



VFW FISHING TOURNAMENT RULES 2024

1) REGISTRATION

All boats and anglers, to include Captains and mates, must be registered and entry fees paid to qualify for prizes (Including Calcutta). Any boat not previously registered, can register from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM Friday June 14th at the VFW. Any boat may be substituted prior to the tournament, but must be registered with the tournament committee prior to fishing.

2) CAPTAINS MEETING

At least one person from each boat should attend and is responsible for knowing the rules including any changes that will be announced at the captains meeting on Friday evening June 14th 7:00 P.M. at the VFW.

3) FISHING DAYS ***** See Addendum # 1

Saturday, June 15th **OR** Sunday, June 16th are the available days to fish. Captains, Crew and Anglers may fish **BOTH DAYS WITH A SEPARATE REGISTRATION FOR EACH DAY.** Each Crew will be issued a form at the captain's meeting on Friday night. Crews that will not fish Saturday will have to turn their forms in at the captain's meeting on Friday, June 14th **OR** no later than 9 A.M. on Saturday, June 15th by texting a picture of the form to 770-630-3570. Boats that do not turn in their forms will be assumed to be fishing on Saturday and will only be able to weigh in fish on Saturday. Boats that turn in their forms by 9 A. M. Saturday will be assumed to be fishing on Sunday and will only be allowed to weigh in on Sunday. Forms must be turned in by boat Captain or boat owner.

4) FISHING TIMES

7 A.M. to 3 P.M. either Saturday **OR** Sunday. No lines or teasers or bait (to include live bait, dead bait, chunks or chum) in the water prior to 7 A.M. A fish hooked before 3 P.M. can be played but must be reported to (1) a committee boat or (2) another boat by 3 P.M. The fish may be played until boated but must reach the weigh-in dock no later than 4 P.M.

5) WEIGH IN

Weigh-in 2P.M.-4P.M. at Stock Island Yacht Club and Marina (Key West) or Big Pine Key Resort 33000 Overseas Hwy Big Pine Key, FL

Fish may be brought to the scales by either boat or motor vehicle. Scales will close precisely at 4:00 P.M. (TMobile Time). An angler (with fish) in line at 4:00 P.M. that is visible and acknowledged by the weighmaster will be allowed to weigh fish. Fish that are freshly mutilated by other fish or boat (Propellers, etc.) are not allowed to be weighed in. The weighmaster has the discretion to eliminate a fish for mutilation.

6) REGULATIONS

It is the captains' and anglers' responsibility to know and comply with all federal and state regulations including licensing requirements, current recreational size and recreational bag limits and circle hook requirements. All anglers must meet current federal and state licensing requirements.

Winning fish in each category, Dolphin, Wahoo, Tuna (Black fin or Skipjack or Yellowfin), Grouper (Black or Gag or Red), and Snapper (Yellowtail, or Mutton, or Mangrove, or Lane), will be determined by heaviest weight. In the event of a tie, the fish that was weighed in earliest will be the winner.

COMMUNICATIONS

Tournament channel is TBA at the Captain’s meeting.

8) **ROD AND REEL RULES**

This is a rod and reel, hook and line tournament. The following practices are illegal in this tournament: (a) use of hand line or rope or cable directly attached to the line, leader, or lure without a release device, (b) spearing, harpooning, free-gaffing or shooting a fish (with a spear gun or firearm), (c) use of electric reels, winches or “bandit” type reels, (d) transferring fish from one boat to another.

9) **PRIZES ***** See Addendums #2, #3,#4, and #5**

There are cash prizes for the heaviest fish in each category

Boat Awards		Angler Awards	
Super Prize	\$ 50,000.00 -Heaviest	1 st place Pee-wee	\$ 400.00 (Age 10 and under)
Dolphin	Dolphin Over 50 lbs.	1 st place Junior Angler	\$ 400.00 (Age 11-15)
1 st place Dolphin	\$ 5,000.00	1 st place Lady Angler	\$ 400.00
2 nd place Dolphin	\$ 3,000.00	1 st place Active Duty Angler	\$ 400.00 (U.S. Armed Forces)
3 rd place Dolphin	\$ 1,500.00	1 st place Veteran Angler	\$ 400.00 (veteran US Armed Forces, not active duty/Reserve)
1 st place Wahoo	\$ 600.00	1 st place Senior Angler	\$ 400.00 (age 65 or older)
1 st place Tuna	\$ 600.00	1 st place First Responder	\$ 400.00 (EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter, Police Officer)
1 st place Snapper	\$ 600.00		\$ 66,700
1 st place Grouper	\$ 600.00		
VFW SLAM*	\$1000.00		
4 Dolphin Aggregate*	\$1000.00		

Any and all anglers (Including Captains and Mates) on boats winning a prize above, must submit to a polygraph exam if asked to do so. No one under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs will be allowed to be polygraphed. Failure to submit to, and pass the polygraph exam will result in disqualification of vessel and catch and forfeiture of any and all prizes including Calcutta.

In the event that no fish are caught in one or more categories, that prize will go back into the prize pool and be distributed proportionately among other winners.

If there are no qualifying fish caught in any category, winners will be drawn for 1st (35%), 2nd (25%), 3rd (20%), 4th (15%), 5th (5%).

10) **PROTESTS**

All protests must be submitted prior to 6PM on the day of fishing. All protests must be written and accompanied by \$200.00 which will be refunded if the protest is upheld. All decisions by the tournament committee are final.

11) **AWARDS CEREMONY**

There will be a dinner and awards ceremony held, starting at 6:30 P.M. on Sunday, June 16th at The American Legion 5610 College Rd Key West, Florida.

12) **PRIZE DISTRIBUTION**

Calcutta prizes are not subject to limitation. (Example: angler who wins heaviest dolphin is also eligible for Calcutta(s), if entered.) See Calcutta addendum. Sharing and/or Culling the catch in order for other anglers in a crew to win a prize is not allowed.

13) **VIOLATIONS**

Any violation(s) will result in the entire catch being disqualified and there will be no refund of entry (to include Calcutta fees).

ADDENDUM # 1 - The intent of the rule change allowing a boat and crew to fish both days, is to allow those crews that wish to fish both days to do so as **TWO** separate entrants, with **TWO separate registrations and entry fees**.

ADDENDUM # 2- The intent is to differentiate between Boat Award and Angler Award. Boat Award means that any number of anglers including captain and mate(s) may handle the rod, handle and adjust the reel, and fight the fish. The fish will be eligible for a Boat Award only in the five eligible species. For the Angler Award, the angler must fight the fish the entire time. Upon the fish striking the bait/lure, any other crew member may remove the rod from the rod holder, and hand it to the angler. At that point the angler who receives the rod is the "angler of record". Should he or she hand the rod off to another angler, allow the rod or reel to be touched by anyone else, that fish will be eligible only for the Boat Award. In the interest of good sportsmanship, we ask all participants to understand and comply with this rule.

ADDENDUM # 3 – If a Super Prize Dolphin is caught, the next 3 heaviest Dolphin will be the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize winners in the Dolphin category.

ADDENDUM # 4- VFW SLAM winner will be the Angler with the heaviest combined weight of 3 of the 5 eligible species. 4 Dolphin aggregate winner will be the angler with the heaviest combined weight of 4 Dolphin including at least 1 bull and 1 cow.

ADDENDUM # 5 - 4 Dolphin aggregate winner will be the angler with the heaviest combined weight of 4 Dolphin including at least 1 bull and 1 cow.