

2020 FORMAT & ENTRY INFORMATION

updated March 11, 2020

The Virginia Beach Billfish Tournament is an invitation only tournament limited to 80 teams. Invitees have a limited amount of time to RSVP with their deposit; the balance of the entry fee must be paid by August 1st. Teams may request to be added to the waiting list at www.vbbt.com/waiting-list/. The waiting list does not carry forward to the following year so if you did not receive an invitation but still wish to be considered, you'll need to add your name to the waiting list when it reopens each year on September 1st.

Teams must check in during Registration to verify team information, pick up event tickets, tournament forms and team merchandise and attend the Captain's Meeting. **Registration takes place on Wednesday, August 19 between 5:00pm and 10:00pm.** Teams running late due to weather or mechanical problems may register up to 8:30am on Thursday, August 20, but must make arrangements with the tournament director beforehand. Teams registering late are still expected to abide by any rules changes that may be announced at the Captain's Meeting.

Each team receives eight event tickets and a team bucket or bag with sponsor gifts and eight tournament t-shirts. Merchandise and event tickets for additional team members may be purchased at the event.

ENTRY FEE & PAYMENT

The entry fee is \$10,500, which is broken down into seven cash award categories. A \$2,500 deposit is required with your invitation RSVP; the \$8,000 balance due must be paid by August 1st. Entry fees may be paid by cash, check or credit card. There is a 3.5% convenience fee on credit card transactions. Make checks payable to the "Virginia Beach Billfish Foundation" or "VBBF". Mail checks to VBBT, PO Box 568, Virginia Beach, VA 23451.

CASH AWARD CATEGORIES

CATEGORY 1 Top Boats..... \$4,000

Awarded to the five teams accumulating the most overall billfish points—first through third place receive cash awards, fourth and fifth place are awarded trophies. The tournament retains 37.5% of this category for expenses, the amount allocated to cash awards is split 50-30-20.

CATEGORY 2 Billfish Jackpot \$1,000

Awarded to the three teams accumulating the most overall billfish points; split is 50-30-20.

CATEGORY 3 High Rollers Jackpot..... \$1,500

Awarded to the three teams accumulating the most overall billfish points; split is 50-30-20.

CATEGORY 4 Billfish Daily Jackpot \$1,500

The cash in this level is split evenly between each day of competition and is awarded to the top two teams that accumulate the most overall billfish points for the day. Cash allocation between the two winners is 70-30. At least 10% of the fleet must fish in order for the Daily to be paid.

CATEGORY 5 Gamefish Division \$500

The cash in this level is split evenly between the three eligible gamefish species (dolphin, tuna, wahoo) and awarded to the teams weighing the single heaviest fish in each species category. If there are no winners in an entire species category, the cash award for that species rolls evenly into the remaining species categories.

CATEGORY 6 Blue Marlin Jackpot \$1,000

Awarded to the team weighing the single heaviest blue marlin. If no qualifying fish are weighed, the award goes to the team that accumulates the most billfish release points.

CATEGORY 7 Charity Mystery Fish \$1,000

The cash in this level is split four ways with 25% going to the VBBF charities and 25% going to each of the daily winners based on a drawing. A “chip” is added to the bucket for each billfish the team caught that day. For example, if your team caught four billfish, you get four “chips” in the bucket. Drawings for all three days are done at the Awards Presentation. At least 10% of the fleet must fish for a drawing to take place for that day.

OTHER TOURNAMENT AWARDS

Trophies, plaques, and/or merchandise are awarded in the following categories:

Top Overall Angler — Angler who accumulates the most total billfish points.

Top Release Angler — Angler who accumulates the most billfish release points.

Top Lady Angler — Lady Angler who accumulates the most total billfish points.

Top Crew — Captain and crew who accumulate the most total billfish points.

Top Junior Billfish Angler — Junior Angler (15 years or younger) who accumulates the most billfish points.

Top Junior Gamefish Angler — Junior Angler (15 years or younger) who catches the largest single dolphin, tuna or wahoo.

Wayne McLeskey Top Boat Perpetual Trophy — Trophy bears the names of the top boats from 2012 onward and is held in a place of honor throughout the year.

CASH AWARD DISBURSEMENT

Disbursement Order—Before winnings are paid each team receiving a cash award must complete a Disbursement Order specifying how the funds are to be distributed. We suggest you decide how prize money is to be distributed before the tournament. Disbursement Orders are handed to the team at the Awards Celebration or emailed to the Team Contact. The Disbursement Order must be signed by the Team Contact as recorded on the Entry Form.

Cash Disbursement and Tax Documents—Cash awards are paid by check and mailed within two weeks after receiving the completed Disbursement Order and W-9(s). A 1099-MISC is issued to the person or company to whom the check is made payable.

TEAM CONTACT (Also relates to prize money distribution)

Please carefully read the following and choose your Team Contact accordingly.

The Team Contact is the designated team leader; there can be only one per team and you must provide the Contact’s mailing address, mobile phone number and email address. The Team Contact must know how to reach each member of the team. Any instructions, confirmations or requests for information are sent to the Contact and they are responsible for passing it on to the rest of the team. In addition, the Team Contact is the person who signs the Disbursement Order designating how cash awards are distributed.

ANGLERS, CAPTAINS and MATES

There is no limit to the number of anglers per team, and it does not matter on which day the angler fishes, but anglers must be registered with the tournament before fishing for the day starts. Captains and mates are also considered anglers. At a minimum, you must provide a First Name, Last Name, City and State for all team participants. After registration, angler changes must be made using the online form at www.vbbt.com/anglers. Anglers may not change teams during the tournament.

2020 TOURNAMENT RULES

Updated March 18, 2020

Rules are subject to change. Final instructions are given at the Captain's Meeting.

It is the responsibility of the captain, crew and anglers to understand and abide by the Tournament's rules, including any special instructions or changes that may be announced during the Captain's Meeting. **The Captain's Meeting takes place Wednesday, August 19 at 7:30pm.** At least one representative from each team must be present.

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1. Permits and Licenses

Registered boats and anglers are expected to comply with all Federal and State laws regarding fishing licenses, size limits, bag limits and any other regulations that may apply. For information regarding Federal HMS Permits refer to www.hmspermits.noaa.gov. For information regarding the National Saltwater Angler Registry program refer to www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/nnri/. You may need to register with the Virginia Fisherman Identification Program (free). Review information at www.mrc.virginia.gov/FIP/. For information regarding Virginia state saltwater fishing licenses refer to www.mrc.state.va.us/mrc-permits.shtm. If you wish to be eligible for a Virginia Citation, you must have a Virginia Saltwater Fishing License. For information regarding the Virginia Citation program visit www.mrc.state.va.us.

2. Fishing Dates and Times

Tournament fishing days are Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Fishing hours are 8:30am to 3:00pm all three days. No lines or teasers may be in the water before the official start or after the official end of tournament fishing. Billfish hooked and reported to the Committee Boat prior to lines out may be fought until caught or released, except for the final day when any team wishing to weigh a fish must be within Rudee Inlet by 6:45pm.

3. Lay Day

Teams may fish any two of the three available fishing days (Captain's choice).

WHEN TO TURN IN LAY DAY FORMS

Lay Day forms must be signed by a registered member of the team and turned in by 8:30am of the day being declared as a lay day, otherwise the boat is recorded as fishing that day.

WHERE TO TURN IN LAY DAY FORMS

Forms may be dropped off at registration on Wednesday, at the weigh station or scoring bus on Thursday or Friday and at Fisherman's Wharf Marina or the Virginia Beach Fishing Center on any day.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If for some reason you cannot make it to one of the drop off points in time, you may text a photo of your completed form to Tournament Officials Paula Owen at 757-652-8409 or Deirdre Bell Loftin at 757-287-4932 prior to 8:30am. Should an issue arise with regard to the submission of a Lay Day form, only verbal contact with Paula or Deirdre prior to 8:30am of the day at issue shall constitute notice, and resolution shall be at the sole discretion of these Tournament Officials. Voicemail, email and text messages do not apply—you must speak directly with either Paula or Deirdre.

4. Tournament Communications

Tournament Officials and Committee Boats monitor VHF Channel 74 and SSB Channel 452 (4149.0).

5. Official Clock

Official tournament time is continuous GPS time and starts at Thursday at 8:30am. Times are recorded to the full minute.

6. Weather and Cancellation Policy

Weather related decisions are at the sole discretion of each Captain. The Tournament Committee does not declare a “weather” day in the event of severe weather conditions. If any of the boats registered in the tournament decide to fish on a particular day (based on lay day forms), that day is declared an official fishing day and all eligible fish are scored according to tournament rules. However, at least 10% of the fleet must fish in order for a Daily Award to be paid.

7. Boundaries and Ports of Departure

All boats must fish into and out of Virginia Beach. Boundaries are 100 nautical miles from the Rudee Inlet Sea Buoy. Fish must be hooked within these boundaries, but may be fought outside of the boundaries once hooked.

8. Equipment and Angling Rules

IGFA Saltwater Equipment and Angling rules apply with the exception of any special instructions given in these rules, and any instructions or changes that may be given during the Captain’s Meeting. Copies of IGFA rules are available during Registration. The VBTT is a Boat tournament—any member of the crew may set the hook, but a registered angler must then fight the fish unassisted. Unconventional non-trolling techniques are strictly prohibited. No backing into schools, casting, use of casting tackle, use of live bait or live bait teasers.

9. Mechanical Failures

Should a situation arise where a boat cannot make it back by the deadline, the fish and angler with scorecards may be transferred to another tournament boat, after consulting with VBTT Officials. If a boat becomes completely disabled, another boat may be substituted. Substitute boats must be registered with the Tournament Director prior to fishing.

10. Eligible Species and Points

ELIGIBLE SPECIES AND POINTS				
SPECIES	MINIMUMS	POINTS per POUND	RELEASE POINTS	LIMITS
Blue Marlin	110” (LJFL) or 400 lbs.	up to 599.9 : 0.5 600.0 and up : 1.0	70	1/angler/day
<i>The capture of a blue marlin under 110-inches and 400-pounds results in the forfeiture of all accumulated points and disqualification of the team from further competition.</i>				
Sailfish	n/a	n/a	70	n/a
Spearfish	n/a	n/a	70	n/a
White Marlin	n/a	n/a	70	n/a
Dolphin	n/a	1 (one)	n/a	10/angler/day
Albacore	n/a	1 (one)	n/a	n/a
Bigeye Tuna	27” CFL	1 (one)	n/a	n/a
Bluefin Tuna	27” CFL	1 (one)	n/a	set by NMFS
Yellowfin Tuna	27” CFL	1 (one)	n/a	3/angler/day
Wahoo	n/a	1 (one)	n/a	10/angler/day

11. Reporting Billfish and Scorecards

As soon as you release or boat a billfish, call a Committee Boat and report Boat Name, Species, and Status (Released or Boated). In addition, billfish hooked within the last hour of fishing on any day, and billfish still being fought at lines out must be reported to a Committee Boat. If a Committee Boat cannot be raised, a verifiable report must be given to another tournament boat and the boat name noted on the Scorecard. Committee Boats are announced during the Captain's Meeting.

The Billfish Scorecard is the Team's record of billfish hooked and subsequently released, tagged, lost or boated. Scorecards are compared to the Committee Boat radio logs for verification. Billfish should be recorded as caught to ensure accuracy. If you caught a billfish you must turn in a Scorecard. Scorecards are distributed during Registration. Lost billfish should not be reported to a Committee Boat but should be recorded on the Scorecard for statistical purposes. The same applies to recording the time the billfish was hooked and whether it was tagged.

Before turning in your Scorecard be sure it's filled in completely including a suffix if necessary for the angler (i.e. Jr., Sr., III). If the angler was a Lady, check off under the "L" column. If the angler was a Junior, write in the junior's age under the "JR" column. The boat captain must print their name and sign indicating they agree to the information as recorded. Turn in all copies of the Scorecard to the Scoring Table by the designated deadline (see Rule #14). If you did not catch a billfish you do not need to turn in a Scorecard.

12. Official Billfish Release

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. Tagging is not required for tournament points, but is encouraged if the billfish is under control and the tag can be placed without injury to the fish. If a gaff breaks the plane of the cockpit covering boards, the team has committed to a capture and the billfish will not count as a release whether or not it is subsequently captured.

13. Weighing Fish

All fish must be weighed at the official Weigh Station located at Southside Marina, and must be brought to the scales by boat. The scales open daily at 12:00 noon. On Thursday and Friday, the scales close at 8:00pm. On Saturday, the final day of fishing, the scales close at 7:00pm. On the final day of fishing, any boat wishing to weigh a fish must be inside Rudee Inlet by 6:45pm. The Weighmaster and VBBT Officials reserve the right to refuse to weigh any fish that does not meet tournament requirements. **Additional Rules:**

- Boats are lined up to weigh in the order in which they arrive.
- The weighing of blue marlin takes precedence over gamefish.
- Fish must arrive at the dock in edible condition.
- Mutilated fish are not weighed. In this case, "mutilation" is defined as any damage that would impair the fighting ability of the fish.
- All fish are weighed to the tenth of a pound.
- If anyone wishes to have a fish re-weighed, it must be done while the fish is still hanging.
- The angler must remain with the fish throughout the weigh-in process, and before leaving the scales must sign the Weigh-In form.

14. Scoring

Scoring closes Thursday and Friday at 8:00pm and at 7:00pm on Saturday. Forms are accepted after 8:00pm on the first two days of fishing only if the team is fighting a fish or their boat becomes disabled, however, the Tournament Director must be made aware of the situation delaying the team. **On the final day of fishing, forms must be turned in by 7:00pm.** The location of the Scoring Table is announced at the Captain's Meeting.

15. Breaking Ties

Ties between the weights of two or more fish are broken by the time the fish was weighed. Ties between Release Points are broken by the time of release. The date of Release is based on the boat's fishing day (day 1 or 2) as opposed to the

tournament fishing day (day 1-2-3). The Rules Committee may consult Committee Boat Logs to reach decisions on release time or sequence of releases.

16. Observers

The Tournament, at their sole discretion, may assign an observer to any boat on any fishing day. If an observer is assigned, the boat is responsible for the observer's comfort and safety, including providing lunch and non-alcoholic beverages.

17. Polygraph Examination

Registered Participants agree to submit to a polygraph examination if requested to do so by VBTT Officials. Failure to comply will result in disqualification of the Participant and, at the discretion of VBTT Officials, the Participant's entire team. Disqualified Participants/Teams or Participants/Teams that fail a polygraph examination forfeit any and all entry money, prizes or prize money, and are refused entry to future VBTT tournaments. The decision of the Rules Committee is final.

18. Protests

Registered participants may submit a protest against any fish entered. Protests must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Director by 9:00am on the day following the catch of the disputed fish or by 8:00pm on Saturday. The Rules Committee at their discretion may use a polygraph examination to reach a decision. All participants agree to the final decision of the Rules Committee.