



Note: These Rules May be Subject to Further  
Revision Prior to Tournament Start

## 2021 HAWAII MARLIN TOURNAMENT SERIES GENERAL TOURNAMENT RULES



### **Section 1.0 Who May Enter**

**Who is allowed to enter** is determined at the sole discretion of The Series owner(s). These are privately owned events and we reserve the right to refuse entry to anyone, for any reason.

### **Section 1.01 Check In, Check Out**

**Due to Covid 19**, we are urging teams to pay entry fees in advance, by mail, online or by phone with a credit card. We suggest teams also pay their optional entry fees in advance. A day before the tournament you will be given a code and a link to a secure web page where you can watch the tournament spreadsheet populate with entries, just as if you were at the Club House watching in person. You can make changes, shifts, additions or subtractions by phone and in person, but social distancing as well as State and County crowd size limit guidelines and face mask laws will be followed.

We have a Self Check In Station on the home page of the website where you can get all the tournament paperwork you need. All forms and rules can be downloaded off the website and printed. If you would like to pick up a Team Kit printed by HMTS Staff, you can do so on the afternoon before Day One of Fishing, or swing by the Fuel Dock prior to Start Fishing Day One. Please advise HMTS Staff which process you choose!

We set this system up “on the fly” last year during the height of Covid 19 and it worked great. In order to keep our State event permits, we must continue to operate this way until guidelines change.

### **Section 1.02 Fishing Hours**

7:00AM to 4:00PM (unless otherwise noted in the rules of each individual tournament.)

### **Section 1.03 Start Fishing**

On Day One, there is a shotgun start in front of the harbor. Teams line up from the Green Buoy to the north, no deeper than 100 fathoms. Start fishing will be called on the radio at 7:00 am.

On Day Two and/or Day Three fishing days, boats can start with lines in anywhere - at 7:00 am (unless otherwise noted). Officials may change the start fishing locations, if the need arises.

Boats may depart Honokohau commencing at 6:00 am, but no earlier on Start Anywhere Days. No exceptions. Officials may change the departure hour if the need arises.

All live bait must be caught during fishing hours, on tournament days. All lines must be in boat prior to and up until, start fishing is called.

All boats must start the fishing day from Honokohau Harbor and return each evening. All boats must check in with tournament control by radio when “On the Line” each morning

### **Stop Fishing, Qualifying Catches**

Boats must “Secure” at the end of the day. A boat may “Secure” prior to actual arrival at the harbor, but from the time that they announce that they are “Secure”, they are holoholo (Hawaiian for “on your own). Teams with fish on board or tags to qualify may not fish after the call of “stop fishing” and should proceed directly to the Fuel Dock for the qualification process.

All fish, fish catch reports and tag cards must be checked in *by boat*, at the Fuel Dock, unless advance arrangements are made with the tournament director.

Teams with no potential qualifying fish on board nor any tags to qualify may not fish after “stop fishing” is called, however, nothing caught after the call of “stop fishing” has any bearing on any tournament.

**Section 1.04 Fishing Area**

The “Fishing Area” map is for reference and aid in providing your general location to tournament control radio. You are not restricted to fishing within its boundaries. You can fish wherever you want, *provided you fish no further than 45 miles from the mouth of Honokohau Harbor - and - you leave from and return to Honokohau Harbor each day*. If you are near the 45 mile limit - or - outside the published grid, capture photo or video evidence of a GPS fix and identify the lat. long. As well as the nearest grid during the radio roundups. If you hook a fish and it takes you outside of 45 miles from the mouth of Honokohau Harbor, you may fight it to conclusion, wherever the fight takes you. You can resume fishing once you are back within the 45 mile limit - *only* - after that specific fight ends.

**Section 1.05 Radio and Tournament Control**

Tournament Control will be on VHF Channel 68, unless otherwise announced.

**Section 1.06 Radio Roundups**

Radio roundups will be conducted at 10:00AM, 12:00PM and 3:00PM on every day of fishing. When Tournament Control calls for your team to report, you must call in your Team Number, Area & Fish Catch Report. Refer to your grid map if you are unsure of which area you are fishing.

**Section 1.07 Radio Conformation**

All hook ups, losses of fish, captures of fish and tag and releases must be confirmed by tournament control radio. If confirmation from Tournament Control is not possible due to distance or radio failure, a confirmation must be made via relay. If you know you will be fishing out of radio range, or know that you are having radio problems, it is your responsibility to organize a buddy to radio relays for you.

See also **Section 1.09 Cell Phone** for extenuating circumstance exceptions.

Any fish that has been tagged or boated that tournament control has not confirmed will not be allowed to qualify in any manner. Confirmation is the responsibility of the teams.

**Section 1.08 Estimated Weight and Short Length**

Every team that boats a marlin must call in the short length within 15 minutes of boating the fish.

**Section 1.09 Cell Phone**

Cell phone hook up/catch/loss/tag reports must be called to another boat and relayed to Tournament Control by VHF radio.

If a relay is just not possible due to time constraints or range, you can text or call tournament control. Cell phone calls and texts are not accepted for reporting a fish catch, tag or loss unless a radio call or radio relay is simply not possible. *This is allowed only in extenuating circumstances and is not to be employed as a daily or day long strategy.*

Once you are able to radio or get a relay, reconfirm your report(s) by radio. The intent of this section is to keep the entire tournament fleet in communication for transparency. Communication is also necessary for Control to give Video Confirmation Instructions. If you choose to fish out of communication range and you tag marlin(s) and do not get the specific video confirmation instructions for each fish, the tags will not count.

**Section 1.10 Multiple Hook Ups**

Multiple hook ups must be reported to Tournament Control immediately upon realization that there are multiple fish hooked up. Specific Video will be required to verify a multiple fish hookup. Failure to report or produce the proper Video can be grounds for disqualification.

**Section 1.11 Dock Time**

All boats with fish to weigh and/or tag cards to turn in, must be inside Honokohau Harbor by 6:00 PM. If you are not inside the line drawn from the green and red Honokohau port entrance lights by 6:00 PM, your catch will not qualify. It's that simple.

**Section 1.12 Late Weigh Ins**

If you hooked up prior to the call of "Stop Fishing" at 4:00 PM, you may fight your fish until you catch it. If it is apparent that you will miss the dock time because you are still hooked up, Tournament Control must be notified in order to make the necessary arrangements.

If there are fish on board that you boated prior to the call of "Stop Fishing" at 4:00 PM, and you hook up prior to the call of "Stop Fishing" but do not land that fish(es), your first fish(es) will still count and you will be exempt from dock time provided that Tournament Control was properly notified.

Any falsification of a hookup in order to be exempt from dock time is grounds for disqualification and possible ejection from the tournament.

**Section 1.13 Disposition of Fish**

Disposition of fish at the dock is 100% the responsibility of the teams. Fish must NOT be left at the dock, or they will be confiscated - and eaten.

**Section 1.14 Registered Crew**

Each team must register one captain and up to two crew. Captains and crew can be registered as anglers,

**Please note:** Four angler are the max per team included with the base entry. More may be added for an additional registration and hospitality fee.

**Section 1.15 Registered Anglers**

Any participant who wishes to weigh a fish for qualification or turn in a tag card must be listed on the registration form as an angler. Non-registered guests are welcome on board to ride along, BUT only registered anglers can angle a fish for qualification in the tournament. Substitute anglers are allowed, but they must be called in prior to "Start Fishing" of that day to Tournament Control.

**Section 1.16 Definition of Team**

A team is defined as a maximum of four (4) anglers and one (1) captain and two (2) crew in relation to the Team Entry Fee. Personnel can be added. (see sec. 1.14)

**Section 1.17 Minimum Weight**

No awards will be given to any fish that weighs in under the minimum weight specified in the specific rules of that tournament.

**Section 2 Angling Rules**

**Section 2.01 Angling Rules**

International Game Fishing Association (IGFA) Angling Rules For Fresh and Saltwater strictly apply. IGFA angling rules can be found in each team kit.

**NOTE: IGFA "Release Rules" do NOT apply and are not incorporated into the HMT Series General Rules or associated individual Event Rules.**

**Section 2.02 Fishing Line Requirements**

130-pound (60kg) line class maximum for a “front.” See the IGFA rules in your team kit for specifics. No bonus points for lighter line. Tackle will be inspected with each and every fish weighed and tagged. Lines may be tested at the discretion of the judges.

IGFA has adopted the following, until further notice:

Equipment Regulations

**A. LINE & BACKING**

1. Monofilament, multifilament, and lead core multifilament lines may be used. For line classes, see World Record Requirements.
2. Wire lines are prohibited.
3. The use of backing is permissible.
4. The catch shall be classified under the breaking strength of the first 16.5 feet (5 meters) of line directly preceding the double line, leader, or hook. This section must be comprised of a single, homogenous piece of line.

**Section 2.03 Terminal Tackle**

Terminal tackle must be tied in conformance with IGFA specifications. Mis-tied terminal tackle is not considered non-conforming gear, but will result in the disqualification of the specific catch being judged at that time only.

**Section 2.04 Re-Use of Lures**

A lure may be re-used after a capture only if this method is strictly adhered to: Cut the leader approximately 12 inches up from the eye of the front hook. Save the hook(s) with the 12 inches of leader attached. Save the long piece of leader also. Present both pieces to the judge along with your lure, tackle and fish or tag card. Cuts, scrapes and scratches that do not match on the two pieces of leader can be grounds for disqualification. Once the leader is cut, the hook set cannot be reused, only the lure. The hook set and leader must be presented as described above or your fish will be disqualified.

**Section 2.05 Non-Conforming and/or Illegal Fishing Gear**

Any non-conforming gear, on board, used or not used, is ground for disqualification. Remove all hand lines, long lines, purse seines, drift gill nets, slide gaffs, harpoons, commercial fishing gear, bombs, guns, gang hooks, etc. Green stick rigs. The green stick its self can be left on board, but remove the bird and the reel from the boat. Teams must abide by all USA, State, County and Municipal laws, as well as abide by applicable fishery rules, regulations and definitions (including illegal fishing gear) of USA, State, County, Municipal and/or of any fishery agreement or treaty that the USA is signatory to and/or member thereof.

**Section 2.06 Transfer of Stuff**

After the call of start fishing, there shall be no transfer of “stuff” between tournament boats *On The Playing Field*– including but not limited to – bait, tackle, caught fish, mechanical supplies and/or personnel - except in case of emergency.

A request to use a replacement boat must be made to Tournament Control prior to the transfer of any stuff or personnel between boats, whether at sea or in the harbor. A team may return to the harbor to pick up “stuff”, and/or people, and/or to change boats, if needed. Any boat returning to the harbor for any reason must notify control on the way in, and when they are back on “the line.” Tournament Control may require an inspection of one or both boats prior to the time that the request to use a replacement boat is granted.

**Section 2.07 Tag Poles**

Tag poles shall be no longer than 8 feet overall. Tag poles will be measured. Telescoping tag poles that extend beyond 8 feet long will be considered non-conforming gear.

**Section 2.08 Tagging and/or Gaffing**

The act of tagging a fish is the demarcation needed to claim a fish as tagged and to be submitted for qualification as a tagged fish. Video evidence is required showing the tag in the marlin.

A fish may be tagged and then observed to determine if the fish is better than 400 pounds. Should that marlin be lost during said observation period, the tag points will still apply to the team score, provided that sufficient video evidence is still obtained.

However, no team may “boat” a fish and then tag and release it. “Boating” a fish includes pulling the fish into, or part way into the cockpit. If a fish is boated in any manner – with or without a gaff - it must be kept and brought to the scales. If a marlin is ‘boated’ and then pushed back into the ocean for any reason, the team shall receive zero points for that fish.

The intent of tagging is that the fish is handled and released in a manner that maximizes the chance that it will survive the tag and release. Attempts to calm the fish with an “attitude adjustment” bat or “donga” shall also result in a forfeiture of tag points for that fish.

Should the team decide that the fish is large enough to be taken, the fish may be gaffed. At the point that a gaff touches a fish, the tag points are lost. Should the fish subsequently be lost after a gaff touches the fish, all points are lost. You must be hooked to a fish at time of tagging or gaffing. No free tagging or gaffing.

**Section 2.09 Birds**

Birds, any sort of float or other device that may unfairly hamper or inhibit the normal swimming or fighting ability of the fish are not allowed to be attached to the fishing line or any segment of terminal tackle. Birds may be used as teasers, as may dredges, daisy chains, mud flaps or any other “teaser” so long as they are not attached to any part of the fishing line or terminal tackle.

**Section 3 Tag and Release Requirements**

NOTE: IGFA “RELEASE RULES” DO NOT APPLY!

**Section 3.01 Video**

All marlin tagged and released must be evidenced on Video in order to qualify. Teams may use their own video devices, provided they can digitally transfer the video in to Tournament Control. Video presented dockside on personal devices may be accepted on a case by case scenario. Judges decision is final.

Teams may also choose to use a Tournament Camera provided by HMTS Staff. No video – no money. Always video with multiple devices to insure you get your video and your points! Video must verify (1) species of the marlin and; (2) that the tagging procedure was completed, (3) that multiple hookups were actually being fought when so reported, (4) the unique hand signal assigned by tournament control radio to each individual fish tagged, and; (5) the marlin swims away free at the conclusion of the process.

**Section 3.02 Best Approach to Producing Video Required by Judge(s)**

The best approach to getting the Video required is to take at least one sequence from the bridge with a wide view of the fish on the leader being tagged. If feasible, go down the ladder and take another sequence close up. It is recommended that you take a couple of clips from each approach, with wide, from the bridge, being the priority (if you have a bridge).

It is expressly understood that due to the nature of dealing with wild animals, and the inefficiencies of sport fishing tackle, no procedure is fool proof, and there is always a chance that, regardless of procedure taken, the team may not capture the video images needed by the judge(s) and may be denied points based upon the lack of video and/or photographic quality and/or detail. In any event, all videos must be taken in compliance with Sections 3.01 and 3.05.

*It is recommended that teams always take back up video - however - the choice to accept video from an "unofficial" personal camera must meet the criteria outlined herein, and by Radio Control during catch.*

**Section 3.03 Radio Control and Video**

Tournament Control radio will give special instructions for Video that you must take during the tag and release process. Failure to capture on video the security element (usually a hand signal) assigned by tournament control can result in disqualification.

**Section 3.04 Multiple Hook Ups and Tagging**

Multiple Hook Ups must be reported to radio control immediately upon hookup as you will be required to take specific Video to provide evidence of all multiple hookups.

**Section 3.05 Intent of These Rules**

As with the I.G.F.A. Angling Rules rules, tournament rules are written with specific "intent" paramount. Participants should be aware that dealing with wild animals is not like dealing with a golf course, where it is plainly obvious whether a golf ball went in the hole or not.

As example, I.G.F.A. Angling Rules (Saltwater) state the intention that the angler shall strike and hook the fish with the rod in hand. We all know that this is not practical with 130 lb. bent butt tackle. However, I.G.F.A. recognizes this is rarely the case with heavy tackle. The IGFA's stated intention is that the angler move the rod from the holder to the fighting position as quickly as possible.

This tournament Series *requires* that video be taken of marlin released with the intent to verify (1) species of the marlin and (2) that the tagging procedure was completed, and (3) that double headers were actually being fought when so reported.

A golf ball in a hole is a golf ball in a hole, and there are no two ways about it. A video proving that the tag and release procedure was fully performed may take many forms, and it is the responsibility of the judge(s) only, to ascertain if the photos provided fulfill the intent of this rule. By participating in this tournament, the teams accept this, and are responsible for providing the best possible videos to the judges.

It is not the intent of this rule that teams are required to get a close up of a tag streamer in a marlin. "Man handling" fish after tagging contributes to undue mortality. This is counter-productive to the intent of tag and release. The recommended procedure for teams to get the videos required by the judge(s) is outlined above. The decision to either follow or not follow the recommended video procedure is the choice of the teams, and the results are their responsibility – regardless of procedure employed.

The judge(s) shall be the only person(s) to interpret the videos for the purpose of rulings. A team may ask to see the videos taken from their boat only. Should the judge(s) have a problem with any particular video and/or disallow a tag and release on the grounds of insufficient videography proof of (1) species and/or (2) that the tag and release procedure was completed and/or (3) that there was indeed a multiple hookup - it is the responsibility of the judge(s) to show the photos to the team whose catch is being disallowed, only.

**Section 4 Sportsmanship, Protests and Payout**

**Section 4.01 Sportsmanship**

All judging, awarding, and accounting of purses and prizes will be handled in a business like manner and in the spirit of good sportsmanship. No yelling or otherwise attempting to intimidate judges or officials shall be tolerated.

We also reserve the right to refuse entry to anyone, for any reason. These are private sector events.

**Section 4.02 Disqualification**

Grounds for disqualification include but are not limited to: cheating in any manner, which includes but is not limited to--filling fish with water, using line “front’s” heavier than 130 lb test, falsified tag video in any manner, disfiguring or rendering official cameras unworkable in any manner, using tag poles longer than 8 feet in length, using non-conforming gear and/or falsifying hook-ups, and/or illegal fishing - as well as being found in violation of any binding Government law, rule or guideline (including fisheries) between the call of Start Fishing on First Fishing Day and the call of Stop Fishing on the Final Fishing Day with a direct bearing and consequence upon score(s) of the tournament. (Not traffic violations etc.)

Disqualifications may also be accompanied by Rule 1.0 expulsion.

**Section 4.03 Protests**

All protests must be filed in writing by 7:00 PM on the final day of fishing. Each individual protest must be submitted along with a \$300.00 deposit fee. No Exceptions. At the sole discretion of the Tournament Director, a decision on any potential rules infraction may be referred to the Protest Committee for final decision. A decision of the Protest Committee will be final and binding upon all parties. If the grounds for protest are not found valid, the Protester shall lose the \$300.00 deposit. If the protest is found valid, the \$300.00 fee will be returned.

If officials find that a protest is vexatious, the protestor shall lose the \$300.00 deposit and may be ejected from the tournament and may be subject to **Rule 1.0. Who May Enter.**

**Section 4.04 Current Protest Committee**

- John Jordan
- Tomo Rogers

**Section 4.05 Rights and Responsibilities**

There are certain responsibilities inherent to, and accepted by teams and management. Upon payment of entry fee(s) teams are, from that point forward, bound by the rules of the tournament as printed herein, and accept this responsibility.

Upon acceptance of entry fee(s) from any number of teams, management becomes responsible for scoring of the tournament, judging of catch(es) in relation to the rules printed herein, and disbursement of purse and/or refunds as determined by the outcome of the tournament.

Should a team find that there are rules in the tournament that they do not find acceptable, they may withdraw from the tournament prior to the call of start fishing on Day One of the tournament. See individual tournament rules for stipulations and refund policies for that specific event.

Once the tournament has started, the teams are bound by the rules printed herein. Violation of one or more rules is grounds for disqualification and/or ejection from the tournament.

A team may withdraw after commencement of the tournament, but all entry fees shall be forfeited and remain in the purse as per normal. Management reserves the right to deny entry to anyone.

**Section 4.06 Official Results and Pay Out**

Purse money shall not be distributed until tournament Videos are processed and results verified. “Results” printed prior to Video verification, protest review and final tally are “Unofficial.”

In the event of any litigation regarding prize money, whether filed by the HMT Series or by a Participant, the HMT Series shall be entitled to its reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs, to be paid out of the prize money in dispute. If the prize money in dispute is insufficient to pay the HMT Series reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs, each Participant in the litigation shall be jointly and severally liable to pay the

HMT Series reasonable attorneys' fees and cost. In no event shall the HMT Series be liable to any Participant for any attorneys' fees or costs.

**Section 4.07 Use of Polygraph**

U.S. District Court Judge Richard D. Bennett of Baltimore recently issued a judgement in favor of the White Marlin Open and their use of polygraph evidence was a large part of the case. Therefore, at the sole discretion and decision of The Tournament, potential winners may be required to take polygraph tests. See HMT Series Polygraph Policy document for specifics.

**Section 5 HMT Series Scoring, Points and Placement**

This section pertains to the overall Series points earnings and does not apply to individual tournament standings.

**Section 5.01 Series Angler and Boat Scoring**

All registered boats and anglers registered in a Member Tournament are automatically qualified to earn Series Points. Boats shall earn points for each Member Tournament that they fish – as individual boats — regardless of their team composition.

Series Points shall be awarded to an angler in relation to their specific catch(es), and to a boat in relation to the catch(es) caught by any participating angler, registered on that boat.

Multiple catches by members of a team in a Member Tournament shall be scored for Series Points separately – according to each individual's catches — and with no connection to the scoring of the Member Tournament.

At the end of a Member Tournament, an angler could score points for catch(es), and possibly earn placement points. Boat points are cumulative of all angler points scored on board.

In 2021 the HMT Series will *not* be awarding Participation Points as in years past.

**Section 5.02 Rules for Qualifying Catch**

All Series points are to be awarded based on catches complying with IGFA International Angling Rules only.

Catches hoping to qualify for Series points must first qualify for points in the Series Member Tournament in which they are captured and/or tag and released. Should the Series Member Tournament judge(s) authorize claim under IGFA rules, the Series judge(s) shall proceed with the processing. Rod, reel, hooks, line and terminal tackle shall be inspected at the discretion of the Series judge(s).

**Section 5.03 Fish Scoring**

1 Point Per Pound shall be awarded for each blue or black marlin boated. A minimum weight of 400 pounds is required to qualify for Series points, regardless of Member Tournament minimum rule.

200 Points shall be awarded to the angler and boat for each blue or black marlin tagged and released.

100 points shall be awarded to the angler and boat for each striped marlin tagged and released.

Zero points shall be awarded for spearfish or sailfish regardless of whether they are tagged or captured.

1 Point Per Pound will be awarded for each pound over 100 pounds for each Ahi weighed. Example: a 101 pound ahi will score 1 point. A 123 pound ahi will score 23 points

**Section 5.04 Event Placement Points**

Event Placement scoring is awarded to the angler's catching a fish on a team that contributes to that team earning First, Second or Third Place Overall in each Member Tournament.



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First, Second or Third Place Overall shall not necessarily be attributed to Member Tournament purse distribution, but to the equivalent of First through Third Total Points, or Gross Score.

Should more than one angler contribute to a catch to the Member Tournament Placement, the Series Event Placement Points shall be split evenly among the anglers catching the qualifying fish.

Should one or more fish from a Placement team be disqualified, the angler disqualified will not receive a share of the Event Placement Points unless they qualified a fish other than the one not allowed.

- 300 points gross shall be awarded to the angler(s) for a First Place Overall finish.
- 200 points gross shall be awarded to the angler(s) for a Second Place Overall finish.
- 100 points gross shall be awarded to the angler(s) for a Third Place Overall finish.

### **Section 6 Definitions**

#### **Section 6.01 Ahi**

The Definition of “Ahi” in the HMT Series, refers to Yellow Fin Tuna, Blue Fin Tuna and Big Eye Tuna.

### **Section 7 Misc.**

#### **Section 7.01 Entry fee and access to HMTS events**

The entry fee for each event includes access for up to four anglers and two crew members per event entered. Additional tickets are available for family and friends. Please enquire with HMTS Staff.

#### **Section 7.02 Administrative Fee**

All entry fees, whether base or optional are subject to a 5% administrative fee. This fee is not included in the calculation of the base purse, or the optional purse. This Administrative Fee has been incorporated into the tournament entry forms. For example, an entry fee for a \$100 daily optional category is reflected on the Credit Card entry form at a price of \$105.

#### **Section 7.03 Cash/Check Discount**

All entry fees paid by cash or check, whether base or optional, are entitled to a 5% cash/check discount. This Cash/Check Discount has been incorporated into the tournament entry forms. For example, an entry fee for a \$100 daily optional category would ordinarily reflect a price of \$105. The Cash/Check Discount Form, however, reflects a price of \$100.

*Mahalo for fishing in the 2021 Hawaii Marlin Tournament Series!*