



THE MAKAIRA INVITATIONAL

Unofficial Tournament Rules

Three-Day Offshore Billfish Tournament
Marina Cap Cana · Dominican Republic

October 22 - 26, 2026

Operated by TCO BLUE, LLC · www.makairainvitational.com

While all efforts are made to keep this information current, all published rules shall be considered unofficial until distributed and announced at the captains meeting. All participants agree to the terms of these rules by participating in the tournament.

Section 1 · The Tournament

The Makaira Invitational is a three-day, team-based offshore billfish tournament held at Marina Cap Cana in the Dominican Republic. Top team honors go to the team that accumulates the most billfish release points during the tournament. Prizes pay down to third place (first, second, and third).

The tournament is a billfish-first event. Gamefish are not included in overall team scoring and are eligible only within optional added-entry jackpots (see Section 7.2). Individual honors include High-Point Angler, Top Lady Angler, and Top Junior Angler (age 17 and younger).

Eligible Species · Billfish (Release Only, Tournament Scoring)

- Blue Marlin
- White Marlin
- Sailfish
- Spearfish (including Roundscale Spearfish, which scores as White Marlin)

Eligible Species · Gamefish (Optional Added Entries Only, Judged by Weight)

- Tuna
- Wahoo
- Dolphin (Mahi-Mahi)

All billfish must be released. Gamefish may be weighed at the Marina Cap Cana scale at the end of each fishing day and are eligible only for optional added-entry jackpots that a team has opted into. Gamefish do not contribute points toward overall team standings.

Section 2 · Schedule of Events

All events take place at Marina Cap Cana. Times are Dominican Republic Atlantic Standard Time (AST).

Date	Time	Event
October 22	4:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Final Registration at Marina Cap Cana
October 22	7:00 PM	Captains Meeting (mandatory)
October 22	8:00 PM	Welcome Dinner & Kickoff Party
October 23	8:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Fishing Day 1
October 23	5:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Video Review & Check-In at Marina Cap Cana
October 24	8:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Fishing Day 2
October 24	5:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Video Review & Check-In at Marina Cap Cana
October 25	8:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Fishing Day 3

Date	Time	Event
October 25	5:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Video Review & Check-In at Marina Cap Cana
October 26	6:00 PM	Awards Banquet & Celebration at Marina Cap Cana

The tournament committee reserves the right to modify the schedule for safety, weather, or operational reasons. Any changes will be communicated through the official tournament WhatsApp group and at the captains meeting.

Section 3 • Entry Fees & Registration

3.1 Base Entry Fee

The base entry fee is \$5,000 per team. There is no limit on the number of anglers per team; however, every angler must be registered online prior to the start of fishing in order to be qualified to score release points. Any fish caught by an angler not registered online will not score.

The base entry fee grants the team up to ten (10) tickets to all scheduled tournament events, including the Welcome Dinner, Kickoff Party, and Awards Banquet. Additional tickets beyond ten may be purchased separately at rates announced prior to the event.

The tournament committee reserves the right to refuse entry to any individual, organization, or corporation.

3.2 Optional Jackpots

Optional jackpots are available and announced separately. Teams must be entered in each specific category to be eligible for its payout. All jackpot entries must be submitted at or before final registration. No jackpot entries will be accepted after lines in on October 23.

3.3 Registration

Final registration takes place on October 22 from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Marina Cap Cana. All preregistered teams and those registering onsite must have at least one representative present to collect tournament credentials and the captains bag.

To encourage maximum participation, registrations will remain open until 7:59 AM on October 23 (lines in).

3.4 Refund Policy

- Withdrawals more than 60 days before the tournament start date: full refund of the entry fee
- Withdrawals within 30 to 60 days of the tournament: 50% refund of the entry fee
- Withdrawals within 30 days of the tournament: no refund
- Jackpot entry fees are refundable only if the team withdraws before registration closes

3.5 Cancellation of the Tournament

If the tournament is cancelled in whole or in part due to a force majeure event (including but not limited to acts of God, war, terrorism, government action, pandemic, or severe weather rendering the tournament

impracticable), all teams will receive a full refund of base entry and jackpot fees paid. If TCO BLUE, LLC cancels the tournament for any other reason (including insufficient participation), all entry fees and optional jackpot payments will be refunded in full.

Refunds are issued to the team representative via ACH, check, or wire transfer within four weeks, provided all tournament entry fees have cleared the bank. TCO BLUE, LLC reserves the right to issue refunds at its discretion in extraordinary circumstances.

Section 4 • Divisions

Teams compete in one of two divisions, declared at registration.

4.1 Sonar Division

Omnidirectional sonar is permitted, subject to the deployment hours in Section 6.6.

4.2 Non-Sonar Division

- Omnidirectional sonar may not be on board, used, or powered on at any time during fishing hours
- Permitted in the Non-Sonar Division: side-scan, downscan, and standard fishfinders
- Boats in the Non-Sonar Division are subject to inspection at any time during the tournament
- A violation by a Non-Sonar boat, including powering on omnidirectional sonar at any point during fishing hours, results in disqualification of that vessel for the day

Section 5 • Anglers, Crew & Boats

5.1 Team Composition

Each boat must carry one designated captain and at least one designated mate at all times, without exception. Designated captains and mates may also register as anglers.

A team may have an unlimited number of registered anglers across the tournament. However, no more than eight (8) anglers may fish on a boat on any single day. Each team must designate its eight anglers of the day prior to lines in.

Any changes to the fishing lineup between days are permitted, provided the incoming angler is already registered online (see Section 3.1). All lineup changes must be reported to Tournament Control before lines in on the day the change takes effect. Failure to report a change before lines in will result in any releases by an unreported angler not scoring for that day. Any changes to the captain or crew must also be reported to the tournament committee prior to the start of fishing on that day.

5.2 Primary Contact

Each team must designate a Primary Contact who is authorized to make decisions for the team. The Primary Contact must provide a cell phone number and email address. All official correspondence will be sent to the Primary Contact.

5.3 Guests

Guests are allowed on board participating boats during fishing hours. Guests may not hook, fight, or land fish.

5.4 Conduct

All participants are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and good sportsmanship at all times, whether at the dock, underway, or while fishing. Unsportsmanlike or threatening conduct toward tournament officials, other participants, or marina staff will result in immediate disqualification of the entire team with no refund of entry fees.

5.5 Assistance Between Boats

Boats may receive aid from other boats in the form of towing in the event of mechanical failure or emergency. Teams and boats are not permitted to receive assistance in hooking, fighting, landing, or releasing fish.

Section 6 · Fishing Rules

6.1 Fishing Hours

Lines In: 8:00 AM AST each fishing day. **Lines Out: 4:30 PM AST** each fishing day. Tournament Control's time is the official tournament time for all starts, hookups, releases, and stops. No lines, teasers, or sonar are permitted in the water before the official lines in call.

Lines Out at 4:30 PM AST is absolute. A release with a Tournament Control time of 4:30:01 PM or later does not count. A fish hooked before 4:30 PM may be fought until released or lost, provided the hookup was reported to Tournament Control before lines out.

Return to Marina: All boats must be back at Marina Cap Cana no later than 7:00 PM each fishing day. Teams experiencing mechanical issues, weather delays, or other safety-related problems must contact Tournament Control as soon as possible to report the delay. Failure to return by 7:00 PM without reporting a valid reason to Tournament Control may result in forfeiture of that day's points.

6.2 Fishing Boundary

Fishing is restricted to a 50 nautical mile radius from the Marina Cap Cana sea buoy. This boundary applies to all competing boats at all times during official fishing hours.

A vessel may cross the boundary only while actively fighting a hooked fish. The vessel must return inside the boundary before resuming fishing. Any release that occurs outside the boundary does not score.

Penalty for fishing outside the 50 nm boundary: forfeiture of all points earned that day (billfish releases and gamefish). The team remains eligible to fish remaining tournament days. GPS tracking data, Tournament Control reports, and video evidence may be used to verify boundary compliance. Teams are responsible for knowing their position at all times.

6.3 Boundary Crossing · Active Fight Exception

A boat actively fighting a hooked fish may cross outside the 50 nm boundary during the fight. The captain must report the boundary crossing to Tournament Control immediately. Once the fish is released or lost, the boat must return inside the boundary before fishing resumes.

6.4 Marine Protected Areas

No fishing is permitted within any Dominican Republic marine sanctuary or protected area. Violation results in immediate disqualification from the tournament with no refund.

6.5 Radio & Tournament Control

Official channel: VHF Channel 7 International. **WhatsApp group:** access provided at registration; each team must designate one representative to submit reports to the group to avoid duplicate entries.

Tournament phone: provided at the captains meeting.

All hookups and all releases must be radioed in to Tournament Control, without exception. Reports must include boat name, angler name, and species. All lost fish must also be reported. All gamefish intended to be weighed must be called in to Tournament Control prior to returning to the dock.

Tournament Control time is final. Failure to radio in a hookup or release may result in the fish not scoring. Intentionally reporting false information to Tournament Control results in immediate full-tournament disqualification and forfeiture of all prizes.

6.6 Late Hookups

Hookups occurring within the final 15 minutes of fishing must be called in to Tournament Control immediately. If a fish is still hooked at 4:30 PM, the angler may continue fighting until the fish is released or lost. Tournament Control must be notified once the fight ends. All release videos and any late-hookup fish intended for the weigh station must be turned in by 11:59 PM on the day of fishing.

6.7 Sonar (Sonar Division)

Omnidirectional sonar units may be powered on before lines in but may not be deployed in the water prior to the 8:00 AM lines in call. Sonar units must be retracted and powered off no later than 15 minutes after lines out at 4:30 PM each day. Non-Sonar Division boats are governed by Section 4.2.

Section 7 • Scoring

7.1 Billfish • Team & Individual Scoring

Billfish releases are the sole basis for overall team standings and all individual angler awards. All billfish must be released. Points are awarded per official release, verified at Marina Cap Cana video review.

Species	Division	Points Per Release
Blue Marlin	Billfish	300
White Marlin	Billfish	100

Species	Division	Points Per Release
Sailfish	Billfish	100
Spearfish	Billfish	100
Roundscale Spearfish	Billfish (scores as White)	100

In the event of a tie in billfish release points, the tiebreaker is awarded to the team that reached the highest point total first, based on the official release time recorded by Tournament Control.

7.2 Gamefish · Added Entry Jackpots (By Weight)

Gamefish do not score any points toward overall team standings. Gamefish are eligible only for optional added-entry jackpots that a team has specifically entered. A team that has not entered a given gamefish added-entry is not eligible for payouts in that category, regardless of what they catch.

Gamefish added-entry jackpots are judged purely by weight. Scoring is calculated to the tenth of a pound up to 200 pounds and to the pound for fish over 200 pounds.

Species	Minimum Weight to Qualify
Tuna	10 lbs
Wahoo	10 lbs
Dolphin (Mahi)	10 lbs

Gamefish must be brought to the Marina Cap Cana scale no later than 60 minutes after the boat returns to the dock. Mutilated fish (fish damaged by sharks or other marine life beyond cosmetic wounds) are subject to review and may be disqualified at the discretion of the weigh master. All decisions of the weigh master are final.

Once a gamefish is boated and the team intends to weigh it, the team must notify Tournament Control. In the event of a tie in weight within an added-entry category, the team that boated the fish first wins, based on the Tournament Control call-in time.

7.3 Individual Angler Awards

High-Point Angler, Top Lady Angler, and Top Junior Angler (17 and younger) are awarded based on total billfish release points scored by the individual angler across all three fishing days. Gamefish do not factor into individual angler awards.

Section 8 · Angling & Tackle Rules

International Game Fish Association (IGFA) angling and tackle rules apply unless otherwise stated in this document. It is the responsibility of each registered angler, captain, and crew member to know, understand, and comply with IGFA and tournament rules throughout the competition. For a complete list of IGFA angling and tackle rules, visit igfa.org. Tournament-specific rules override general IGFA rules where they differ.

8.1 Line

Maximum line strength is 130-pound test. Tournament and non-tournament lines are eligible. If the line test stated on the manufacturer label is 130 pounds or less, the line is allowed in the tournament. The catch is classified under the breaking strength of the first five meters of line directly preceding the double line, leader, or hook. This section must be comprised of a single, homogeneous piece of line.

8.2 Leader

The length of the leader is the overall length, including any swivel, lure, or hook arrangement. In all line classes exceeding 20-pound test (10 kg), the leader is limited to 30 feet (9.14 meters). The combined length of the double line, leader, swivel, and hook set may not exceed 40 feet (12.19 meters) total.

The tournament committee holds the right to examine any hook sets, lines, or leaders at any time during the event. Refusal to allow examination will result in immediate disqualification from the event without a refund of any jackpot or registration fees.

8.3 Rods & Teasers

Rods and teasers are unlimited in use or numbers.

8.4 Baits

Dead bait, lures, and any combination thereof are permitted for all species. Live bait is permitted for gamefish only. Live bait is not permitted for billfish under any circumstances; this applies to all trolling, drifting, kite fishing, or any other method of presentation targeting billfish.

8.5 Hooks

All tournament participants must use non-offset circle hooks for all species whenever natural baits or natural-bait and artificial-lure combinations are used. Artificial lures without natural bait may be rigged with conventional J-hooks.

8.6 Prohibited Equipment

- Power-driven, ratchet-handle, and dual-crank reels
- Wire line
- Drones
- Green sticks
- Live bait for billfish
- Omnidirectional sonar deployed outside permitted hours (see Sections 4 and 6.7)

8.7 Hook and Hand

The Makaira Invitational permits hook-and-hand fishing under the following conditions:

- If the captain or the mate hooks the fish, the rod must be transferred to a registered angler immediately after the hook up

- Once the rod is in the angler's hands, that angler must fight the fish to conclusion (release, boat, or loss). The rod may not be passed to a second angler under any circumstances.
- The hook-up, transfer, and the angler fighting the fish must all be clearly captured on video
- A rod holder may be used to hook a fish, but not when fighting a fish. Once a fish is hooked on a rod in a rod holder, the rod must be removed and placed in the hands of an angler to fight.

Violation of the hook-and-hand protocol, including a second handoff after the initial transfer or a failure to transfer immediately after hook-up, will result in the release or catch not scoring. Repeated or intentional violations may result in disqualification from the tournament at the discretion of the tournament committee.

Section 9 · Video Verification & Release Criteria

9.1 Mandatory On-Site Video Review

Every billfish release must be verified at Marina Cap Cana on-site video review. Video review takes place in the designated review area at Marina Cap Cana from 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM on each fishing day.

Each team must submit all release footage, the signed catch affidavit, and the official release cards for the day no later than 7:30 PM, unless a team is actively fighting a fish after lines out at 4:30 PM. Teams fighting late fish must notify Tournament Control and will receive an adjusted submission deadline.

9.2 Equipment

Each team is responsible for providing its own video camera(s) or cell phone and recording media. The tournament does not provide video equipment. Accepted media: SD cards or cell phone video files. A secondary video source is strongly recommended. All video recording equipment must be set to the proper Dominican Republic time and date and synchronized to the official tournament time announced at the captains meeting.

9.3 Release Cards

Release cards are distributed in the team captains bag at registration. Each fishing day has its own release card, a different color with a unique design, announced by Tournament Control prior to lines in each day. It is the team's responsibility to have the correct card on board before fishing begins. Use of the wrong day's card on a release will result in the release not scoring.

9.4 Required Video Elements

To score an official release, the video footage must clearly include all of the following:

- Clear identification of the species
- The fish hooked and being fought by the registered angler
- If the fish was hooked by the captain or mate, clear video of the rod being transferred immediately to the angler (see Section 8.7)
- A team member, angler, or crew touching the leader (not the double line) while the fish is still hooked
- The release card of the day displayed on camera

- Full release of the fish, showing the line being cut, hook removed, or fish swimming away freely
- The time and date of the release (camera timestamp)

9.5 Continuous Video Sequence

Teams must maintain a continuous video sequence from the time video evidence of the fish is established to the time the leader touch and release are verified on video. If a break in the footage occurs, the team must reestablish video evidence of the fish with a continuous sequence to the leader touch and release.

9.6 Catch Affidavit

After each release, the team must record on the official catch affidavit: (1) date, (2) release time, (3) species, (4) release card color of the day, (5) angler name, and (6) Tournament Control confirmation number. The affidavit must be signed by each registered angler and the boat captain. At the end of each fishing day, teams must bring the camera, SD card(s) or video files, signed catch affidavit, and all original video footage to Marina Cap Cana video review no later than 7:30 PM.

9.7 Multiple Hookups

In the event of a multiple hookup, a crew member must state this on camera with video evidence to support it. If multiple fish of the same species are being fought, one color card may be used as the break image for the multiple, provided the video evidence clearly distinguishes each fish and the anglers fighting those fish, and meets all release criteria for each individual release.

9.8 Video Ownership

Do not delete any video footage taken during fishing hours, even if it does not include the required elements and will not be used to prove a catch. All recordings, images, and sounds captured during the tournament become the property of TCO BLUE, LLC and may be used for promotional and marketing purposes. Any release photos or video posted on tournament channels are for entertainment and marketing purposes only.

Section 10 · Protests

Participants may lodge protests against any catch they believe was not made in accordance with these rules. All protests must be submitted in writing and accompanied by \$1,000 in U.S. currency. All protests must be in the hands of the tournament's designated rules official by 8:00 PM on the day of the alleged incident, unless the protest concerns a release under review after 8:00 PM, in which case the deadline is extended by Tournament Control.

All protests will be settled the day of the incident. The tournament committee may call a protest hearing at its discretion; a protest hearing is not guaranteed. The protesting party, as well as the accused team members, captain, and crew, must be present at any official protest hearing. The tournament committee may refuse to consider any protest evidence not submitted at the protest hearing in the presence of the protested team. If the protesting or protested team fails to appear at the protest hearing, that team forfeits its right to submit or defend evidence. Decisions of the tournament committee regarding protests are final, non-appealable, and non-justiciable.

Section 11 · Weather

There is no weather committee. The tournament is conducted on a fish-at-your-own-risk basis. If any portion of the tournament is fished and a team releases eligible billfish or lands eligible gamefish, prizes will be awarded. Teams and captains are solely responsible for making their own decisions regarding safety and weather conditions. TCO BLUE, LLC, Marina Cap Cana, and all tournament officials bear no responsibility for team decisions to fish or not fish on any given day.

Section 12 · Winnings, Awards & Tax Compliance

All cash prizes are subject to U.S. tax reporting and withholding rules. U.S. winners must submit IRS Form W-9 and non-U.S. winners must submit IRS Form W-8BEN before any prize is released. Tax forms are collected at the time of winnings claim; no payout is released without a valid form on file. Prize payouts may be reported to the IRS on Form 1099-MISC where applicable, and backup withholding may apply if a valid taxpayer identification number is not furnished.

Prize money is paid in U.S. dollars via check, ACH, or wire transfer to the team representative within 30 days of the awards ceremony, provided all tournament documentation is complete.

The tournament management platform used by The Makaira Invitational provides live scoring updates for entertainment purposes. Live scoring content does not replace and may not reflect official tournament standings or payout amounts. Official standings are determined by the tournament committee.

Section 13 · General Provisions

13.1 Rule Changes

The Makaira Invitational tournament committee reserves the right to update or change these rules at any time. By entering the tournament and paying the entry fees, all participants agree to abide by the tournament rules and accept all decisions made by the tournament committee as final.

13.2 Disqualification

Any angler, captain, or mate who deliberately breaks IGFA or tournament rules may be deemed ineligible for any prize, award, honor, or recognition and may be immediately expelled and disqualified from this and future editions of The Makaira Invitational without a refund of any jackpot or registration fees.

13.3 Governing Law & Arbitration

These rules and all matters relating to The Makaira Invitational are governed by the laws of the State of Florida, without regard to its conflict-of-laws principles. Any dispute arising from these rules or tournament participation that is not resolved through the committee's protest process shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration administered in Miami, Florida, in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association. Participants waive any right to a jury trial and consent to exclusive personal jurisdiction in Miami-Dade County, Florida for any proceeding to enforce an arbitral award.

13.4 Release of Liability

Tournament participation is dangerous and may result in serious injury, death, or property damage. By entering The Makaira Invitational, all participants acknowledge these risks and release TCO BLUE, LLC, its officers, employees, sponsors, and all tournament officials from any and all claims, suits, causes of action, obligations, liabilities, debts, costs, damages, or demands arising from tournament participation, whether or not caused or contributed to by the negligence of the released parties. All tournament participants are advised to obtain their own insurance coverage, including marine insurance for vessels and liability coverage for crew and anglers.

13.5 Publicity

By entering the tournament, participants grant TCO BLUE, LLC the unrestricted, irrevocable, and perpetual worldwide right to record, copy, reproduce, publish, exhibit, perform, and otherwise exploit (and license others to exploit) the participant's appearance, name, likeness, voice, and statements made in interviews connected with the tournament, in any and all media now existing or hereinafter developed, without payment of additional compensation.

Tournament Contact

Website: www.makairainvitational.com

Tournament Director: Connor Motsko

Email: connor@makairainvitational.com

Operating Entity: TCO BLUE, LLC

End of Unofficial Rules