

2026 Cape Fear Blue Marlin Tournament Rules

**Rules Committee - Arlen Ash, Cameron Bailey, William Bailey, Bobby Brown, Jackson David,
Jimmy Vass, Jr., Jordan Vass**

Weighmasters – Randy Gregory, George Lott

Official Reporting / Weigh Station – Seapath Marina and Yacht Club

1. All boats must be registered no later than 9:00 pm Wednesday, May 27th, and entry fees paid to qualify for prizes. Entry fees may be paid by cash or check. No credit cards accepted. The tournament or tournament host reserves the right to deny entry to anyone for any cause. Withdrawal from the tournament must be done by notifying a rules committee member by 8:30 am on the first fishing day, and 15% of the Level 1 money will be retained for tournament expenses. **Registration will be on Wednesday, May 27th, at Seapath Marina, starting at 3 pm.**

2. Fishing time will be GPS 8:30 am to 3:00 pm daily, Thursday, May 28th, Friday, May 29th, and Saturday, May 30th. Fish hooked after 3:00 pm each day are not eligible for prize money. VHF channel 72. No sonars shall be deployed before lines in time of 8:30 am each day. This is a 2-out-of-3-day event, Captain's choice. This is a total points tournament (Weighed/Released/Combined). Fishing boundaries will be between North 39550 and South 39000 Loran. An official lay day form must be submitted by 8:30 am on the day declared a non-fishing day. Email a picture of the completed lay day form to; **rules@capefearbluemarlin.com**. The form must be signed by a participant. If a lay day form is not turned in, that day will automatically be counted as a fishing day.

3. **Boated Blue Marlin** - A Blue Marlin that has been boated must be reported to the committee boat along with an estimated time of arrival to billfish scales (Atlantic Marine). A Blue Marlin that is boated must be a minimum of 110 inches, measured from the V-notch in the tail to the tip of the lower jaw. Billfish is considered boated if it breaks the vertical plane of the boat or is gaffed to be measured. If a Blue Marlin does not meet the required 110-inch minimum, all billfish points (weighed and released) shall be disqualified for that boat for that day. Points for qualifying billfish shall be 1 ½ pts per pound up to 599lbs and 2 pts per pound 600lbs or above. Scales are open at 4:30 pm and close at 7:00 pm each day.

4. **Released Billfish** – All billfish must be reported to the committee boat when hooked, lost, or released. The crew cannot attempt to boat or gaff a billfish that is claimed to be released. A verified release of any billfish must include a time-stamped video or digital photograph showing the date, time, leader in mate's hand or inside the rod tip, the assigned tournament marker (found in registration packet), and identifiable species in one single picture or continuous, unedited video segment meeting criteria in rules 4 & **"RULE 5 – Media Requirements"**. The release form and picture (s) shall be emailed to **rules@capefearbluemarlin.com**. All materials must be received no later than 7:00 pm the day of the release. In the event of a tie, the first boat to achieve winning points will be declared the winner. Each release will award the participating boat with points as per the following values and criteria.

a.) Blue Marlin – Undisputable, identifiable blue marlin meeting all criteria in Rules 4 & 5 shall be worth 400 pts for Sonar boat and 425 pts for Non-Sonar boat. Must pass a 4 out of 7 vote from the rules committee if in question. If a blue marlin is not identifiable and does not pass a majority vote in the rules committee, it shall be worth 100 pts.

b.) White Marlin/Sailfish/Spearfish – Undisputable identifiable white marlin/sailfish/spearfish meeting all criteria in Rules 4 & 5 shall be worth 120 pts for Sonar boat and 125 pts for Non-Sonar boat. Must pass a 4 out of 7 vote from the rules committee if in question. If a white marlin/spearfish is not identifiable and does not pass a majority vote in the rules committee, it shall be worth 100 pts.

5. **Release Media Requirements** – In order for media to qualify for release points, all phone-based videos/pictures must be taken within **"The Reel Time Camera App"** or via time-stamped GoPro footage. No phone media will be accepted from any other application, ie, camera roll, photos, other third-party apps, etc. CFBMT requires all participants who use phone-based media to download **"The Reel Time Camera App."** The app is free of charge. Please ensure the app is open on your iPhone before losing service/wifi (if applicable). GoPro footage can also be uploaded to the app. All footage must be sent from the app to **rules@capefearbluemarlin.com**. Please see the included QR code for **"The Reel Time Camera App"** at the end of the rules.

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6. **Gamefish** – 1st Place Tuna (Yellowfin Only), Dolphin or Wahoo will be determined by weight. If two or more fish are of the same weight, then length plus girth shall determine the winner. All gamefish qualifying for prize money must be offloaded at the official weigh station(Seapath Marina) from the boat landing the fish unless authorized by the weighmasters. Scales open at 4:30 pm and close at 7:00 pm each day.

7. **Level 4 Billfish Lottery** – Each individual billfish released shall be assigned a number. At the awards party, two numbers will be drawn at random, and the Level 4 monies will be split equally between the two winners, 50/50.

8. This is a rod and reel, hook and line tournament. Double line and leader may not exceed 40ft, neither of which may exceed 30ft. Mandatory use of non-offset circle hooks with natural bait or natural/artificial combinations is required. J-hooks may be deployed only with artificial lures. All billfish, gamefish, and participants must adhere to the latest NC state and Federal regulations to qualify for prize money. Each participant (including the captain and mate) is required to have a current NC state saltwater fishing license. All boats must have current 2026 HMS permits.

9. Disputes must be made in writing to the CFBMT rules committee. The dispute must be made by 8:30 am the following day or by 7:00 pm the last day of the tournament. Weighmaster has the right to hold any fish qualified for prize money deemed questionable. If retention is refused, the fish is disqualified. The rules committee may cut open any fish for inspection. Fish with weight alterations are disqualified. IGFA rules apply regarding all fish.

10. Prize money checks will be written to the person/entity on the registration form. SSN or TIN must be provided to receive prize money. Checks will be mailed to the address on the form when all checks have cleared by the bank.

11. One person from each boat entered is responsible for knowing the rules, including any changes made. Any boat breaching the above rules will be disqualified. Decisions of the rules committee are final. By signing the CFBMT entry form and paying the entry fees, you agree and understand the rules for the 2026 CFBMT.

HMS permits – All boats must have one of the following valid permits: HMS angling(recreational), HMS Charter/Head boat, or Atlantic Tunas General category permit(commercial). Current permits expire annually on December 31st each year. Permits must be on board the vessel when engaged in fishing. The 2026 CFBMT is a registered recreational HMS tournament. For more information on HMS permits, call (888) 872-8862.



The Reel Time Camera App

Tournament Video Recording

Designed for iPhone. Not verified for macOS.

