



## SECTION I

### **Sport Fishing Championship | SFC Billfish Championship Rules**

#### **1. Composition of Team.**

- (a) A “Team” is defined as at least three Team Members (“Team Members”), comprised of any combination of Captain, Mates, and Anglers, and includes all anglers on a boat. Each boat is limited to a single Team in each SFC Qualifying Event regardless of the number of persons on the boat. Teams may be comprised of male and female representatives (Sport Fishing Championship (“SFC”) does not have gender-specific competitions).
- (b) All Team Members must be on the boat at all times during an SFC Qualifying Event in order to for the Team to remain eligible to earn points in that SFC Qualifying Event.
- (c) Once a person declares themselves a Teammate of a Team, that person may not compete for any other Team in the same SFC Season.
- (d) SFC acknowledges that there are limited situations where a Teammate may become injured, ill, or experience other Special Circumstances (such as bereavement) (“Special Circumstances”). Special Circumstances shall not include scheduling conflicts or personal preference. In the event that a Team cannot meet the three Teammate qualification minimum for an SFC Qualifying Event due to Special Circumstances, the Team must submit a Tournament Qualification Special Request Waiver to the SFC Competition Chairperson for review. The SFC Competition Chairperson shall be the sitting Chairperson of the Competition Committee of the Team Charter Owners. The Team must identify in the Waiver a Teammate who has previously appeared on the Team’s SFC Roster Card during the current SFC Regular Season, who may be permitted to compete in that SFC Qualifying Event. Approval of the Special Request Waiver is at the sole discretion of the SFC Commissioner.

#### **2. Registering a Team, Roster, and Boat.**

- (a) Registration for the SFC Billfish Championship is only available for the fourteen (14) SFC Team Charters and their representatives, per the league’s Constitution & By-Laws.
- (b) The three Team Members of each Team must check in with the SFC’s team registration table, typically located at the same registration location at each of the SFC Qualifying Events. All Team Members must check-in with the SFC representative and provide a government-issued ID or 2025 SFC Season Credential unless otherwise noted by the Head of League Operations. The Team will then fill out a SFC Team, Roster, and Boat registration card, either physically or digitally, where the SFC will collect the first names, last names, boat name (if applicable) and boat HIN.
- (c) Example of SFC Team, Roster, and Boat Registration Card:

**2025 Hurricane Hole Louisiana Open SFC Roster Card**

Team Charter	Texas Lone Stars AC
Boat Name	Lucky Number 7
Boat HIN	ABC12345D404
SFC Fishing Teammate #1	Johnathon Doe
SFC Fishing Teammate #2	Jane Smith
SFC Fishing Teammate #3	Walter Angler
Team Member #4	First Last 1
Team Member #5	First Last 2
Team Member #6	First Last 3
Team Member #7	First Last 4
Team Member #8	First Last 5
Team Member #9	First Last 6
Team Member #10	First Last 7

- i. In the example above, Johnathon Doe, Jane Smith, and Walter Angler have declared that they are competing for the “Texas Lone Stars AC” team in the SFC Regular Season.
- ii. The three Team Members will be required to compete on the “Lucky Number 7” boat with HIN last four D404 at the 2024 Hurricane Hole Louisiana Open.



- iii. The three Team Members that comprise the Team Super Charged (Doe, Smith, Angler) are permitted to compete as a Team on a different boat at future SFC Qualifying Events.
- (d) Teams are permitted to change boats during any SFC Qualifying Event **only** if the vessel experiences a new mechanical issue to the motor, cabin, or hull that creates life safety issues to the Team and all other people on board and is subject to the Head of League Operations approval. If a Team needs to change boats due to life safety issues, a Boat Change Request Form must be immediately submitted to the SFC Competition Chairperson upon learning of the life safety issue. before the new boat is entered into that SFC Qualifying Event.
- (e) SFC reserves the right to inspect any boat within 24 hours of competition at its sole discretion. If a Team does not allow the SFC Competition Chairperson or his/ her designee to inspect the boat, that Team will be disqualified from the SFC Qualifying Event.
- (f) These SFC rules and regulations are in addition to, and not a replacement for, the rules and regulations of each SFC Qualifying Event and the league's Constitution & By-Laws. Each Team and each Teammate must comply with all rules and regulations of SFC and each SFC Qualifying Event in which such Team participates; provided, that in the event of any conflict between the SFC rules and regulations and the rules and regulations of any SFC Qualifying Event, the SFC rules and regulations shall be controlling.
- (g) **"Ghost Team Member" Rule:** It is the sole responsibility of the three Team Members to make sure that all Team Members have been reported on the SFC Roster Card prior to the beginning of the tournament. All persons on-board the boat must be accounted for on the SFC Roster Card. If it is confirmed that a person is present on the boat without being reported by the Team Members on the SFC Roster Card in an effort to create a competitive advantage, that Team may be subject to disqualification from the SFC Qualifying Event and/ or the SFC's Billfish Championship at the sole discretion of Sport Fishing Championship tournament officials.
- (h) **"Working Charter Boat Exemption" Rule:** At the sole discretion of the Commissioner and Sport Fishing Championship Officials, a working, licensed, fishing charter boat business may be permitted to provide services for multiple fishing Teams during the same SFC Billfish Championship Season, so long as a) the boat is providing support to the Qualifying Event by increasing the number of available vessels in the market, b) the charter boat captain and crew have secluded themselves from participating in the SFC's Billfish Championship prize money, and c) it is determined that the supporting Charter Boat provides no competitive advantage to the fishing team utilizing the charter boat services. For the avoidance of doubt, the act of registering points while using a Working Charter Boat shall not, by itself, be considered a competitive advantage. The Team's ability to register points and submit Qualified Catches will not be used as a basis for rejecting a Working Charter Boat Exemption Request. All exemption requests must be submitted to Sport Fishing Championship Officials prior to lines in the water for the applicable tournament. Requests may be approved or denied at the sole discretion of SFC tournament officials.
- 3) **SFC Qualifying Events & Competition Schedule.** The following events will be recognized as SFC Qualifying Events in the 20254 SFC Regular Season with their regional division represented in quotations:
- (a) Fort Lauderdale Billfish Tournament (Fort Lauderdale, FL): April 17-19 (Atlantic)
- (b) East Pass Challenge (Fort Walton Beach, FL): April 24-26 (Gulf)
- (c) Hurricane Hole Louisiana Open (Grand Isle, LA): May 8-10 (Gulf)
- (d) Walker's Cay Open (Walker's Cay, BHS): May 29-31 (Atlantic)
- (e) Huk Charleston Billfish Cup (Charleston, SC): June 5-7 (Atlantic)
- (f) Gulfport Mississippi Open (Gulfport, MS): June 12-14 (Gulf)
- (g) Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic (Miramar Beach, FL): June 19-21 (Gulf)
- (h) Pensacola Billfish Release Tournament (Pensacola, FL): July 3-5 (Gulf)
- (i) Oak Bluffs Bluewater Classic (Oak Bluffs, MA): July 14-18 (Atlantic)
- (j) Huk Big Fish Classic (Ocean City, MD): July 25-27 (Atlantic)
- (k) The MidAtlantic (Cape May, NJ): Aug. 19-22 (Atlantic)
- (l) MBGFC Labor Day Invitational (Orange Beach, AL): Aug. 29-31 (Gulf)
- (m) Zane Grey Championship Playoffs (TBA): Oct. 18-20



#### 4) Qualified Catch.

- (a) A “Qualified Catch” is defined, for each SFC Qualifying Event, as:
- i. Any blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish or spearfish (all species), catch-and-release recorded by any Teammate or Team Member submitted on the SFC Roster Card at an SFC Qualifying Event that is recognized by the official rules of the SFC Qualifying Event during tournament competition; and
  - ii. During Tournament competition, if an SFC Qualifying Event permits the boat or angler to return to the docks with one (1) or more blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish or spearfish to be weighed, the fishing Team may record one (1) or more fish per SFC Qualifying Event as a Qualified Catch as long as each fish counts as one (1) Qualified Catch.
- (b) Timely Reporting of a Qualified Catch – 10 Minute Rule: In 2025, SFC teams shall report their Qualified Catch within (10) minutes of recording the catch either via the SFCAA Scoring App, via Satellite Phone, inReach communication, or by emailing Tournament Officials at [scoring@sportfishingchampionship.com](mailto:scoring@sportfishingchampionship.com). A Qualified Catch that is not reported in accordance with this rule may be subject to disqualification at the sole discretion of the Qualifying Event's Tournament Director, or Commissioner.
- (c) The SFC awards Qualified Catch points using the following scoring system:
- i. Blue Marlin: 450 points
  - ii. Black Marlin: 450 points
  - iii. White Marlin: 100 points
  - iv. Striped Marlin: 100
  - v. Spearfish: 100 points
  - vi. Sailfish: 75 points
- (d) The SFC will take the official catch data from each SFC Qualifying Event and apply its scoring system to the data, and then publish the final SFC's tournament results. For clarity, if there is a “Billfish Competition” in an SFC Qualifying Event, then SFC's tournament results may not be equal to the tournament's final results (due to individual tournament multipliers, “first catch bonuses,” and other scoring inconsistencies across the tournament circuit).
- (e) SFC reserves the right to enforce independent video verification reviewed by the SFC Competition Chairperson and polygraph test examination of any Team Members and Team Members in order to preserve the integrity of the competition. SFC at its sole discretion may verify Qualified Catches or disqualify the Qualified Catch or fishing Team based on the results video verification and/ or polygraph examination.
- (f) Sport Fishing Championship competition officials support NOAA, ATCA, the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Code of Federal Regulations 50 CFR 635.21 (f) for the protection of Atlantic Migratory Species, which states: *Anglers fishing with natural bait (or natural/artificial combination bait) must only use non-offset circle hooks in billfish tournaments. Anglers may only use J-hooks in billfish tournaments if they are fishing with artificial lures.*
- (a) The definition of "natural bait" as adopted by SFC means, any living or dead animal or vegetable substance which on account of the edibility, smell or taste thereof is used in angling to lure fish.
- (g) Competitors may fight a fish either free standing, in a harness or seated in a fighting chair. SFC Qualifying Events permit competitors to fight a fish based on their preference.
- (a) While fighting a fish, a Teammate is permitted to assist the Angler by adjusting a harness or chair so long as the Teammate does not make intentional contact with the rod, reel or line.
  - (b) For the safety of all competitors, Team Members may reinforce the harness by pressing down on the back of the harness so long as the Teammate does not make intentional contact with the rod, reel or line.
- (h) Anglers are prohibited from fighting a fish with the rod inside the rod holder. Anglers may not advance or crank the line while the rod is in the holder after verified hook up or drag is being pulled from reel.
- (i) A Teammate may pass the rod one time during the fight. If the rod is passed it must be done within the first minute after the hookup of the fish. The one-minute time limit will be verified using video evidence submitted by the Team. In cases where video verification is inconclusive or unavailable, the determination will be made at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director or SFC Competition Chairperson, and such decision shall be final.



- (j) Verifying a Qualified Catch: All Qualified Catches must be verified by video either through the SFCAA App or by submitting video to Tournament Officials within the time allotted during the Qualifying Event's competition hours. A Qualified Catch occurs when:
  - (a) The leader connection is wound to the tip of the rod, or,
  - (b) A Teammate makes contact with the leader in hand, and,
  - (c) Video verification includes the live fish swimming away.

*\*Either (a) or (b) AND (c) must occur and be verified by a Qualifying Event Video Official to register points in the competition.*

**5) SFC Regular Season Tournament Scoring System.**

- (a) Registered Teams that finish in the top seven (7) of all registered Teams at each SFC Qualifying Event will earn SFC Season points based on the following tiered system:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Points</u>		<u>Place</u>	<u>Points</u>
1 <sup>st</sup>	3,500		8 <sup>th</sup>	1,800
2 <sup>nd</sup>	3,000		9 <sup>th</sup>	1,600
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2,800		10 <sup>th</sup>	1,400
4 <sup>th</sup>	2,600		11 <sup>th</sup>	1,200
5 <sup>th</sup>	2,400		12 <sup>th</sup>	1,000
6 <sup>th</sup>	2,200		13 <sup>th</sup>	900
7 <sup>th</sup>	2,000		14 <sup>th</sup>	800

- (b) In the event that multiple teams “tie” for placement in a tournament by recording identical scores, Ties will be broken based on the which Qualified Catch occurred first based on date and time of the Qualified Catches of each Team. For Example, if two Teams are tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> Place at an SFC Qualifying Event, the Team with the earliest catch time will be awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> and the second earliest Catch Time will be 4<sup>th</sup>.
- (c) In the event of an event cancellation, the event will be removed from the SFC Regular Season and will not be considered an SFC Qualifying Event for the current SFC Regular Season. SFC has the sole right to add or remove SFC Qualifying Events to the SFC Regular Season at any time at its own discretion, but shall allow Teams a 2 weeks notice to make arrangements for any new Qualifying Events.

**6) Payouts**

- a) SFC Regular season Pay Outs will be per SFC Qualifying Event based on the below.

1 <sup>st</sup> (First) Place Team, Winner	\$60,000
2 <sup>nd</sup> (Second) Place Team, First Runner Up	\$40,000
3 <sup>rd</sup> (Third) Place Team	\$30,000

- b) If only one (1) Teams has a Qualified Catch in a single Qualifying Event, then that Team shall win the entire prize pool for that Qualifying Event. If only two (2) Teams have Qualified Catches in a single Qualifying Event, thus receiving 1st and 2nd place, both Teams shall receive their Payout and the 3rd place Payout shall be split evenly between 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place..

**7) Awarding A Winner: 2025 Zane Grey Championship Playoffs**

- (a) The 2025 SFC Billfish Championship Season will conclude in a three-day, four-team, elimination tournament that will be hosted at the Zane Grey Championship Playoffs (the "Playoff(s)"). At the conclusion of the SFC Billfish Championship Season, the following teams will advance into the 4-team playoff:
  - (a) Gulf Division Championship winning team and the second place Gulf Division team.



- (b) Atlantic Division Championship winning team and the second place Atlantic Division team.
- (b) In order to qualify for the Atlantic Division Championship or Gulf Division Championship, the Team must compete in all divisional SFC Qualifying Events.
- (c) The SFC will also award regional Division Championships in the Atlantic Division and Gulf Division with division-specific Qualifying Events noted above in Section 3. The SFC will award one Division Champion based on the aggregate of fishing Team's ~~top two~~ regional division-specific Qualifying Event ("tournament") scores.
  - i. In general terms, SFC will combine the team's regional-division-specific tournament scores.
  - ii. Division Championships are awarded at the final Regular Season event in each respective regional division, not at the final event of the SFC's Regular Season (Zane Grey Championship Playoffs). The Gulf Division Champion will be syndicated at the Gulf Division Championship Event (Mobile Big Game Labor Day Tournament) and the Atlantic Division Champion will be syndicated at the Atlantic Division Championship Event (MidAtlantic Tournament).
- (d) Scoring Examples:

**Team A:**

1 <sup>st</sup> SFC Qualifying Event	2 <sup>nd</sup> SFC Qualifying Event	Total
3,000	2,800	5,800

**Team B: \* WINNER \***

1 <sup>st</sup> SFC Qualifying Event	2 <sup>nd</sup> SFC Qualifying Event	Total
2,600	3,500	6,100

**Team C:**

1 <sup>st</sup> SFC Qualifying Event	2 <sup>nd</sup> SFC Qualifying Event	Total
3,000	2,000	5,000

- (e) Tiebreakers: In the event that two or more Teams have equal scores at the conclusion of the SFC's Regular Season (or at the conclusion of a final regional division event for Division Championships), the following tie breakers will be implemented in order to crown one team the Champion:
  - i. Tiebreaker 1: Highest place finish in an SFC Qualifying event.
  - ii. Tiebreaker 2: Most blue marlin caught in the SFC Regular Season.
  - iii. Tiebreaker 3: Most white marlin caught in the SFC Regular Season.
  - iv. Tiebreaker 4: Most sailfish caught in the SFC Regular Season.
  - v. Tiebreaker 5: First blue marlin caught in the SFC Regular Season.
  - vi. **\*\*\* Tiebreakers for Division Championships shall be determined using the same tiebreaker sequence listed above; however, only results from SFC Qualifying Events that occur prior to or during the final event of each regional division will be considered. Results from any event that occurs after the final regional divisional tournament—such as the Zane Grey Championship Playoffs—will not be used in determining Division Championships.**
- (f) The SFC will award its prizes in the Billfish Division (including Atlantic and Gulf Divisions) to the Teams.

8) Zane Grey Championship Playoffs Competition Format.

- a) **Playoff Scoring:** During the Zane Grey Championship Playoffs, the SFC awards Qualified Catch points using the following scoring system:



- i. Blue Marlin: 450 points
  - ii. Black Marlin: 450 points
  - iii. White Marlin: 100 points
  - iv. Striped Marlin: 100
  - v. Spearfish: 100 points
  - vi. Sailfish: 75 points
- b) Play Off shall be a 3 day team play off structure which standing will be based on the cumulative points at the end of the 3 days of fishing. Playoff Tiebreakers: In the event that two or more Teams have equal scores at the conclusion of Playoff Day 1, Day 2 and/ or Day 3, the following tie breaker will be implemented: Ties will be broken based on the which Qualified Catch occurred first based on date and time of the Qualified Catches of each Team. For Example, if two Teams are tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> Place at an SFC Qualifying Event, the Team with the earliest catch time will be awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> and the second earliest Catch Time will be 4<sup>th</sup>.
- c) The four-team Zane Grey Championship Playoffs will be hosted across three days, featuring the two top-ranked teams from each regional division as outlined above in Section 7.a.:

First Place Team, Winner	\$250,000
Second Place Team, First Runner Up	\$100,000
Third Place Team	\$70,000
Fourth Place Team	\$60,000

- d)
- 9) Recording of Qualified Catch Media. Team, and its Team Members and team members, explicitly acknowledge that Sport Fishing Championship prizes are funded and supported by corporate sponsors and media partners of the SFC. Team shall accommodate a single-person camera operator in order to support the competition's television and multimedia production.
- 10) Additional Requirements for SFC Billfish Championship Participants. Sport Fishing Championship requires all members of participating Teams to agree to the terms set forth in the following league policies prior to registering in order to be eligible for the Competition:
- a) Sport Fishing Championship Competitor Terms & Conditions
  - b) Sport Fishing Championship Competitor Code of Conduct & Sexual Harassment Policy
  - c) Sport Fishing Championship Gambling & Wagering Policy

*\*At the sole discretion of the Sport Fishing Championship additional league policies or amendments to existing policies may be made at any time.*

- 11) **Release of All Claims.** In consideration of being accepted for participation in the Sport Fishing Championship, each Teammate hereby releases, forever discharges, and agrees to hold harmless SFC and its officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, partners, members, and or attorneys (collectively the “Releasees”) for any and all losses, claims, or demands of any kind or character whatsoever arising from the negligence or gross negligence of the Releasees or from any other cause connected with or occurring during any SFC Qualifying Event. Each Teammate expressly acknowledges that he/she has received, reviewed and agrees to abide by the SFC rules and regulations and this release. Furthermore, each Teammate expressly acknowledges that activities relating to deep sea fishing are extremely dangerous and involve the risk of serious injury or death, and each Teammate hereby assumes full responsibility for the risk of bodily injury or death due to the negligence of the Releasees or any other cause connected with or occurring during any SFC Qualifying Event.