

# General Rules

IGFA rules apply in all tournaments held by the Golden Hook Fishing Club. It is the responsibility of each team to know, understand and abide by the applicable IGFA and tournament rules during the competition. We recommend you carry these rules on board for immediate reference during the competition. In the event that written rules do not specifically apply, then the judges' decision is final.

Any team member, captain or mate who deliberately breaks these rules shall be expelled from the competition and will be barred from all future tournaments and functions held by the Golden Hook Fishing Club.

## **1) Lines and Teams**

- a) Each team may fish up to 5 lines. How these lines shall be fished is left up to the individual team involved so long as IGFA rules are followed at all times. Line breaking strength may not exceed IGFA 130 pound test. There are no bonus points for fishing less than 130 pound line.
- b) Only one teaser is allowed per line fished.
- c) All IGFA tackle, line, leader, lure and bait rules apply.
- d) Boats are not required to carry the same team members each day but only one team is allowed per boat. Teams must fish the same boat for the entire competition. In the event of mechanical failure, a replacement vessel may be used with the approval of the tournament committee. All cash prizes will be paid to designated team captains only. In the event that a chartered boat is utilized for a tournament series points are awarded by team rather than by vessel.

## **2) Daily Fishing Times**

- a) Fishing lines and teasers may not be placed in the water before lines in and must be removed immediately at lines out.
- b) Quitting times vary with each tournament. The tournament weigh station will remain open two hours after lines out. All boats must either bring their fish by boat to the weigh station or a designated tag station. Fish brought to the weigh station must arrive no later than 2 hours after lines out. Fish brought to the tag station must arrive no later than 1 hour after lines out. All fish received at designated tag stations will be transported to the weigh station by a tournament official. Boats utilizing a tag station must send a representative to the weigh station with their completed catch reports in order to qualify their catch.
- c) Boats fighting a fish at quitting time must report to tournament control.
- d) All boats shall leave from St. Croix each day.
- e) All vessels competing in the tournament must stay within the following geographical limits.
  - o Eastern limit 064 00' 00 " W longitude
  - o Western limit 065 15' 00" W longitude
  - o Southern limit 16 50' 00" N latitude
  - o Northern limit 18 12' 00" N latitude

f) Excluding the area in the northeastern corner where the British Virgin Islands Exclusive Economic Zone exists. The only exceptions will be made for vessels crossing these boundaries while fighting fish. All other lines and teasers must be removed from the water and kept in the boat until the boat has returned to eligible waters.

### **3) Point Scoring, The Official Billfish Catch.**

- a) Sportfish caught during the Golden Hook Challenge Billfish tournament do not count towards the Golden Hook Challenge tournament results or any of the overall Golden Hook Series awards.
- b) Billfish released during a sportfish tournament will count as 50 points towards the best billfish boat and best overall boat series awards only. No billfish released during a sportfish tournament will count for points towards the individual tournament results.
- c) Billfish caught and released during the Golden Hook Challenge Billfish tournament will count as 50 points towards the tournament results.
- d) Any one of the following must occur to qualify a billfish for an official catch:
  - i) -The mate touching the leader.
  - ii) The swivel touching the rod tip
  - iii) The attachment point joining the line to the leader passing the rod tip(wind-on)
- e) Once a gaff or boating device has been placed on or in a billfish, or the billfish has been removed from the water, no points will be awarded for that billfish. No weigh-in facility will be provided and no points will be awarded for a boated fish.
- f) All billfish catches / releases require photographic documentation, digital preferred, identifying a billfish that meets the requirements in rule D. Photographs are required for all tournaments where billfish are caught. Any billfish caught without photographic evidence will not be eligible for tournament or series points.

### **4) Radio Communications**

- a) VHF channel 79A will be the official tournament channel. Boat to boat communications will be on channel 80.
- b) Lines in and lines out times will be announced each day via channel 79A. Fish reported before lines in and after lines out will not count for tournament points except under rule (2C).
- c) A good faith effort must be made to report all of the following to tournament control:
  - i) -hook ups
  - ii) -boated, lost, or released fish.
- d) Geographical locations are appreciated but NOT REQUIRED.

### **5) Catch Reports and Official Protests**

- a) The time and location of the official weigh in will be announced for each tournament.
- b) Team captains are responsible for having the catch reports on board the vessel. The

catch report must be signed by all anglers, the captain and mate(s). Anyone refusing to sign the catch report must be prepared to state his or her reason for not signing the report at a judge's request. It is the responsibility of every tournament participant to insure that the applicable rules are followed.

c) Protests must be lodged in writing and presented to the judges for a decision. Protests must be lodged with the judges no later than 1 hour after the weigh station closes on the day the alleged infraction occurred. If presenting a protest in writing is not feasible or possible then intent to lodge a protest must be conveyed to the judges within this time period.

d) Protesters, defendants and witnesses shall meet at a time and place of the judges choosing within 3 hours of the formal protest. The refusal of either the protesting or defending party to attend the meeting will result in a summary judgment for the attending party.

e) In the event that a protest is not covered by tournament rules or by IGFA rules the judge will choose 2 captains, chosen from a pool of 4 captains who are members in good standing randomly selected at each captain's meeting, who are not involved in the protest to form an arbitration committee. This committee will be presented with all the facts and come to a decision concerning the protest. Once a majority decision is reached it will be considered final.

f) All judges' decisions are final.

## **6) Angler and Crew Agreement**

a) All participants of any tournament held by the Golden Hook Fishing Club must agree to hold harmless the following: The tournament committee, tournament volunteers, tournament employees, judges, sponsors, advertisers, donors, marinas and any other individual or organization involved in this tournament.

## **7) Boat Requirements**

a) It is the responsibility of the individual captains to insure that his/her vessel is mechanically sound and is in safe operating condition. This includes, but is not limited to, all required safety equipment.

b) All tournaments are trolling method events; therefore vessels must have some form of mechanical propulsion on board which must be in use at all times while competing in this tournament. The vessel's primary propulsion must be in gear and the forward progress may only be stopped during the actual fight of a fish. Drift fishing, live bait, and any live baiting techniques are prohibited.

## **8) Weather Conditions**

a) If there is inclement weather prior to the start of a tournament day, tournament control will pool the votes of no less than three (3) captains to determine if fishing shall take place that day. There will be no refunds issued for weather days.

b) If inclement weather arises after the start of a tournament day, the day will count towards awarded prizes and the safety of the individual vessels, crew and anglers becomes the responsibility of each captain.

c) In the event of a natural disaster or an act of God, no refunds will be issued and the proceeds will be applied towards the next tournament held by the Golden Hook Fishing Club.

