

2026 Tournament Rules

ANGLER ELIGIBILITY: Open to all except professional anglers, captains and crew. **Professional is defined as anyone who has been paid to fish, crew or captain on a fishing boat in the last year (12 months).** The Derby Rules Committee reserves the right to determine an angler's professional status. All entrants must fish on boats officially entered in the *Silver Sailfish Derby* and must fly the official Derby Pennant.

LIMITED ENTRY: Tournament limited to 50 boats.

FISHING DAYS: Thursday, January 8th & Friday, January 9th.

WEATHER: The decision to fish is solely the Captain's choice. All participants fish at their own discretion and risk.

DEPARTURE: All boats must visually check out of Palm Beach (Lake Worth) Inlet each morning between 6:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. Any boats departing after 8:00 a.m. must visually check out at the Sailfish Marina. You must show your boat number and be audibly confirmed prior to leaving the inlet. **FISHING HOURS:** Official "Lines In" is 8:00 a.m. and official "Lines Out" is 4:00 p.m. each day. **At the conclusion of each day, all boats must return to Sailfish Marina by water, in the boat you fished on, to submit their daily score sheet & SD card by the designated time.**

BOUNDARIES: **North:** St. Lucie Power Plant (Lat. 27° 20'57.00" N)

South: Boca Raton Inlet (Lat 26° 20'8.00" N)

DAILY REPORTS & SD CARDS: The tournament supplied Daily Report Form must be completed and submitted along with your SD card, **by boat**, at the designated Sailfish Marina Dock no later than 90 minutes (1 1/2 hours) after "Lines Out". **Register names of all anglers aboard**, whether eligible fish were caught or not. List tag numbers if applicable; note estimated weight and length of released sails; **official time of release**

must be indicated for each sailfish; weigh and record dolphin/kingfish/wahoo/cobia/tuna at the marina on an official tournament scale. If a boat breaks down, their daily score sheet & SD card may be delivered prior to the deadline by some other boat. The Sailfish Marina is the **ONLY** official weighing and recording station.

*** All decisions made by the tournament committee are final and official.**

BAIT & TACKLE SPECIFICATIONS

1. All anglers are limited to fishing 20 lb. (maximum) test line. The use of backing is permissible per IGFA rules. Leader (any material) is limited to 15 feet including floats/corks. The combined length of double line and leader shall not exceed 20 feet.
2. Tournament boats are allowed to fish a maximum of four (4) lines at any one time. This includes the use of bait rods. Eligible fish (sailfish, dolphin, etc.) cannot be caught using a bait rod. No wire lines or planers allowed. Downriggers and kites are permissible.
3. Any type of live, dead or artificial bait can be used and are scored equally. **The use of natural dead bait teasers/dredges is prohibited.** Artificial bait/strip teasers and dredges are permitted. Chumming sailfish with live or dead bait is prohibited. Boats must retain all baits (fresh or used) during fishing hours.
4. All boats are required to fish with billfish approved non-offset circle hooks when fishing with live or dead baits. Any brand non-offset circle hook is permitted. Hooks must not be altered in any manner whatsoever. The use of other traditional hook styles is permitted only when fishing with unbaited artificial lures.

ANGLING RULES & VIDEO VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. All participants must comply strictly with IGFA rules. The only exception will be in the event of multiple hookups. Then the angler may fight additional fish from a rod holder. Anglers must fight their own fish unassisted. Fish will be disqualified if rod, reel or line is handled by anyone other than the angler while fish is baited, hooked up and fought.
2. A sailfish release is official when a crew member touches/takes hold of the leader; tipping the leader does not constitute a release. Cut the leader to release a sailfish (as close as possible to the mouth). Breaking the leader by intentionally jerking or snatching is not permitted & will disqualify a catch. Gaffing a fish to touch the leader is not permitted & will disqualify a catch. A fish hooked on multiple lines is deemed ineligible. If the leader is wrapped around the fish, clearly identify on video that the fish is within touching range of the butt-end of a gaff or tagging stick; this will constitute a release.
3. Video Requirement: All sailfish releases must be verified in a continuous video footage sequence, from the time video evidence confirms identification of the fish, until the leader is touched and then cut at the time of release. **Each team is responsible for providing their own video camera and the appropriate media to record video footage that documents the releases on their boat.** The first video clip to be shot by all teams should be of the time & date at the start of fishing. Video media will not be provided to teams by the tournament. Acceptable video formats are SD cards only.
4. Release Verification: This continuous video must clearly identify the fish as well as the touching of the leader by a crew member, and the separation of the fish by cutting the leader. If a break in the footage should occur, the team must reestablish video evidence of the fish again with a continuous video sequence up to the leader touch and leader cut.
Upon releasing the fish, the proper release card (one for Day 1, and the other for Day 2 of fishing) must be displayed on video to mark the completion of a catch.
5. Video/Content Release: Video footage submitted becomes property of the *Silver Sailfish Derby* and may be used for all promotional purposes. All registered captains, anglers and occupants of their boats consent that tournament officials may use all video content without payment or restriction. SD cards will be returned at a later date.
6. Release Confirmation: All sailfish releases (time of release) must be radioed/phoned to the tournament score keeper; time on SD card is not official tournament time. Each release will be audibly verified on the VHF. **It is the responsibility of each boat to have a sufficient VHF radio and/or cellular phone.** The official *Silver Sailfish Derby* VHF Channel is 79 (backup Channel VHF 80). Tournament standings will be reported on the radio at the start and conclusion of each day. Live scoring will be available throughout the tournament.
7. If fish are being fought at "Lines Out" time, the captain **MUST** report the number of fish hooked up. Only those fish, if successfully released, will count.
8. No one may retain hold of the leader to hook a fish. The fish must pull drag from the reel.
9. The intentional abandonment of the boat to fight or land a sailfish is prohibited. All anglers & rods must remain in the boat.
10. Marlin releases do not count towards sailfish release points, but will be eligible for special awards.
11. If tagging sailfish, care should be exercised in placement of the tag, avoiding eyes, gills & stomach. **Billfish Foundation Tags** will be available when you pick up your Captain's Bag at the West Palm Beach Fishing Club.
12. Derby officials may disqualify any entrant/entry/captain/boat for any rule infractions and will interpret all rules and constitute final authority. Any protests must be submitted in writing immediately to the Derby Committee, and **MUST** be accompanied by a \$500.00 non-refundable fee.
13. All anglers must be properly licensed for fishing in salt water. Anglers, crews and captains fish at their own risk.



JANUARY 7-10, 2026

