



International Masters Angling  
Tournament  
2026 Official Rules

## GENERAL

The Invitational Masters Angling Tournament is open only to anglers who have been approved by the Membership Committee. Anglers desiring to enter the tournament must be sponsored by a current or past participant and seconded by two additional current or past participants. Anyone who has engaged in commercial fishing or received monetary remuneration during the last three years for sport fishing activities such as captaining a boat, mating, or guiding is ineligible to participate. Income derived from sports writing will not preclude participation.

The limited number of world class boats and crews necessitates restricting the number of anglers in the tournament. Applications will be accepted from all anglers who qualify under existing "Priority Guidelines" until November 15, 2025. After that date, anglers will be accepted based on the postmark date of their application, up to the maximum number deemed desirable by the Committee

A. The dates of the 2026 Masters Angling Tournament are February 3-6, 2026. Applicants must be physically capable of competitively fishing in potentially rough sea conditions three consecutive days.

B. There will be a meeting for all anglers who are fishing the tournament for the first time at 2:30 pm on February 3 *at* the Los Suenos Marina Lanterna Lounge. The

purpose of the meeting is to thoroughly review the tournament rules. Freshmen anglers are urged to study these rules before the meeting so as to facilitate comprehension. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory; anglers not in attendance without a committee approved excuse will be penalized 200 points.

C. All anglers, including freshmen, will meet at 4:00 pm at Los Suenos Marina, Lanterna Lounge on February 3 for a review of the rules and to draw boat assignments. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory; anglers not in attendance without a committee approved excuse will be penalized 200 points.

D. The boat draw ensures that no angler fishes the same boat or with the same fellow angler more than one day. The Committee reserves the right to alter the draw slightly to prevent two freshmen anglers from fishing together on the first day.

E. The admission fee covers the costs of the boats with crew, gratuities, extra or replacement fishing line, terminal tackle, bait, lunches, prizes and social functions for the anglers and their wives or a guest. Tipping of the crew is prohibited, and anyone discovered tipping will be disqualified.

Coaching of the anglers by the crew, or favoritism shown one angler over another, are violations of the rules. Crew members may call out the location of a fish in the bait spread, but delivering specific instruction on what the angler should do with his tackle or bait is prohibited.

There will be three consecutive days of fishing, Feb 4 - 6, weather permitting, with no lay day. The Weather Committee reserves the right to cancel a day of fishing or set geographical limits for safety reasons.

Fishing hours all three days are 8:30 am to 4:00, although the Committee may adjust these hours in the best interests of the tournament before the

first day of fishing has commenced.

Anglers should be prepared to board their boat two and one half hours prior to the commencement of fishing time. Boats will not be held for a tardy angler after two hours prior to fishing time. A substitute angler will be provided and the boat will depart the dock.

Consumption of hard liquor during tournament hours is prohibited.

Guests are not allowed aboard without the prior approval of the tournament chairman and both anglers.

## TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT

A. Monofilament Momoi 30# IGFA Hi Vis Yellow line will be used. Anglers may spool at home or bring their reels and the tournament will spool the line. Extra line will be supplied by the tournament committee. The monofilament main line must measure a minimum of 200 yards from the double line. (See backing allowed below)

The use of braided line for backing is encouraged to conserve the amount of monofilament used. Braided backing material may be of any weight. The monofilament main line used on top of the backing line must measure a minimum of 200 yards from the double line.

B. Tackle will conform to standard IGFA 30# class. There will be no spinning equipment. Anglers may carry 3 rod and reel combinations each day.

C. A maximum of 5 feet of double line will be allowed. The "wind-on" material will be supplied by the boat and may be of any brand and test strength. The leader material will be supplied to each boat by the Committee. The total length of the "wind-on" and the leader will not exceed 30 feet in length.

D. 7/0 circle hooks will be supplied

to the boats by the Committee. One hook per bait allowed. Skirts, chuggers and sea witches may be used ahead of and touching the bait and must be made available to both anglers. Hooks are not to be modified by crew or angler. Must be used as supplied.

E. Teasers will be supplied by the boat and need not be identical on both sides. Live bait teasers are not allowed. Teasers may not be put in the water before starting time each day.

#### PROCEDURE

A. Two anglers will fish on each boat. Under standard trolling conditions, each angler will fish a flat line behind the teaser and forward of his rigger bait and a long rigger. Each bait is to be of equal distance behind the boat to the corresponding bait of the fishing partner. Flat lines may be run directly from the rod tip, through a clip on the transom, or from a short rigger.

B. Anglers will change sides of the boat every hour. Should a fish appear behind a bait during a change-over, the rod belonging to the angler shall take precedence over the location of that rod. If a fish appears behind an angler's teaser during a change-over when the angler has his bait in the boat or just behind the boat, the angler must drop his bait back behind the teaser before the teaser can be moved.

C. Fish eligible for scoring are Sailfish, Striped, Blue or Black Marlin. Any other species should be dispatched as quickly as possible.

D. Fish are officially caught when the angler winds on the leader through the first guide, if using a wind-on leader, or when the swivel touches the rod tip if a wind-on is not employed. The mate is not to touch the leader prior to either of the above described events.

E. This is a dead boat tournament.

When a hook-up occurs, the captain must halt the forward motion of the boat with a brief reverse thrust of the engines. The transom of the boat may be maneuvered to face the fish, but the boat may not at any time be advanced stern first toward the fish. All boat maneuvers of twin engine boats must be accomplished with two engines simultaneously in gear, one in forward and the other in reverse. In the event of a double header hook-up by two anglers, one angler will be deemed to have hooked-up first, and that angler will have control of the boat. The boat will then maneuver as if the second angler's fish did not exist. Courtesy on the part of the first angler may allow the captain to make all efforts to catch both fish by maintaining an angle with the boat so as not to cut off the second fish. But the first angler is within his right to request that the transom be maneuvered to face his fish even if that maneuver places the second angler's fish in peril.

F. Scoring Marlin - From the time of strike the captain shall engage the stopwatch and the boat shall maintain as a dead boat for the first minute. If a single fish is hooked the boat may back down ONLY at the angler's request. If the fish is later identified as a sailfish the score will be disqualified for angler and boat.

A marlin released after engaging in backdown will receive the same points as a sailfish. The angler may choose to fight a marlin dead boat style for a doubled score.

In the event of a double header with the blue Marlin being hooked first by angler A and within the one-minute time frame angler B hooks a sailfish then angler A has control of the boat after the one minute but can't back down until angler B has caught and released his/her sail or has pulled the hook. Scoresheet will be noted for Boat Assist.

G. Once a fish is officially caught, the boat may make any necessary maneuver including backing down or running forward to facilitate the cutting of the leader to free the fish.

Jerking the leader to free the fish is not permitted.

H. After an initial hook-up, both anglers may leave their remaining bait or baits in the water for one minute. The second angler must not impede the angler hooked-up to a fish. Partially or fully retrieving a bait to avoid interference during the initial minute is allowed. Dumping a bait is not allowed. All fish hooked subsequent to the first fish, and before the one minute time limit, assume the start time of the first fish. Fish hooked after the first minute has elapsed must be immediately broken off so as not to impede the first angler.

I. When one or both anglers experience hook-ups that are not positively identified as scoring fish, both anglers may continue fishing the remaining lines. An angler hooked to a questionable or positively identified non scoring fish may request at any time the boat's assistance by backing up to dispatch that fish, providing the second angler agrees. Scoring fish hooked with the boat in reverse do not count. An unidentified fish that turns out to be a sailfish is disqualified if the boat has backed up. Scoring fish hooked while non-scoring fish are being fought use their own start time.

Should a previously believed non scoring fish be in fact a scoring fish, the start time is at the time of the hook-up, and the one minute rule for the start time of subsequent scoring fish applies.

A scoring fish hooked more than one minute after the first scoring fish will not count and must be immediately dispatched – with no interference to the first angler – regardless of when the first scoring fish is finally identified.

J. At any time an angler may call one or both of his rods "out of action." The rod or rods may be called "back in action" with no necessity to return them to the boat and be re-positioned only if there is no fish behind the bait. A rod called "out of action" that

has a fish appear behind the bait must remain “out of action” until the fish disappears or the angler returns the bait to the boat and re-positions it.

K. One angler with two scoring fish hooked at the same time, may fight these fish utilizing rod holders and alternating rods in and out of the holders.

L. When one angler is baiting a fish at his teaser or behind one of his baits, the lines of the other angler must remain in their trolling position. An angler may not alter the position of his baits, remove the line from the rigger or flat line clips, or attempt to bait a fish off his partner’s bait or his partner’s teaser.

M. Should a fish appear behind the teaser of the angler with a bait in the boat or just behind the boat, that teaser may not be moved until the angler drops his bait back behind the teaser.

N. The boat must be in forward motion when the baits or teasers are overboard unless hooked to a fish and in the one minute grace period. It is not legal to put the boat into neutral in order to sink the baits. Backing into schools of fish or bait is not legal.

O. The anglers at no time may leave the cockpit and walk around the sides of the boat or go on the bow of the boat to fight a fish.

P. In the event that the boat must be placed in gear and moved due to a safety issue there shall be no penalty to the angler.

## SCORING

A. Timing commences when the fish is hooked and line peels from the reel with the drag engaged or the angler can retrieve line. Fish hooked subsequent to the first fish and before the initial sixty seconds has elapsed will utilize the start time of the first fish.

B. Each fish when hooked is worth 100 points for the first 30 seconds.

Thereafter, the score for catching the fish drops by 5 points with the elapse of every 30 seconds. At the end of 10 minutes the fish is considered “overtime” and receives 5 points with no penalty for breakoff. A sincere effort, expeditiously executed, should be made to retrieve the outstanding line on an overtime fish before release. Such action will benefit the fish and return both anglers quickly to action. Marlin scores double except when boat assisted.

C. On positively identified non-scoring fish hook-ups, the captain will not start the stopwatch.

On questionable hook-ups the captain will start the stopwatch and announce when one minute has elapsed. With this information the second angler will know how to behave if he has hooked a scoring fish and the first hook-up proves to be a scoring fish as well. If less than one minute has elapsed, both anglers have opportunities to catch their fish for score. If more than one minute has elapsed, the second angler must dispatch his fish as quickly as possible with no interference to the first angler.

On questionable hook-ups the captain will start the stopwatch and clear it immediately when the fish is positively identified as a non-scoring fish. With a clear watch the captain and anglers are ready for a scoring fish event.

On scoring fish hook-ups after an initial hook-up that had not yet been positively identified, the captain will note the elapsed time on the stopwatch. If the first fish proves to be a non-scoring fish, the captain will subtract that amount of time from the second angler’s final time, as the second angler’s start time is the time of his hook-up. If the first fish proves to be a scoring fish, the second scoring fish, if it is hooked within one minute of the first fish, assumes the start time of the first fish.

D. Anglers will be penalized for a

broken line regardless of the circumstance, with the single exception of a fish being cut off by an adjacent boat. Broken lines are only penalized if the fish is positively identified as a sailfish or marlin. There is no penalty for a broken line by another species of fish or an unidentified strike.

E. In the event of a broken line, the angler will be penalized one half the score that would have been garnered if the fish were to have been caught at that exact moment. For example, a sailfish broken on strike results in a 50 point penalty. A fish broken off after 5 minutes and one second is penalized 25 points. Broken line penalty is the same for all scoring fish and is not doubled in the event an angler attempts to deadboat a marlin..

F. Anglers are responsible for the line, including the double line knot, and will be penalized for any breakage. Anglers are not responsible for breakage of the wind-on leader, the leader, or the knot joining the wind-on to the line. If the bimini comes back, there is no penalty.

G. All scoring fish caught or broken off must be immediately reported to Radio Control. The report is to be as follows: transmit the boat number, the angler number, the time on the fish and whether there was a broken line or boat assist. Radio Control will respond with a reiteration of this information and then supply the time of day, the event number, and a confirmation if there was a broken line or boat assist. The captain is to record all this information.

H. At the end of each day anglers must fill in an angler/boat score sheet. Angler’s score sheets are incomplete without all the following information:

1. Date, boat name and boat number.
2. Angler names and numbers.
3. Time of day, time on fish, event number, indication of broken

line or boat assist if applicable and points earned (or lost) for each fish.

4. Total points for the day.
5. Signatures of both anglers and the captain.

Incomplete score sheets will result in a 50 point penalty for both anglers and a one fish penalty for the boat. Regardless of the number of omissions on the score sheet, the maximum penalty incurable in one day for each angler is 50 points, and the maximum penalty for a boat in one day is one fish.

I. All protests must be called in to the committee before the boat reaches the dock. Ruling on protests is the province of the Rules Committee, and all decisions are final.

J. The angler score sheet must be turned in to a representative of the scoring committee upon return to the dock. Promptness in turning in this document is greatly appreciated by the Committee.

K. Tying angler scores will be broken by the lower average time on all fish caught.

#### BOATS AND CREWS

A. Boat crews shall consist of one captain and one English speaking mate with two others, possibly non-English speaking mates, allowed. A tower and sonar man are permitted but must be one of the supplied mates on board not an additional person.

B. The crew is responsible for presenting to the tournament each day a tidy boat, devoid of unnecessary paraphernalia in the cockpit, all equipment such as rigger pins and terminal tackle in good order, and a sufficient supply of rigged bait. Lunch and cold drinks for the anglers are also the responsibility of the boat.

C. There will be a mandatory Captains' Meeting on February 3 at 6:00 pm to review the tournament rules, answer questions, and pass out

the boat packets which contain, among other things, a copy of the rules and stop watches. The site for the meeting will be Los Suenos Marina, Beach Club.

D. Boat scores are based on the number of scoring fish caught by the anglers aboard with no consideration for time on the fish. Fish broken off prior to going overtime do not count either for or against the boat total. Overtime fish count for the boat even if broken off subsequent to the ten minute time limit. All efforts must be used to release the scoring fish without breaking a line.

E. Crew should be aware that the anglers are fishing IGFA rules that prohibit anyone but the angler from touching the rod, reel or line when baiting or fighting a fish. Inadvertent contact with the angler's equipment when a fish is striking a bait or hooked disqualifies that fish. Deliberate interference subjects the boat to a one fish penalty.

F. The only allowable baits are ballyhoo, mullet, belly strips and squid. Live bait is not permitted.

G. Captains will be given Daily Log Sheets for their notes and scoring. The Daily Log must be remitted with the scoresheets and include the Boat Name and number, angler names and/or numbers and date. The Daily Log Sheet will be used as reference for the scoring committee.

H. Coaching of the anglers by the crew, or favoritism shown to one angler over another, are violations of the rules. Crew members may call out the location of a fish in the bait spread, but delivering specific instruction on what the angler should do with his tackle or bait is prohibited.

I. Boat score ties will be broken by the earlier time of release.

J. There are no time outs but an angler may call his/her lines "out of action".

#### VI. ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

A. Anglers achieving certain totals of fish caught cumulatively in various tournaments will be awarded achievement pins as follows:

- 20 scoring fish - Bronze Award
- 35 scoring fish - Silver Award
- 50 scoring fish - Gold Award
- 100 scoring fish - Platinum Award
- 175 scoring fish - Diamond Award
- 250 scoring fish - Grand Master

For the tabulation of cumulative scoring fish, overtime fish do not count.

Anglers in each division at the start of the tournament will compete against their fellow anglers in the same division for an award for division winner. Ties will be broken based on the earliest time of day.

B. There is a prize for the billfish caught in the least amount of time. In the event two or more anglers post identically fast times, the winner will be determined by the first fish caught.

C. There is a prize for the most fish caught in the tournament. Overtime fish do not count toward the total. Ties will be broken by the earliest last fish.