

2025 Rules and Regulations - Offshore Division

1. A North Carolina Recreational Saltwater Fishing License is required. The NC Division of Marine Fisheries requires a recreational fishing license for anyone 16 years or older participating in fishing aboard a non-charter boat vessel. These individual licenses can be purchased on a 10 day, annual or lifetime basis. For more information or to acquire a license, go to <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/recreational-fishing-licenses-and-permits> or call 252-726-7021.
2. Anglers, boats, or teams must abide by all state and federal regulations.
3. To qualify for the tournament, each boat must be registered with the Tournament Committee and tournament entry fee (\$1500.00) must be paid by 7:00 pm on Friday, May 2nd. Any boat may be substituted before the tournament, but must be registered with the Tournament Committee before lines in on Saturday May 3rd.
4. There is no boundary for where you can fish but you must be in sight of the scales by 6:00 pm or the boat will be disqualified. The scales/weigh-in will be located at Ottis Landing, Morehead City Waterfront.
5. Fishing hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and all boats must be in sight of the weigh-in station by 6:00 pm. The scales at the weigh-in will open at 4:00 pm. The weigh-in is located at the public dock on Morehead City Waterfront, next to Carolina Princess. Look for the Reelin' for Research banner.
6. Boats/Teams will be notified the evening of Friday, May 2nd if the tournament is going to be canceled or altered due to weather. Tournament registration fees are nonrefundable but still tax deductible. 100% of tournament registration fees will go to Reelin' for Research, Inc.
7. The committee boat (to be announced) will be monitoring channel 72. No fish need to be called into the committee boat.
8. The winner is determined by the total weight of three (3) meat fish. These can be all the same species or a combination of species as defined by the next rule. Reelin' for Research is not responsible for determining a team's largest (3) meat fish.
9. Meat fish are defined as dolphin, wahoo, tuna (yellowfin or blackfin). One point per pound for all meat fish.
10. All fish must be caught from a conventional rod and reel. J-Hooks or Circle hooks are allowed, as well as lures and artificial baits. No electric reels or bandit reels or "Green sticking" will be permitted. All boats must be trolling.
11. A rod may be passed from one angler to another angler as long as it is immediate and that the receiver fights the fish. A rod may not be handed off to more than two anglers.
12. In the case of a tie in total weight of the teams 3 fish, the winner will be determined by a coin toss. The boat that weighed in first will make the heads/tails call.
13. Any protest must be made immediately at the end of the day's fishing in writing to the Tournament Committee.

2025 Rules and Regulations - Inshore Division

1. A North Carolina Recreational Saltwater Fishing License is required. The NC Division of Marine Fisheries requires a recreational fishing license for anyone 16 years or older participating in fishing aboard a non-charter boat vessel. These individual licenses can be purchased on a 10 day, annual or lifetime basis. For more information or to acquire a license, go to <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Licensing/Hunting-Fishing-Trapping-Licenses> or call (888) 248-6834.
2. Anglers, boats, or teams must abide by all state and federal regulations.
3. To qualify for the tournament, each boat must be registered with the Tournament Committee and tournament entry fee (\$1500.00) must be paid by 7:00 pm on Friday, May 2nd. Registration must be made online at r4rweighin.com. Any boat may be substituted before the tournament, but must be registered with the Tournament Committee before lines in on Saturday, May 4th.
4. There is no boundary for where you can fish. The scales/weigh-in will be located at Ottis Landing, Morehead City Waterfront.
5. Fishing hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The scales at the weigh-in will be open from 2:00 pm to 3:15 p.m. or until all qualified teams have weighed in. Fish may be weighed in dead or alive. Teams may weigh in by land or water.
6. Team Captains will be notified the evening Friday, May 2nd if the tournament is going to be canceled or altered due to weather. Tournament registration fees are nonrefundable but still tax deductible. 100% of tournament registration fees will go to Reelin' for Research, Inc.
7. Maximum of 4 registered anglers per boat.
8. The winner is determined by the total weight of four (4) qualifying fish. These can be a combination of species as defined by the next rule but a team **cannot weigh-in more than two of the same species of fish**. Reelin' for Research is not responsible for determining a team's largest four (4) qualifying fish. A tie will be settled by whichever team has the largest fish.
9. Qualifying fish are defined as bluefish, sheepshead, bonito (not albacore) and drum (black and/or red). Maximum of 2 red drum per boat. One point per pound for all qualifying fish. See NC 2025 Saltwater Regulations for size and creel limits.
10. All fish must be caught on rod and reel, maximum of six rods in the water at a time. Artificial and/or live bait is permitted.
11. Any protest must be made immediately at the end of the day's fishing in writing to the Tournament Committee.

2025 Rules and Regulations - Billfish Division

1. All boats must be registered with the Tournament Committee and entry fee of \$2,500.00 (general entry + billfish division) paid to qualify for prizes and trophies prior to fishing and no later than 8:00 pm Friday, May 2nd. Any boat may be substituted, but must be registered with the Tournament Committee prior to fishing. The tournament reserves the right in its sole discretion to deny entry to anyone for any reason.
2. At least one person from each boat should attend the Captain's Meeting for the tournament which will be held on Friday prior to the first day of fishing. This meeting will be live streamed for convenience. Regardless, all participants in the tournament are responsible for knowing all tournament rules including any changes to the rules that may take place at the Captain's Meeting.
3. No lines or teasers are permitted in the water before official fishing hours. The use of omnidirectional sonar technology will not be permitted before official fishing hours. Official fishing hours are 8:00am until 2:00pm.
4. This is a rod-and-reel, hook-and-line tournament. Double line and leader combined may not exceed 40 feet; neither may exceed 30 feet. The fish must be fought by rod and reel from the boat. A second rod and reel may be attached to the primary rod and reel. It is not allowed to throw a rod overboard with a flotation device. 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. Drones are not allowed in this tournament.
5. All billfish must be reported to Tournament Headquarters when hooked, lost or released. If a fish is released by a junior angler, report the angler name and age for real-time scoring. Radio frequency shall be VHF Channel 72 or via the Reelin' for Research App.
6. There are no boundaries currently for this Tournament.
7. 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 Reelin' for Research Billfish Tournament Rules as contained herein.
8. All participants, fish, and boats must adhere to all state and federal fishing regulations to qualify for prizes in this tournament. This is an all-release tournament. No billfish shall be boated. A billfish is boated when any portion of the fish breaks the outside vertical plane of the boat. In the event a billfish is boated, the boat will automatically be disqualified from the tournament.
9. Release Points Release points will be awarded when mate touches the leader or the 30-foot leader touches the rod tip. In the event of a tie in total release points, the winner will be determined by the first boat to achieve the winning total. In order to qualify as a release, by federal law the billfish must remain in the water.

2025 Rules and Regulations - Billfish Division Cont'd

125 RELEASE POINTS WILL BE AWARDED FOR:

- (1) All billfish, including blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, hatchet marlin and spearfish.
- (2) When mate touches the leader or leader touches the rod tip before the fish is released,
- (3) When team turns in a release form via the Reel Time App it must be attested to by signature of the captain and mate or angler on board the boat at the time of the release. Release forms must be turned in by 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 3 to qualify. All billfish forms may be photographed and uploaded via the Reelin' for Research App.

400 RELEASE POINTS WILL BE AWARDED FOR:

Blue marlin, if the team provides indisputable video or photo evidence to the Rules Committee. To qualify for the 400 points, teams must turn in a release form online via your Reelin' for Research App account, along with video or photo evidence. All release forms must be turned in no later than 6:00 on May 3. The photo or video must show clear indisputable evidence that the fish is a blue marlin. It is the responsibility of the participants to ensure that their video recording device clock/ date is set accurately to reflect the time and date of the releases to qualify for the 400 points. The recording device will need to be compatible to upload the photo or video into the Reel Time App. If the Rules Committee is unable to see indisputable evidence that the fish is a blue marlin, the release will be scored at 125 points.

25 BONUS RELEASE POINTS WILL BE AWARDED FOR:

All billfish released by a Reelin' for Research Junior Angler, defined as any angler age 16 and under. A kid must be the primary angler. The rod may be passed to other Junior Anglers on board, age 16 and under. A billfish hooked by an adult must be handed off to a Junior Angler immediately or in a timely manner. The angler's age must be verified on the release form attested to by signature of the captain, mate, or angler on board the boat at the time of the release. If the fish is hooked and angled by a Jr. Angler there is a possible additional 25 points that can be awarded with verification for that fish.

10. A boat will be disqualified from the tournament if the boat, captain and crew violate any rules of the tournament.

11. Non-offset circle hooks are mandatory when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lures in order to receive release points for a billfish. "J" hooks are allowed on artificial lures only.

12. Omni Directional Sonar is defined as any technology that requires a transducer mounted to a shaft that extends from or through the hull of the boat with the capability to rotate and view the water from 1-360 degrees. Omni Directional Sonar is permitted.

13. Awards/Trophies will be awarded to the top boat, top overall angler, top lady angler and top junior angler for Billfish release points.

14. WITHDRAWAL FROM TOURNAMENT - No fees will be refunded.