

2026 WMO INFORMATION HIGHLIGHT SHEET

This is NOT a complete list of the rules.

PLEASE READ ALL RULES IN TOURNAMENT RULE PAMPHLET CAREFULLY.

1. **OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT COMMUNICATION** - All official tournament communication must take place directly with a Tournament Director (Jim Motsko, Sasha Motsko or Madelyne Motsko Wainglass), by **telephone, email, or in-person conversation**. Communication conducted through social media platforms (including comments, direct messages, posts, or similar features) is **not recognized as an official form of tournament communication** and will not be considered valid for submitting requests, receiving rulings, filing complaints, alleging rule violations, or conducting tournament business. Participants are responsible for using the approved communication methods to ensure timely and accurate information.
2. **FISHING HOURS** – Lines-in 8:00 AM. Lines-out 3:30 PM.
3. **OMNI SONAR TRANSDUCERS/SCOPES** – Omni Sonar transducers/scopes are not permitted to be deployed prior to the lines-in time of 8:00 AM.
4. **ELIGIBLE SPECIES** – Eligible species for weighing are white marlin, blue marlin, swordfish, tuna, dolphin and wahoo.
5. **BLUE MARLIN TIME EXTENSION** – General Tournament Rule 8A – Any boat still fighting a blue marlin after the 3:30 PM deadline will be permitted to fight that fish until boated, released, or lost – except that in order to be eligible for prize money, the blue marlin must be made available for weighing no later than 12:15 AM on Sunday, August 9th, regardless of which fishing day the hook up occurred. The boat must make every effort to keep the Tournament Directors posted on the status of the fight including relaying information via VHF, cell phone, or Single Side Band to another tournament boat. ALSO – if the boat fighting the blue marlin has another boated fish it intends to weigh, the boat must follow the procedures under General Tournament Rule D6 or the fish will not be weighed.
6. **DECLARING A LAY DAY** – Read General Rules C1-C5. A representative from the boat must declare a lay day by clicking the direct link that was texted or by logging in to “Manage My Boat” on www.whitemarlinopen.com. A direct link and access code will be given to each boat when they visit the Registration tent at Harbour Island on Saturday, August 1st or Sunday, August 2nd, or when they register at South Jersey Marina in Cape May on Saturday, August 1st. If you have difficulty reporting a non-fishing day online, please call or text 443-359-3787. **LAY DAYS MUST BE REPORTED BY 8:00 AM**
7. **CATCH AND RELEASE REPORTS** – All catch and release reports must be turned into the White Marlin Open by 9:15 PM the day fished. Catch and release reports may be submitted in the following ways:
 - Turning in the catch and release report to the scorers’ table at Harbour Island Marina
 - Dropping the catch and release report in the designated Drop Box at one of the following marinas:
Sunset Marina, O.C. Fishing Center, Talbot Street Pier Office, Bahia Marina
 - Boats fishing from an inlet OTHER THAN OCEAN CITY, MD may submit their catch by texting a photo of the catch report to 443-359-3787.
8. **ELIGIBLE ANGLERS** - Any person listed on the Official White Marlin Open entry form will be considered an angler (i.e. Captain, Mate, Boat Owner). Anglers may also be registered by clicking the direct link that was texted or by logging in to “Manage My Boat” on www.whitemarlinopen.com. A direct link and access code will be given to each boat when they visit the Registration tent at Harbour Island on Saturday, August 1st or Sunday, August 2nd, or when they register at South Jersey Marina in Cape May on Saturday, August 1st. **All anglers must be registered prior to fishing.**
9. **BLUE MARLIN MINIMUM LENGTH** – In order to be eligible for weighing, a blue marlin must meet the minimum length of 114 inches. There is no minimum weight. The winner will be determined by weight.
10. **WHITE MARLIN MINIMUM** – In order for a white marlin to qualify for prize money and/or billfish points it must be at least 70 inches AND 70 pounds.
11. All fish intended for donation to the Maryland Food Bank must be kept on ice.
12. **SMALL BOAT DIVISION ADDED ENTRY LEVELS** – The small boat added entry levels are for boats 40’ and under. Boat length is determined by LOA (Length Over All). Length Over All (LOA) is the horizontal distance between the outboard side of the foremost part (bow) of the hull and the outboard side of the aftermost part (stern) of the hull. It does not include bowsprits, rudders, outboard motor brackets, swim platforms that do not contain buoyant volume, and other similar fittings and attachments that are not part of the buoyant hull envelope.
13. **OUTBOARD DIVISION ADDED ENTRY LEVELS** – The outboard added entry levels are for boats with outboard engines regardless of boat length.
14. **NON-SONAR DIVISION ADDED ENTRY LEVELS** – The non-sonar added entry levels are for boats that are not equipped with an omnidirectional sonar. Any boat equipped with such technology, whether operational or not, is ineligible to participate in Non-Sonar added entry levels.

OVER

15. OFFICIAL PROTEST PROCEDURE - The protest procedure outlined in **General Tournament Rule F** is the **exclusive method** for filing a protest or alleging a tournament rule violation. Protests or allegations submitted through any other means, including verbal complaints made outside the official protest process, social media, text messages, or third parties, will not be recognized or considered by Tournament Officials. All participants must follow the procedures established in General Tournament Rule F for a protest to be accepted and reviewed. All protests in compliance with Rule F will be presented to the Judges. A majority ruling by the Judges is required for a decision. **That decision is final.** The Judges are Brian Tinkler, Shawn Harmon and Webb St. Clair. The Weighmaster is Alex Davis.

16. With the intention of preserving sportsmanship, rewarding angling skills and billfish conservation, the intentional use of live bait and/or live bait teasers in the attempt to catch billfish, or any other eligible species, is not allowed. The use of live bait or stopping and casting or pitching to trailing fish or fish balling bait is not permissible. Live baiting shall include live teasing and fishing for bait at any point during the tournament. The use of Chub Mackerel, Atlantic Mackerel, Boston Mackerel and Tinker Mackerel is prohibited.

17. DAISY CHAINS, BIRDS & FLOATS - The use of daisy chains, birds, floats and similar devices may be used with or without a J hook.

18. FLIPPY FLOPPY – The Flippy Floppy is 100% legal to use when used strictly as a teaser. If a hooked bait/lure is placed behind the Flippy Floppy (or incorporated into the Flippy Floppy), this would not be IGFA legal. The reason for this is because the horizontal “arms” extending from the main daisy chain prevent this from being considered as an “in-line” daisy chain which are IGFA legal.

19. STINKY TINKY – As per NOAA – It is not illegal to soak lures in fish oil. However, soaking an artificial lure in fish oil then makes part of it a natural component and would trigger the requirement to use non-offset circle hooks.

20. POWER DRIVEN REELS – As per IGFA – Power driven reels are acceptable under the following situation and configuration:

- a) Reels that have power accessories (e.g., electric drill attachments, motors or other power accessories specifically designed for a reel) that can be physically removed from the reel may be used strictly for the purpose of retrieving a deployed bait or lure at depth all the way to the boat.
- b) Power accessories may only be used to retrieve a bait or lure completely to the boat and are not permitted for adjusting the position of a bait or lure in the water column. Once a power accessory is attached to the reel, the bait or lure may no longer be legally used to catch a fish and the bait or lure must be retrieved all the way to the boat for manual redeployment before it may be legally used to hook or catch a fish. Power accessories may not be attached to the reel during the deployment of a bait or lure.
- c) Power accessories must be physically removed from the reel before the act of hooking or fighting a fish. Any fish that strikes a bait or lure being fished with a reel with power accessories still attached- whether or not under electric operation- will not be eligible for record consideration.
- d) Electric reels that do not have removable electronic components that allow them to be completely manually driven are prohibited.

21. CHUNKING for tuna is permitted, but not before 8:00 AM

22. DEPARTURE INLETS – Boats fishing in the White Marlin Open may leave from any inlet between Rudee Inlet, VA and Barnegat Inlet, NJ. No boat may pass the sea buoy of any inlet prior to 4:00 AM on any fishing day. Any boat leaving early will be disqualified for that fishing day. There is a distance limit of 100 nautical miles from the Ocean City Inlet sea buoy. Boats must fish within this limit regardless of the inlet of departure.

23. POLYGRAPH TESTING – Read in the brochure General Rule G5.

Any angler winning \$50,000 or more **may** be subject to a polygraph test. **Anglers that are required to take a polygraph test will be contacted by a tournament director on Saturday, August 8th after 9:15 PM to confirm the test time and location.**

***The White Marlin Open reserves the right to reschedule and/or cancel any polygraph test, at its discretion, for a different time, date and/or location.**

24. AWARDS CEREMONY & PRIZE MONEY PAYOUT PROCEDURE – The awards ceremony will be held at the Ocean City Marlin Club, 9659 Golf Course Road, in West Ocean City on Sunday on August 9th from 4PM-6PM. All White Marlin Open winners and their guests are invited to attend. Tickets are not required. Representatives from boats receiving prize money are asked to report to the Tournament Directors Table between the hours of 4 PM and 6 PM Sunday, August 9th to complete a Prize Money Distribution Form indicating how the money should be disbursed, including Social Security or Federal Identification Numbers, and signed by the winning angler. Without the completed Prize Money Distribution Form, no prize money will be disbursed. Prize money checks will be mailed within 7 business days of the satisfactory completion of all polygraph tests. The Prize Money Distribution Form is also available for download on www.whitemarlinopen.com

25. VHF 19 – The Tournament designates **VHF channel 19** as the frequency for tournament use. **VHF channel 71 is the back-up channel.** They will be monitored from shore from 4:00 PM – 9:15 PM nightly. If you have a fish intended for weighing and would like to make the Tournament Directors aware of it, you can do so on this channel. The Mid-Shore Electronics/White Marlin Open base station, **provided by Mid-Shore Electronics**, will be able to reach 10 miles past the Ocean City Inlet sea buoy.

26. IGFA Rules – **It is the participant’s responsibility to know the IGFA Rules.** They can be found at <https://igfa.org>. Questions regarding IGFA rules should be directed to IGFA Angler Recognition Manager Zack Bellapigna at 954-924-424.

27. SWORDFISH Leader Length- While fishing for Swordfish, the maximum length of the double line cannot exceed 30’ and the maximum length of the double line and leader combined cannot exceed 100’. For all other species, IGFA rules regarding double line and leader length apply. Any species other than Swordfish caught while using the increased double line and/or combined double line and leader lengths will not be eligible for prize money.

28. When SWORDFISHING, the weight may be removed by anyone at any time after the fish is hooked.