure to present the non-refundable fee of \$1,000 cash with a dispute will result in a waiver of the dispute and Tournament Organizers/Rules Committee will not consider the dispute. The Tournament Organizers/Rules Committee shall decide all such disputes and its decision shall be final and binding upon all parties.

In the event the Tournament Organizers/Rules Committee cannot render or refuses to render a final and binding decision with respect to any dispute, protest, claim, difference, or controversy relating to any aspect of the Tournament Rules, Participants must first serve written notice to Tournament Interests within ninety (90) days of the failure or refusal to render a final and binding decision, setting forth in detail the nature of the alleged dispute and an itemization of remedies sought. Participants must then submit to mediation in good faith, bearing 50% of the mediation expense. Failure to serve proper notice or to mediate in good faith shall serve as a waiver of any rights to pursue litigation. In the event litigation is commenced by any party, Participants waive the right to a trial by jury.

Rules Committee: Scott Burt, Art Favre, Craig Martin, Dewey Blaylock, Jim Cox.

## SECTION 21

### RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS, EXPRESS ASSUMPTION OF RISK, DEFENSE, AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT.

In consideration for being accepted by the Tournament Organizers for participation in the Blue Marlin Grand Championship of the Gulf, the Participants hereby agree to defend, indemnify, and hold the Tournament Committee, Sponsors, Blue Marlin Grand Championship, LLC, The Wharf Entertainment Properties, LLC, Wharf Events, LLC, Wharf Retail Properties, LLC, Coastal Marina Management, LLC, Wheels Up Special Events, LLC and their respective officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, partners, members, affiliates, subsidiaries, successors, predecessors, vessels, and/or attorneys (collectively, "Tournament Interests"), and any other Tournament participants, harmless for any and all losses, claims, damages, expenses (including but not limited to all reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses of litigation through all appeals), demands, liabilities, costs and obligations (including but not limited to claims for personal injury, loss of life, and/or damage to property) (1) whether or not arising out of the ordinary negligence of Tournament Interests; (2) in connection with any activities arising out of the Tournament; (3) for loss or damage to any vessel, its tackle, apparel, engines, machinery, appurtenances, equipment, stores, boats and furniture due to fire, theft, vandalism, collision, equipment failure, windstorm, rain, hurricane or any other casualty; and (4) against any losses incurred as a result of any Participant's breach of the Tournament Rules and/or this Release. This Release of All Claims, Express Assumption of Risk, Defense, and Indemnification Agreement shall survive the expiration or termination of the Tournament and this Agreement.

Should any provision of the Tournament Rules and/or this Release exempting Tournament Interests from liability be declared or adjudged to be invalid, Participants agree that in no event shall Tournament Interests' aggregate liability for all claims and all parties exceed \$300,000. Participants agree to indemnify, defend, and hold Tournament Interests harmless for any amount above this sum, including, if necessary, payment of said excess amount to third parties. In no event shall Tournament Interests be liable to any Participant for any consequential, special, incidental, indirect or punitive damages. The Participants expressly acknowledge that they have received, reviewed, and agree to abide by the Tournament Rules and this Release. Participation in the Tournament is a purely voluntary, recreational activity. Nothing in the Tournament Rules or this Release absolves the Participants of their obligation to follow the applicable navigation rules or relieves them of any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen. Furthermore, the Participants expressly acknowledge that activities relating to deep-sea fishing are extremely dangerous and involve the risk of serious injury or death. Having so acknowledged, the Participants hereby assume full responsibility for the risk of bodily injury or death due to the negligence of the Tournament Interests or any other cause connected with or occurring during the Tournament.

## SECTION 22

### GOVERNING LAW

The general maritime law of the United States governs all losses, claims, damages, expenses, demands, liabilities, costs and/or obligations arising out of the Tournament, the Rules, and the Release (contained in Section 21). If there are any gaps in the general maritime law of the United States or if it does not address a disputed issue, the laws of the State of Alabama shall apply. Moreover, Participants hereby agree that all losses, claims, damages, expenses, demands, liabilities, costs and/or obligations arising out of the Tournament, the Rules, and the Release (contained in Section 21) be litigated in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Alabama. In addition, those lawsuits to which the United States District Court for the Southern District of Alabama lacks subject matter jurisdiction, Participants agree to bring any such actions before a court located in Baldwin County, Alabama, U.S.A., to the exclusion of the courts of any other country, state, county, or city.

## SECTION 23

### MEDIATION

In the event of any losses, claims, damages, expenses, demands, liabilities, costs and/or obligations arising out of the Tournament and the Release (contained in Section 21) prior to initiating litigation against Tournament Interests, Participants must first serve written notice to Tournament Interests within ninety (90) days of the alleged loss setting forth in detail the nature of the alleged claim and an itemization of remedies sought. Participants must then submit to mediation in good faith, bearing 50% of the mediation expense. Failure to serve proper notice or to mediate in good faith shall serve as a waiver of any rights to pursue litigation. In the event litigation is commenced by any party, Participants waive the right to a trial by jury.



## SECTION 24

### JOINT PREPARATION

This Agreement shall not be construed against the party preparing it, but shall be construed as if it were prepared jointly by all affected persons and entities, and any uncertainty or ambiguity, or both, shall not be interpreted against any such person or entity.

## SECTION 25

### ENTIRE AGREEMENT

Participant acknowledges and agrees no representations or promises have been made to or relied upon by him/her in connection with the subject matter of this Agreement, which are not specifically set forth in writing herein. All representations and promises made by any party to another, whether in writing or orally, are understood by Participant to be merged in this document. Participant further agrees and acknowledges he/she will not claim, at any time or place, that this Release has been orally altered, modified, or otherwise changed by oral communication of any kind or character.

# 2026 BLUE MARLIN GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP ACCEPTANCE

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Participant acknowledges that he/she has read this document in its entirety, including but not limited to the Rules and Release contained herein, and agrees to abide by and be bound by all of its terms. Participant expressly agrees that this is a personal contract, all obligations under which are personal in nature, and any liability to Tournament Interests are not subject to limitation. The person signing for or on behalf of the Participant warrants having authority to obligate the Owner and the vessel to the terms of this Agreement.

I UNDERSTAND, ACCEPT AND AGREE TO THE ABOVE RELEASE AND ACCEPT AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE RULES OF COMPETITION AS PRESENTED FOR THE 2026 BLUE MARLIN GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP.

I UNDERSTAND, IN ORDER TO WEIGH A FISH OR HAVE VIDEO VERIFIED ON THE FINAL DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT, TEAMS MUST CLEAR THE DEMARCATION LINE ON SATURDAY, JULY 18th, 2026 BY 6:00 PM.

IN THE SPIRIT OF FAIR COMPETITION, AND THE REASONABLE CONSERVATION OF GOM BILLFISH RESOURCES, I AGREE TO USE MY BEST EFFORT TO NOTIFY THE TOURNAMENT OF EACH BILLFISH BOATED AND/OR RELEASED IN A REASONABLE TIMEFRAME.

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

BOAT: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_