

Houston Invitational Billfish Tournament

Rules and Requirements

Dates and Times:

1. Tournament fishing days are Friday, June 27 and Saturday, June 28, 2008.
2. Boats may depart from any Texas port no earlier than 5:00 pm on Thursday, June 26, 2008.
3. Fishing begins no earlier than midnight Friday morning.
4. There is no "quit fishing time" but all boats weighing fish or turning in release verifications must be in Surfside Marina by 6:00 pm on Saturday.
5. The tournament weigh station will be open from 2:00 pm until 6:00 pm only on Saturday, June 28, 2008.
6. All boats must return to Surfside Marina to weigh fish and turn in video release verifications to receive tournament points and double award points. All boats must be within the entrance to the Surfside Marina and verified by Tournament Control by 6:00 pm. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Entry & Registration: Registration forms can be downloaded from the HBGFC website and faxed, completely filled out, to 281.474.2201. Registration is not complete until payment of entry fee by check, cashier's check or Visa/MasterCard/Discover/AmEx is received by the Club office. Mail entry form to: Houston Big Game Fishing Club, 1902 Shipyard Drive, Seabrook, TX 77586. You can also register at the Surfside Marina prior to the Captain's Meeting between the hours of 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm on Thursday, June 26 or any time prior to June 25 at the club office.

Captain's Meeting: The Captain's Meeting is scheduled for 4:00 pm on Thursday, June 26, 2008 at the Surfside Marina. All tournament participants must be registered by that time. Tournament bags with caps/visors, t shirts, wristbands and dinner tickets for Saturday nights Awards banquet will be distributed to all Tournament participants. Each boat will receive one bag with 6 caps/visors, 6 t shirts, 6 wristbands, and 6 dinner tickets. Additional dinner tickets may be purchased for \$50.00 per person.

Tackle and Rules: The official IGFA Saltwater Rules, and all pertinent state and federal regulations are the applicable rules for the Houston Invitational Billfish Tournament with the exception of our Junior Angler (anglers 18 years of age and under) which states that "a Junior may receive help in getting the rod to the chair". The maximum line class for the Tournament is 130# test. Be aware of any federal requirements regarding the use of circle hooks during tournaments. It is the sole responsibility of all participants to be familiar with IGFA saltwater equipment and angling rules, as well as all applicable federal and state regulations.

Reporting of Fish: All Billfish hookups must be reported to a Tournament committee boat via VHF, SSB, or telephone. Frequencies are 68 for VHF and 2638, channel 275 on SSB. When the Billfish has been released, please notify the Tournament committee boat **immediately**. In case of a tie, time will be the tiebreaker. When reporting a release, Name of Boat, Name of Angler, Species of Fish and Time must be contained in the transmission to a Tournament Committee boat.

Scoring: Blue Marlin will be worth 1000 points, White Marlin 400 points, and Sailfish 200 points. Tuna, Wahoo and Dolphin must meet the minimum weight of 25 lbs. and be in fresh condition. No mutilated, cut, frozen or questionable fish, as to be determined by the Tournament Committee, will be weighed. Swordfish do not count toward tournament scoring but Club anglers and boats will receive double points in the Club's Award Program for swordfish caught during the tournament. The decision of the Tournament Weigh Master and the Tournament Committee is final.

Digital Images/Video Recordings

To obtain release points, each release must:

1. Be verified by a Tournament Committee boat.
2. Be documented by the completion of a HBGFC Texas Division Verification form, along with digital/video images clearly identifying the species released.
3. The digital image must have a time and date stamp on the picture and clearly show the species of Billfish, with leader in hand or to the rod tip for wind on leaders. If the species of Billfish cannot be determined, then that Billfish will be awarded the points based on the lowest point value of the eligible species. Examples: a) obviously a billfish, but cannot determine sailfish or marlin, fish will receive sailfish points. b) obviously a Marlin, but cannot determine white or blue marlin, will receive white marlin points.
4. The committee strongly encourages all participants to have a backup camera/video in case of a malfunction and make sure that you have at least two people who know how to operate the camera/video. We also suggest that you leave the camera/video outside in a safe place to prevent "frosting up" when taken from an air-conditioned salon to the hot, humid outside air. Please use a new memory stick and/or video tape to facilitate the viewing of releases by the Tournament Committee. All tapes, cameras and memory sticks will be returned at the end of the Awards Celebration. The Club retains the right to a copy of any video or camera image used to verify eligible fish.
5. All rules and requirements of the HBGFC Awards program apply.

Awards:

1st, 2nd and 3rd place trophies will be awarded for the overall billfish release points. The winning boat receives the beautiful HBGFC Perpetual Trophy.

Trophies will be awarded to the Top Woman Angler and Top Junior Angler.

1st, 2nd and 3rd place trophies will be awarded for the heaviest Tuna, Wahoo and Dolphin. These trophies are awarded to the angler.

Protests: Any protest must be registered by the HBGFC member team leader of the boat before 6:30 pm on Saturday, June 28. The protest must be written and accompanied by \$250.00 cash and any evidence/materials supporting the protest must be presented to the Tournament Committee by the team leader. The Tournament Committee will do, with all due diligence, their best to validate or deny the protest within a two-hour period. The decision of the Tournament Committee is final and if the protest is deemed valid, the \$250.00 will returned to the team leader.

Permits: All boats desiring to weigh a fish are required to possess and display a current NMFS Highly Migratory species permit prior to the weighing of any Billfish or Tuna. For additional info, please go to www.nmfspermits.com.

Weigh-In: The Weigh Station will be at Surfside Marina and will be open from 2:00 until 6:00 pm on Saturday only. No fish or digital verification will be accepted after 6:00 pm on Saturday. The Tournament Committee will monitor Channel 68 on VHF. Cell phone contact numbers will be given out at the Tournament. You must be within the confines of the Surfside Marina by 6:00 pm for any of your release points or weighed fish to count towards the Tournament.

Slips/Dockage: The base entry fee does NOT include slip/dockage rental fees. Slips can be obtained by contacting the Surfside Marina at 979-230-9400. Please tell them that you are fishing the HBGFC Tournament for a discounted rate. Your slip will not be confirmed without paid entry.

Cancellation: The Tournament Committee, at their discretion, may change the Tournament to 1 day if weather dictates, or cancel Tournament fishing days altogether. There will be no make-up weather days for this event. If the Tournament cannot be conducted as planned due to inclement weather, Tournament registration fees, less Awards Dinner and Give-Away item costs, will be reimbursed. The Dinner and entertainment for Saturday night will proceed regardless of whether fishing takes place or not.

Liability Release: Participants agree to the maximum extent allowed by law that they are entering the HBGFC Tournament at their own risk. By entering/registering for the Houston Invitational Billfish Tournament herein referred to as HBGFC, as participants, including but not limited to, all anglers, Captains, mates and guests, agree, to the maximum extent allowed by law to hold the HBGFC, together with all persons or entities involved/associated with the HBGFC along with respective employees, officers, directors, volunteers, agents, committee members, partners, sponsors, advertisers, subcontractors (herein referred to as the HBGFC Group) harmless from any and all claims, demands or liabilities of any kind whatsoever relating to the HBGFC, including but not limited to any claims for any act or omission, excluding any claims for any intentional or gross fault by any member of HBGFC Group, and for any claims for physical injury by any member of the HBGFC Group.