

2023 ACFA Tournament Rules

All eight (8) club tournaments are included in yearly membership dues which must be paid prior to fishing in a tournament. Your membership extends to your family: spouse, children (or grandchildren) who have not reached their 16th birthday by February 1st of the current year. ACFA members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with our Mission Purpose of providing a “Family-Oriented Atmosphere” during club functions. Unruly or otherwise disruptive behavior is unacceptable, and the membership of such offender may be forfeited (and refunded) at the discretion of a majority of the club executive officers.

1. Competition is open to all members in good standing (dues paid prior to tournament day and legally licensed for Alabama saltwater fishing).
 - a. Their spouse and children (or grandchildren) under 16 years of age as of Feb 1 of that tournament year.
 - i. PLEASE make a note to the Weighmaster of the member’s name when their dependents (spouse, children, or grandchildren) enter a fish.
 1. This is especially important for helping to verify the spelling and validity of stepchildren or grandchildren who have a different last name from the accompanying adult.
 2. PLEASE use the same name for each tournament!
2. Tournaments begin at 5:00 am. and end at 3:00 pm (**Unless otherwise advised**).
3. Tournaments will be canceled due to weather conditions if:
 - a. A “Small Craft Advisory” is predicted or expected to be predicted for a majority of Alabama waters (3 of the 5 Alabama Marine Weather Forecast Zones) by NWS Mobile for the Tournament day.
 - b. Members should always “exercise caution”, fishing at their own risk, and shall use good judgment of when and where to fish.
 - c. The ACFA encourages safe boating practices (PLEASE file a USCG Float Plan) and assumes no responsibility for participating fishers or their equipment***

It is not worth risking life and property to get a plaque!

4. **All state and federal laws, licenses and creel limits apply.**
PLEASE CALL ALMRD 251-861-2882 OR 251-968-7576 FOR UPDATES. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FISHERMAN TO KNOW AND ABIDE BY THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN EFFECT.
5. All fish MUST be caught by legal means, on rod & reel, in Alabama State Waters (out to 3 miles) and entered by the angler during tournament hours.
 - a. 45 feet deep water is generally (not officially) accepted as the southward extent of 'state waters'. You are on your honor!

- b. **The Weigh Master keeps "official time". You MUST be on the premises** (within view of the weigh-in table) **with your fish by 3:00 pm.**
6. All decisions made by the Weigh Master and/or his assistants (club president and officers) are final. No changes will be made to the weigh sheets after the scales close. See Rule 12. c.
7. Each fish should be weighed in by the member or family member who caught it.
- You **MUST** be on the premises to weigh a fish, but not as a "Net Man".
 - You are ultimately responsible for ensuring your catch is recorded correctly.
8. Weights are recorded to hundredths of a pound. In case of a tie, the first fish weighed in places highest. Times recorded on the weigh in sheets are considered "official".
*The ACFA scales are periodically calibrated to assure consistency.
9. To qualify for the monthly awards, all fish weighed in an ACFA tournament must be a **Legal Alabama Catch** as specified in AL MRD (see Rule #4).
- For unregulated species or those with no minimum length, the following will apply:
 - Spanish Mackerel and Gafftopsail Catfish must weigh at least one (1.00) pound.
 - "Croaker", "White Trout" and "Kingfish" must weigh at least one-half (0.50) pound.
10. To be more concise and avoid confusion when using local names in our classifications:
- Kingfish** is considered to be any of the three species of kingfish/kingcroaker (also known as "Ground Mullet & "Whiting"). Those are: **Southern** kingfish (*Menticirrhus americanus*), **Gulf** kingfish (*M. littoralis*), or **Northern** kingfish (*M. saxatilis*).
 - "White Trout" are considered to be either the **Sand** seatrout (*Cynoscion arenarius*) or **Silver** seatrout (*Cynoscion nothus*).
 - "Flounder" species include either **Gulf** flounder (*Paralichthys albigutta*) or **Southern** flounder (*Paralichthys lethostigma*).
 - NOTE: There is no minimum weight for pompano or the Junior Angler category fish in our tournaments but must still meet any size limits specified by the AL MRD (12" TL).
11. Junior Angler fish **MUST** meet minimum requirements (as shown in ACFA Tournament Rule 12.d.i-viii) to qualify for points & plaques.
12. It is the angler's responsibility to bring the fish to the weigh in table in a "FRESH" and pliable condition that allows it to readily be accurately measured.
- ONLY** fish that are 'straight' can be accurately measured on the Check-It-Stick, so the angler must prepare the fish for that at the weigh in table.

- b. At the discretion of the Weighmaster, any fish of the following **WILL** be rejected:
- i. 'Spoiled',
 - ii. Frozen, or previously frozen,
 - iii. Mutilated in such a way to alter (shorten) the length (i.e., Redfish, or Speckled Trout),
 - iv. “Stuffed” with any foreign object intended to artificially increase weight.
- c. The ruling of the Weighmaster to accept or reject a fish is final by the end of the tournament. **Protests must be made in writing to the President by 3:00 pm.**
- d. **SPECIAL NOTE:** The Weighmaster may recommend any participant caught cheating be disqualified from the club with the approval of the Executive Committee Officers.
- e. Only the following may be entered in ACFA Tournaments (See Rule 4)
- i. **Speckled Trout in slot only** (15”- 22”),
 - ii. **Redfish in slot only** (16” - 26”),
 - iii. Flounder 14” TL (Total Length) or longer,
 - iv. Pompano 12” TL (Total Length) or longer,
 - v. Sheepshead 12 inches FL (Fork Length) or longer,
 - vi. Gafftopsail Catfish minimum weight of one pound (1.00#),
 - vii. Spanish Mackerel minimum weight of one pound (1.00#),
 - viii. Croaker, White Trout and Kingfish minimum weight is pound (0.50#).
13. Only one fish in each species category per angler may place in each tournament.
- a. **NOTE:** a second category fish may be weighed in as a Big Fish Contest (BFC) entry if it meets the minimum requirements for that species (see Big Fish Contest Rule #3).
 - b. Also, fish eligible for the Big Fish Contest (even if caught prior to tournament hours) may be weighed at tournaments, provided the angler **first** declares the fish is **ONLY** for the BFC. You are on your honor!

14. Tournament points will be awarded as follows:

Place	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Points	5	4	3	2	1

15. **Bonus Points:** * One (1) Tournament “Species Point” will be awarded to each member who weighs a fish (**for each** of the 5 eligible species) at any tournament provided that fish is ‘legal’ and meets the minimum set weights (see Tournament Rules 12.e.i-viii). You receive 1 point per species in that tournament even if they do not place in the top 5.
- a. *Five (5) additional Tournament Points will be awarded to any member who places in the top five Speckled Trout, Redfish and Flounder in the August Grand Slam Tournament.

- b. *Five (5) additional Tournament Points will be awarded to any member who breaks a club record in a tournament. No Bonus Points are awarded for establishing a new record.
16. At the club meeting following each tournament, places 1st thru 3rd in each category (species), and Division (Adult and Junior anglers) will receive an engraved name plate (1 inch by 3 inch) that may be attached to a plaque (unless they DECLINE at the weigh in). A plaque comes with the first plate for each angler, and they may request additional.
17. Anglers breaking club records will receive a 'frameable' ACFA certificate.
18. Since 2019, Junior Anglers have competed in a separate Tournament Division. But any qualified dependent of a member (Junior Angler) may choose to waive their Junior status (at their first tournament), and fish in the Adult Division for the entire season.
19. The Club's Adult Tournament Point Champion and Junior Tournament Point Champion:
- a. Will be recognized at the year-end ACFA Awards Banquet in December.
 - b. The member, or dependents, accumulating the highest number of Tournament Points at the season's end in October, will be declared the victor.
 - i. We also track Lady anglers (**L**) and New members (**N**) for each year.
20. All weigh-in locations will be announced in the newsletter and at the regular club meeting prior to the tournament.
- a. Our Weigh-in site for most tournaments is the American Legion Post 250 on Dauphin Island Parkway Hwy 193 (near the Greer's Food Tiger store).
 - b. The May and October tournaments have weigh-in sites on the Causeway (location: 'TBA' means "To Be Announced" in the newsletter and meeting).

NETMAN (or WOMAN) of the Year

1. Any ACFA angler at the time of their weighing in a tournament fish who declares the eligible member or dependent who actually netted that fish for them (including themselves) will be awarded the same number of points as Tournament Points in a separate contest category called "Netman of the Year".
 - a. These points will be tallied and kept for the duration of the tournament season.
 - i. The anglers in each division with the most accumulated "net" points will receive this award during the December Banquet.

*** Under no circumstances will the Alabama Coastal Fisherman's Association (ACFA) nor its officers be held responsible for the welfare, conduct or actions of any members, guests, or their equipment while attending meetings or engaging in ACFA tournaments or related activities.