

New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament Rules – August 19-22, 2026

Rules are Subject to Change. The final instructions/rules will be given at the Captains' Meeting, 9:30 AM, Thursday, August 20, 2026 at Cypress Cove Marina

1. **Dates and Times:** Tournament fishing begins after the Captains' meeting at 9:30 AM, Thursday, August 20, and continues through Saturday, August 22, 2026. Boats must pass the Cypress Cove fish cleaning station and check in via VHF radio ch.68 prior to 7:00 PM Saturday, August 22, 2026. All participating boats with eligible fish to be weighed or BSC's and video images (see section 11) must pass the check point –see above- and be checked in with Tournament Headquarters via radio prior to 7:00 PM, Saturday, August 22, 2026. Please refer to "Weigh-In" section for weigh station times.
2. **Registration:** Registration will be held at the Tournament Headquarters, located at Cypress Cove Marina, Thursday, August 20 from 12:00 PM until 5:00 PM. All anglers must be registered to be eligible for tournament awards or prizes. Wristbands will be issued and **MUST** be worn at all times for admission to events and be visible in your digital images for Release/Tag Points.
3. **Departures/Boundaries:** Boats may depart from any Gulf of America marina at 6:30 PM, Thursday, August 22. Boats departing from marinas other than Cypress Cove must be registered and will have specific instructions for daily designators and be required to video your dock departure and your GPS date/time departure. Cypress Cove is the **ONLY** weigh station. There are no tournament boundaries. **ALL** eligible fish, along with Billfish Score Cards, completed Tag cards, and digital images must be brought to Cypress Cove Marina; just be in on time, and please use safe judgment with regards to fuel capacity and range.
4. **Tackle:** The official I.G.F.A. saltwater rules are the applicable rules for the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament. For a complete listing of the I.G.F.A. saltwater equipment and angling rules, please go to <http://www.igfa.org/Fish/INTERNATIONAL-ANGLING-RULES.aspx>. The only exception to this is that the Mate may set the hook and assist the registered angler to the chair during the first 2 minutes after the hook up; this may occur only once during the initial hook up and not while fighting the fish. Maximum line class is 130 lb. test. NOBGFC boats will receive line class bonus for annual club awards, but not tournament awards.
5. **Official Times:** The official tournament time will be announced at the Captains' Meeting, Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 9:30 AM. The official tournament clock will be posted at the weigh station.
6. **Entry Fees:** The base entry fee is \$2,500.00. The base entry fee covers: 1 Boat with 1 Captain, 1 Mate, and 4 Anglers - registered Captain and Mate are included as anglers. Additional anglers may be registered at a cost of \$150.00 each; additional party passes may be purchased at a cost of \$75.00 each. Cash, Checks, and Credit Cards (credit cards subject to a 3.5% service charge) will be accepted at tournament headquarters. Payment of the base entry fee and signing of the entry form constitutes that each participant has read and wholly understands the tournament rules and release of liability. Additionally, the participants further agree to abide by the tournament rules and the decisions of the Tournament Committee. The decisions of the Tournament Committee are **FINAL**, inclusive of the Weigh Master and Tournament Rules Committee. Participants must fish the boat that they are registered to. **Changing boats is not allowed after 9:30 AM, Thursday, August 20, 2026.**
7. **Sportsmanship:** The New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament is located in Venice, Louisiana, also known to many as the "Sportsman's Paradise." All participants hereby agree to abide by our basic tournament philosophy: "Treat fellow sportsmen and fishermen the way you would like them to treat you in return." Poor sportsmanship may be grounds for tournament disqualification at the discretion of the Tournament Committee.

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8. **Permits/Licenses:** All anglers desiring to weigh in an eligible fish are required to possess a current Louisiana Saltwater Fishing License (1-888-765-2602, or <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses/fishing/recreational>) Additionally, a current NMFS permit must be presented prior to the weighing in of any Billfish or Tuna (<https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/InitialOrRenew.asp> 1-888-872-8862). All tournament participants are encouraged to comply with all Federal, state of Louisiana, and Plaquemines Parish laws regarding boating, fishing licenses, size and bag limits, along with any other laws that may apply. **Additionally, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries requires a Recreational Offshore Landings Permit per angler for the landing of yellowfin tuna, billfish, swordfish, amberjack, dolphin, grouper and snapper. There is NO CHARGE for this permit. The Recreational Offshore Landing Permit can only be obtained online at <http://www.wlf.la.gov/rolp> or via the Apple app store or Android app store.**
9. **Polygraph Testing:** All registered participants may be subject to polygraph testing, prior to the issuing of any tournament winnings or prizes. The Tournament Committee may consider the results of any such polygraph test prior to the determination of any tournament prize money or award winner.
10. **Captains' Meeting:** The Captains' Meeting is scheduled for 9:30 AM, Thursday, August 20; ALL boats must be registered before 9:00AM, Thursday, August 20, 2026. Attendance is recommended and a boat representative must sign out at the close of the Captains Meeting. **Boats departing from other marinas will be required to call for special instructions on captains meeting and video designators.**
11. **Billfish Score Cards:** Billfish Score Cards will be distributed at the Captains' Meeting. The BSC is the registered Team's log for every Billfish that is hooked and either released, tagged or boated. Teams must present completed and signed BSC's (signed by all Team members), along with Video Images and **completed tag cards (only for club annual points)**, checked in via radio passed the checkpoint - see Item 1, no later than 7:00 PM, Saturday, August 22, 2026 in order to either weigh-in an eligible Blue Marlin or qualify for Release/Tag Points. BSC's will be compared to the Tournament Committee Boats radio log. See rule #15 & #16 for additional video requirements. Video images, BSC's and Tag cards must be presented at the Weigh Station via the registered boat and cannot be transferred to another boat.
12. **Weigh-In:** Tournament scales are located at Cypress Cove Marina. The weigh station hours are from 8:00 AM until 7:00 PM, Friday, August 21, 2026, and 8:00 AM until 7:00 PM, on Saturday, August 22, 2026. **All fish must be brought to the weigh-station by the boat from which it was caught - do not go to your slip with fish; boats with no fish, but with release videos may go to their slip.** Only registered tournament anglers are allowed to weigh in an eligible fish (see Rule #11). **Eligible fish/ BSC's must be presented at the weigh-station by the angler that caught the fish, via his/her Teams registered boat. Eligible fish/BSC must not leave the registered boat from which it was originally caught, except for the weigh-in at Cypress Cove Marina.** The angler must remain with his/her fish throughout the complete weigh in procedure and sign the certified weight-slip to verify the weight and time prior to the fish becoming an Official Fish, eligible for prizes and/or awards. Weigh-in times will be recorded to the minute.
13. **Eligible Fish:** The following species are eligible as described below:

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<u>Species</u>	<u>Tag & Release</u>	<u>Min. Size</u>	<u>Allowable Per</u>	<u>Points/Weight Points</u>
	<u>Awards</u>	<u>to Weigh</u>	<u>Team to Weigh</u>	<u>(1/10th lb.)</u>
Blue Marlin	Yes	110 inches LJFL	1 per Team/per day	500/1 point per lb.
White Marlin	Yes	NO	0	200
Sailfish	Yes	NO	0	200
Spearfish	Yes	NO	0	200
Dolphin	NO	20 lb. Min.	3/day/per Team	1 point per lb.
Tuna*	NO	27" CFL	3/day/per Team	1 point per lb.
Wahoo	NO	20 lb. Min.	3/day/per Team	1 point per lb.

* Allowable species are Yellowfin tuna, and Big eye tuna

13. **Eligible Fish continued:** No mutilated, cut, frozen, or questionable fish, as determined by the Tournament Weigh Master and Tournament Committee, will be weighed. The decision of the Tournament Weigh Master and Tournament Committee is FINAL. Any angler or team in possession of illegal fish will result in entire Team disqualification and all entry fees and optional entry fees will be forfeited.
14. **Reporting of Billfish:** All billfish released or boated must be reported to a Tournament Committee Boat or tournament headquarters via VHF, or telephone. Committee Boats, frequencies and telephone numbers will be announced at the Captains' Meeting, 9:30 AM, Thursday, August 20, 2026. Upon releasing or boating of any billfish, you must report to a Tournament Committee Boat or HQ to receive a confirmation number. (Do not boat or remove from the water any billfish for release, - **it will be disqualified**). Upon the releasing, tagging, or boating (110" minimum lower jaw to fork length for Blue Marlin) of any eligible billfish or Blue Marlin, the entire Team must complete their BSC and report the following information:
- Name of Boat
 - Name of Angler-whether male, female, or youth (please)
 - Species of Billfish
 - Whether or not Tagged, Released or Boated
 - Lower Jaw to Fork Length (LJFL), if Boated, measurement should be within 3 inches LJFL
- The Tournament Committee Boat will issue a confirmation number and time for your released or boated billfish. Please make certain that the Committee Boat has confirmed your data, including time of release or boating of billfish. If a Tournament Committee Boat cannot be contacted, then a verifiable report must be given to another Tournament boat or Tournament Headquarters; boat name must be noted on the Billfish Score Card (BSC's will be provided at the Captains' Meeting). This is the same procedure for each billfish. Release/Tag points are based on GPS date/time in your video and will be compared to the full minute recorded by the Tournament Committee Boat; please confirm your times and confirmation numbers.
15. **Release/Tagging:** The New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament does not require that a tag be inserted in a Billfish for the release to qualify for release points. We encourage tagging of all billfish to further continue the research efforts of The Billfish Foundation (www.billfish.org). Only tagged billfish will qualify for annual club points. A billfish is considered officially released when the leader connection is wound to the tip of the rod, or the mate or other crew member touches the leader, along with the complete video image requirements and proper tag placement (club annual points only) that are required (see Rule #16).
16. **Video Images:** To obtain release points, in addition to the communications with the Committee Boat/Tournament HQ or other registered tournament boat and the corresponding confirmation number, the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament requires completed Billfish Score Cards (BSC's-see Sect. #11) and video images with GPS date and time stamps must be provided. The video image must contain the following:
- The angler fighting the fish showing the tournament issued wristband or identifier.
 - Clear identification of the species of Billfish.

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- c. Mate with leader in hand and tournament wristband or identifier, wiring, proper tagging and releasing the fish.
- d. Wiring and release of fish, followed by an immediate and complete pan of the cockpit showing no other lines in the water. **If you have a double hook-up, please show it on your video.**
- e. After the pan of the cockpit, record a legible shot of the boat's GPS showing both date and time.
- f. The camera must **NOT** stop recording during the wiring, release and complete pan of the cockpit and filming the GPS date and time. **This is imperative.**
- g. If the mate has the leader in hand and the hook pulls or the leader breaks, the fish still qualifies if all other rules are satisfied; but, if the fish is only identifiable as a billfish, the fish will score the minimum points=200 points. Please do not stop your video. **Do not bring any billfish out of the water that you are going to release; it will be disqualified.**
- h. **NO CD/DVD video will be accepted.** One person from each team must present memory cards and completed BSC's to the video judge. **Please have memory cards set at your first fish ready for review.**
- i. **If the GPS date or time is not clearly identifiable, the date and time of the boat checking in via radio crossing the checkpoint will be applied, if all other video requirements are met.**

17. Protests: A tournament participant must register any protest with the Tournament Committee within thirty minutes of the weigh in closing time (7:00 PM) on Saturday, August 22, 2026. The protest must be written and accompanied by \$1000.00 cash, along with evidence/materials for the protest and must be presented to the Tournament Rules Committee prior to 7:30 PM, Saturday, August 22, 2026. The Tournament Rules Committee will make every effort possible to determine the validity of the protest within two hours (9:30 PM). The decision of the Tournament Rules Committee is final. If the appeal is successful, the \$1000.00 appeal fee will be refunded.

18. Prizes from Base Entry Fee: The Base Entry Fee for the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament covers all events, trophies, and captain's bags/give aways. The Base Entry Fee is exactly that, an Entry Fee that allows the registered team to participate in this event. There are no payouts from the Base Entry Fee. Winners or their representatives **MUST BE PRESENT** at the awards ceremony or they waive their award.

Species	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Blue Marlin (weighed)	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy
Top Release (total release points)	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy
Dolphin	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy
Tuna	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy
Wahoo	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy
Top Angler-(total billfish points) (Judge Leander Perez Award)	Trophy		
Top Female Angler (total billfish points)	Trophy		
Top Youth Angler (total points) (Herman "Dutch" Prager)	Trophy		
Top Outboard Boat - (Total Points)	Trophy		

Release: Based on total billfish release points; ties broken by release times to the full minute; the first team to reach the highest number of total points will be declared the winner.

Weighed fish prizes are based on individual fish weight; not on cumulative weight/points.

19. Tie Breakers: Ties between the weights of two or more fish are broken by the time the earliest fish was weighed in, as recorded by the Tournament Official Weigh Master. A tie on total release points will be broken by the team that reaches the highest total number of release points first based on time.

20. Optional Entry Categories: The Optional Entry Levels are exactly that, Optional, and are not required or

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included in the base entry fee. The entry into the Optional Entry Levels is not required to be eligible for base entry fee trophies. Boats/anglers must be registered in the Optional Entry Categories to be eligible for the Optional Entry Levels Awards. There are 3 separate levels of Optional Entry Categories for Blue Marlin, Tag/Release, Tuna, Wahoo, and Dolphin. Teams may enter as many Optional Entry Categories as they desire, prior to 9:00am, Thursday, August 20, 2026. Cash, Checks, or Credit Cards (subject to a 3.5% service charge) will be accepted to enter Optional Entry Categories on-site at the Tournament Headquarters.

<u>Level</u>	<u>Blue Marlin</u>	<u>Release</u>	<u>Dolphin</u>	<u>Tuna</u>	<u>Wahoo</u>
Optional Entry Level #3 Jackpot	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Optional Entry Level #2 Jackpot	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Optional Entry Level #1 Jackpot	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500

Total Across the Board \$20,00.00 plus Entry Fee

90% PAYBACK ON ALL OPTIONAL ENTRY CATEGORIES; 10% ADMINISTRATIVE FEE DEDUCTED

20.a.

Optional Entry Level # 1-Level # 3 Payouts:

3 Winners

1st Place	50%
2nd Place	30%
3rd Place	20%

2 Winners

1st Place	60%
2nd Place	40%

1 Winner

1st Place	100%
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21.Optional Entry Refunds: If there are no winners in a specific category Optional Entry Jackpot, the Jackpot for that specific category will be refunded (less 10% Administration Fee) by NOBGFC to the Team Leader listed on the Entry Form within Ten Business Days (10) following the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament.

22. All Payouts: All payouts for tournament winnings will be made payable to the "Make Check Payable To" entity indicated on the Entry Form. A Social Security # or Federal Tax Identification # must be provided. NOBGFC will issue a Federal Tax Form 1099 for all monetary awards to the entity for whom the check is made payable. Winning payout checks will be mailed within Ten Business Days (10) days following the completion of the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament.

23. Cancellation: The New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament is scheduled August 19-22, 2026. In the case of inclement weather, the tournament will be completed on the first day to be declared fishable by the Tournament Committee. If weather and/or conditions beyond the control of the Tournament Committee require that the tournament be cancelled, refunds will be made, less tournament expenses, as solely determined by Tournament Committee.

24. Use of photographs, audio & video recordings: All participants hereby grant the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament, New Orleans Big Game Fishing Club, and comefishLa.com, Inc. their full and unlimited consent for the use of any photograph, video and or audio recording, taken or recorded in relation to the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament, in which they, or their voice and or likeness may appear. New Orleans Big Game Fishing Club and comefishLa.com, Inc. may use said photographs, video or audio recordings for any purpose it deems, including, but not limited to, advertising and marketing, promotion, resale, or the like without compensation or any restrictions.

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25. **Liability Release:** Participants agree to the maximum extent permitted by law that they are entering and participating at their own risk. By entering and/or registering for the New Orleans Invitational Billfish Tournament (hereinafter referred to as "NOIBT") all participants, including, but not limited to all registered anglers, Captains, mates and guests (hereinafter referred to as "Participants"), agree, to the maximum extent permitted by law, to hold the NOIBT, NOBGFC, comefishLa.com, Inc., Cypress Cove Marina, Inc, Cypress Cove Peninsula Townhomes, LLC, and Cypress Cove Lodge, LLC, together with all persons or entities involved with/associated with the NOIBT, along with their respective employees, officers, directors, volunteers, agents, committee members, partners, sponsors, advisors, and subcontractors (hereinafter referred to as "the NOIBT group") harmless from any and all claims, demands, or liability of any kind whatsoever relating to the NOIBT, including but not limited to any claims for any act or omission, excluding, however, any claims for any intentional or gross fault by any member of the NOIBT group, and for any claims for physical injury caused by any member of the NOIBT group.