



2026 Tournament Rules

1. Eligible species for competition purposes is king mackerel (*Scomberomorus Cavalla*).
2. This is a big fish tournament with the heaviest qualifying king mackerel winning.
3. Any rule changes or additions at the captain's meeting will take precedence over these printed rules.
4. This is a captain's choice tournament. It is up to the captain of each boat to determine if he/she and crew will compete on the designated tournament day.
5. Tournament officials will monitor VHF 72 during competition hours. VHF 16 is an international distress frequency and should be used for emergency calls and Coast Guard assistance.
6. A captain may enter one boat in the Carolina Kingfish Classic and it must be the sole boat fished for the duration of the tournament. Replacement boats may not be entered for any reason after 6:00 am on the eligible fishing day. The Tournament Director must be notified immediately upon realizing need for change.
7. Sponsors, tournament director, and employees of Charleston Harbor Resort and Marina are eligible to win primary and bonus prizes just like any other entrant.
8. Carolina Kingfish Classic is limited to motor boats only.
9. By signing the entry form, all captains, anglers and occupants of their boat hereby agree to all rules and regulations and consent that tournament officials may use without payment or restriction, any photographs, video or interviews in which he or she may appear for any purpose whatsoever, including but not limited to resale, promotional material and advertising.
10. The tournament committee reserves the right to refuse an entry into the tournament.
11. The tournament director and tournament committee, at their discretion, can enforce the rules or make decisions on any other circumstances that may arise during the course of the event. The tournament director and/or the tournament committee's decisions are final.
12. Violation of the tournament rules will subject the boat and angler to disqualification from the entire tournament without refund.

Tournament Days & Times

13. Tournament fishing day is Saturday. If Saturday is deemed unfishable, then Sunday will be a designated tournament day.
14. Competition hours start at 6:30 a.m. on designated fishing day. King Mackerel fishing lines may not be in the water before 6:30 a.m. Boats must be checked-in Saturday by 5:00 p.m. If Sunday is a designated tournament day, then Saturday's competition hours will be followed.
15. If Small Craft Advisories are in effect for 6:01 a.m., then that day will not be a tournament fishing day. Forecast used is Waters from South Santee River to Edisto Beach SC out 20 NM and can be found here:
<https://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS52.KCHS.html>. The safety of the participating vessel is ultimately the responsibility of the captain.
16. One day of fishing constitutes a tournament.
17. If the tournament committee cancels the tournament, then 90% of entry fees and 100% of the Tournament within Tournament fees will be returned to the boat captain.

Fishing

18. All anglers must have a valid South Carolina saltwater fishing license and comply with South Carolina and Federal fishing regulations.

19. King Mackerel are not allowed to be on-board at the start of a tournament fishing day. Tournament officials may inspect any boat participating in the Carolina Kingfish Classic prior to the start of each fishing day.
20. Boats entering the ocean on tournament day must do so from South Carolina navigable waters.
21. No more than six king mackerel fishing lines can be fished from the boat at any one time. All fish must be caught on a rod and reel. Wire lines are prohibited. Downriggers, outriggers and kites will be allowed as fishing line carriers only. No electric reels except for kite rods & downriggers.
22. Junior and/or Lady Anglers must be the primary angler and accompany their fish to the scales to qualify for Junior and/or Lady Angler bonuses. Primary angler constitutes fighting the fish 50% or more of the time. The rod may be passed to another angler anytime while fighting their fish or as needed for assistance.
23. A junior angler is 15 years or younger and a lady angler is 16 years or older on the date of the captains meeting.
24. Two or more boats congregating during competition hours will be disqualified from the tournament. Congregation is defined as two or more boats touching and/or passing objects to another boat. Prior to weighing in, boats are not allowed to make landfall or dock during competition hours. Approval is not required for life threatening emergencies.

Check-In & Weigh-In

25. Weigh station will open at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday.
26. A boat entry can weigh 1 king mackerel and only win one primary prize. The entrant does remain eligible to win bonus prizes with the same fish. Bonus prizes consist of single engine outboard bonus, lady angler bonus, youth angler bonus, and special weight bonus prizes.
27. Entrants weighing a fish on a competition day must visually and verbally check-in on VHF Channel 72 with the tournament committee member located on the corner of A Dock and A Extension, which is the south west corner of Charleston Harbor Marina. Boats should be off plane and not wake the marina by the time they pass Red Buoy #34 which is located about 250 yards south of Charleston Harbor Marina. Boats that do not check in by 5:00 p.m. on the eligible fish day will not be eligible to weigh their fish. GPS time will be the official time.
28. The crew is responsible for unloading and presenting their fish for weighing. Crews should have their fish ready for unloading as there is a 1 minute unload time limit. The crew members are responsible for taking their fish to the weigh station. Registered Junior and/or Lady Anglers must accompany fish to scales to be eligible for bonus prizes.
29. Fish must be fresh, not frozen, fit for human consumption, not mutilated, nor its weight altered in any manner. Hook and gaff marks are acceptable. It is the sole responsibility of the crew to remove all hooks, lures, and leaders prior to presenting the fish for weigh-in.
30. If a fish is determined ineligible after being weighed, then any fish weighed by that entrant during the entire tournament will be disqualified.
31. In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined by the earliest weigh-in date and time.
32. The winning fish weighed becomes the property of the tournament.
33. All fish must be brought to Charleston Harbor Marina, by the registered boat, under its own power. Fish cannot be transported over land or by another boat.
34. Polygraph tests will be administered at the sole discretion of the tournament committee. Refusal by any participant or occupant of a registered boat will result in disqualification. All decisions of the polygraph examiner are final.
35. Only a registered boat's captain may protest any fish weighed in the tournament. All protests must be delivered in writing to the tournament director on the day of the protested catch no later than thirty minutes (30) after the last fish weighed. All decisions of the tournament officials regarding protests are final. There is a \$1,000 cash charge for registering a protest. If the protest is validated, the \$1,000 will be returned. The captain who submitted any protest must provide indisputable evidence to prove the infraction.