

2024 ACFA Tournament Rules

All 8 club tournaments are included in your yearly membership fees, which must be paid prior to fishing in a tournament. Your membership extends to your family: spouse and children (or grandchildren) who have not reached their 16th birthday by February 1st of the current Tournament year.

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 or children) 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. All fish **MUST** be caught, by the entering angler, during tournament hours, on hook and line (rod and reel) using bait or lure in Alabama State waters (out to 3 miles).
 - a. 45 feet deep water is generally (not officially) accepted as the southward extent of 'state waters'. You are on your honor!
 - b. Tournament weigh-in is from 1:00 pm.-3:00 pm. (**Unless otherwise advised**) The Weigh Master keeps "official time". You **MUST** be within view of the weigh-in table with your fish by 3:00 pm (**Unless otherwise advised**).
4. Each fish should be weighed in by the member or family member who caught it.
 - a. You **MUST** be on the premises.
 - b. You are ultimately responsible for ensuring your catch is recorded correctly.
5. 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 declared final.
6. 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 #8 & #11).
 - a. For unregulated species or those with no minimum length, the following will apply:
 - i. Spanish Mackerel and Gafftopsail Catfish must **measure at least 14 inches Fork Length (FL)**.
 - ii. "Croaker", "White Trout", and "Kingfish" must **measure at least 10 inches Total Length (TL)**.

7. To avoid confusion when using local names in our classifications:
 - a. “Kingfish” is considered to be any of the three species of kingfish or kingcroaker previously known as “whiting” or “ground mullet” i.e. Southern (*Menticirrhus americanus*), Gulf (*M. littoralis*), or Northern (*M. saxatilis*).
 - b. “White Trout” is considered to be either the Sand seatrout (*Cynoscion arenarius*) or Silver seatrout (*Cynoscion nothus*).
 - c. “Flounder” species include either Gulf flounder (*Paralichthys albigutta*) or Southern flounder (*Paralichthys lethostigma*).

8. 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.
 - a. ONLY fish that are ‘straight’ can be accurately measured, so the angler must prepare the fish for that.
 - b. Any fish that meets any of the following **WILL** be rejected by the Weighmaster:
 - i. 'Spoiled',
 - ii. Frozen,
 - iii. Mutilated in such a way to alter (shorten) the length for “slot length” fish (i.e. Redfish, or Speckled Trout)
 - c. The ruling of the Weighmaster to accept or reject a fish is final by the end of the tournament.
 - d. **SPECIAL NOTE:** Only the following may be entered in ACFA Tournaments
 - i. Flounder 14” minimum TL (Total Length) or longer,
 - ii. Redfish (16” - 26”) MTL (“Slot” = Maximum Total Length),
 - iii. Speckled Trout 15”- 22” MTL (“Slot” = Maximum Total Length),
 - iv. Pompano 12” TL minimum (Total Length) or longer,
 - v. Sheepshead 12 inches minimum FL (Fork Length) or longer,
 - vi. Gafftopsail Catfish minimum 14” FL,
 - vii. Spanish Mackerel minimum 14” FL,
 - viii. Kingfish, White Trout and Croaker minimum 10” TL.

9. Only one fish in each category per angler can place in each tournament.
 - a. **NOTE:** a second category fish may be weighed in as a Big Fish Contest 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!

10. 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”.

11. All state and federal laws, creel limits and licenses apply. (See AFCA Tournament Rule #6). PLEASE CALL ALMRD 251-861-2882 OR 251-968-7576 FOR UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE FISHERMAN’S RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND ABIDE BY THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN EFFECT.

12. 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.
 - i. Members should always “exercise caution”, fishing at their own risk, and shall use good judgment of when and where to fish.
 - ii. The ACFA encourages safe boating practices and assumes no responsibility for participating fishers or their equipment**
It is not worth risking life and property to get a plaque!

13. **Tournament points** will be awarded as follows:

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

14. **Bonus Points:** * One (1) Tournament “Species Point” will be awarded to each member who weighs a fish (of the 5 eligible species) at any tournament provided that fish is ‘legal’ and meets the minimum set weights (see ACFA Tournament Rules 8.d.i-ix). You will 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 in Speckled Trout, Redfish and Flounder for 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.
- c. For every tournament the top three places in each category will receive a plaque and/or inscribed plate at the next club meeting (unless they DECLINE at the weigh in).

15. As of 2019 Junior Anglers will be running a separate Tournament Division and receive TOURNAMENT POINTS in addition to plaques for their tournament category fish (1st through 3rd place) only against other Junior Anglers.

- a. Any qualified dependent of a member (Junior Angler) may choose to waive the Junior classification (at their first tournament) and fish against the adults for the entire season.

16. The Club's 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.

17. 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 200 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 the challenge. ***