



Basic Information for ASWSC Tournament Participants

Signing up for a Tournament: Tournament applications and tip-sheets are posted on the website at some point in advance of the tournaments. The captain completes the application and submits it per the instructions by the sign-up deadline date. Planning for meals and activities is done well in advance, and is based on the number of participants listed on the applications. We typically allow captains to sign up after the deadline, but if you send your application in late, you risk losing out on provided meals and other benefits. Captains must be paid current members in order to register a boat for a tournament. Crewmembers are not required to be club members, but only club member catches are eligible for the Angler of the Year (AOY) competition. To keep things from getting confused, only anglers who are listed on the tournament application should fish on the boat during the tournament.

Payment: Send your payment with a copy of your application in advance. Don't wait and bring payment to the tournament unless you coordinate it with the Tournament Director. Pay by check whenever possible; don't hand someone a wad of cash to keep up with.

Captains Meeting: Itineraries and schedules for individual tournaments vary, but in general the tournaments begin with a Captains Meeting, typically held the evening prior to the start of fishing. Fishing officially begins at the end of this meeting (subject to special rules in place for the tournament). During the Captains Meeting, you may be given additional important information about the tournament and you should attend if at all possible. Weigh-in times are usually clarified at this time, and the Tournament Director will let captains know which VHF channel club boats should use to contact each other. All participants are welcome to attend the Captains Meeting, but at the very least each captain should attend.

Fishing Days / Weigh-Ins: Each fishing day ends with an official weigh-in (or submission of photos in case of length-scoring tournaments), at which point each Captain signs off on his boat's catch results for that day. Points are awarded for each eligible fish and each boat's current score is posted on the leader board.

Enforcement of Weigh-In Schedules: For the most part, the weigh-in ending time is firm; show up before the deadline or forfeit your chance to score (plan accordingly and allow extra travel time). Allowances are typically strictly enforced, except in very extreme cases. The Tournament Director has the final say on these matters. You must check in with the Tournament Director or Weigh-master each fishing day, even if you don't have any fish to weigh.

Getting Together during Tournaments: Extra activities during tournaments enhance the experience and are encouraged. Examples: join up with the other crews for a meal; having a bait-rigging or strategy session; shopping excursions during fishing days for non-anglers; attending local events/attractions; or even just hanging out at the docks. Participants can arrange these activities individually or with the help of the Tournament Director. It's a good idea to obtain cellphone numbers for other participants during the Captains Meeting, so you can get in touch when opportunities arise.

Awards Dinner: Tournaments typically end with an Awards Dinner, usually the evening of the last fishing day. Awards are presented and experiences are exchanged over a nice meal. In some cases, the cost of the dinner is included in the Tournament Fees. Details and time will be provided on the Tip Sheet or during the Captains Meeting. It is usually possible for non-participants (non-anglers) to attend the Awards Dinner for an additional cost or at their own expense.

Tournament Scoring: Except for specialty & release-only tournaments (such as the annual Sailfish tournament), the applicable Points Matrix (Offshore or Nearshore, depending on tournament format) is your official guide to scoring tournament points. The latest Points Matrix and official Tournament Rules are available on the club website. For scoring purposes, the four heaviest (or longest) fish in each category count toward your daily tournament score (example: the four biggest snappers will count, regardless of sub-species. Your boat might catch 6 red snappers, 2 cubera snappers, and 3 mangrove snappers; regardless of species, the four largest of those 11 fish will count towards your score). Obviously, if you catch less than 4 in any given category, all of your fish will count towards scoring. The boat with the highest cumulative total score wins the tournament.

Legal Fish: At weigh-ins, fish which are not legally caught and/or cannot be legally landed at the weigh-in location will not count for tournament points. This includes out-of-season fish, undersized fish, or out-of-slot fish. This restriction does not apply to length-scoring tournaments; however, illegal fish must not be harvested. Be aware of the regulations in both state and federal waters at the tournament location, particularly when other state waters are close by.

Release Points: Some species (for example, tarpon and marlin) only score points for a released fish. If your release-only fish cannot be revived and can be legally harvested, the proper thing to do is keep the fish. However, be aware that your catch will not earn points in the tournament if it is harvested. Although the scoring for release species is based on the honor system, you are strongly encouraged to take photos of your release catches. As always, practice proper fish-handling and release techniques to ensure the survival of these fish. Avoid removing release fish from the water whenever possible.

Angler of the Year competition (AOY): There are 3 separate competition divisions (Men, Ladies, Junior). Anglers compete within each division for top angler honors and take home an annual award. In order to compete for AOY during a tournament, you must be a paid current club member BEFORE fishing. Because this is an individual competition, it is imperative that you keep track of which angler caught each fish. The club typically provides colored zip-ties when possible. This can also be accomplished with colored ribbons/cords, by notching fins or marking fish, or by keeping each angler's catch separated in the fishbox/cooler.

Boat of the Year competition (BOY): Points are awarded to a boat for placing 1st through 5th in club tournaments during the year (1st Place = 20 pts; 2nd = 15 pts; 3rd = 10 pts; 4th = 5 pts; 5th = 3 pts). The boat with the highest score at the end of the tournament year wins the Boat of the Year award.

Behavior during ASWSC Tournaments & Events: You are expected to behave in a responsible and courteous manner during any club activity. Your behavior is representative of the club and its membership. Be nice; be polite; be respectful of others around you. Remember, the goal is to have fun. We want to be invited back to enjoyable destinations for years to come.

CAPTAINS

You must check in with the tournament director or weigh-master before weigh-in closes each fishing day, even if you have no fish. One of the great things about our club is that we look out for each other; if we don't hear from you, we're going to err on the side of safety. We need to know that you've made it back to land safely so we don't send the Coast Guard looking for you. Similarly, file a float plan or at least let someone know the approximate area you'll be fishing. If something does go wrong, it will help narrow down the search area.

Regarding Your Crew:

When fishing with new crewmembers, remember that to earn respect, you must first give it. Don't expect new crewmembers to know your procedures and methods until you show them. Be patient and give them a chance to get up to speed (remember, you weren't born knowing all that stuff either). Set the pace for your crew; lead by example. Be up front with prospective crewmembers about what you expect from them in terms of fishing experience, boat duties/chores, anticipated expense, behavior, etc. Be honest about your capabilities and experience level; don't set false expectations. Let them know what gear to bring. Give your orders in clear terms and loudly enough to be heard. Ask your crew for advice or input as appropriate, but remember that the final decisions are yours.

The captain is responsible for the crew's safety. Show crewmembers where safety & first aid gear are located; tell them what to do in case of emergencies. Discuss man overboard procedures. Make sure they know how to operate your VHF and can quickly get to your ditch bag. Encourage the use of PFDs and safe boating practices. Pick at least one crewmember to take the helm in case something happens to you; make sure that person can pilot the boat and perform basic navigation. Make sure each of your crewmembers has the proper fishing license(s) before leaving the dock.

CREW

The captain is in charge. Most captains welcome crew input, but ultimately what he/she says goes. This is maritime law. It's also important during emergency situations that all crewmembers follow a single set of instructions.

Be honest about your capabilities and experience level; you can't bluff this stuff. Let the captain know in advance about any physical limitations. Get a feel for what your captain expects of you during the trip. Ask him how much money you need to bring for expenses.

Fishing with club members is not a charter excursion. It takes a crew working together for a successful trip and you are part of the crew; while you are on the boat, your time and energy is committed to the team (don't expect to be closing deals on the phone or working remotely from your tablet). Be proactive about getting things done on and off the boat. If you're not sure what to do, ask. The best crew members offer to help prepare for the trip, pick up supplies, help clean and/or load the boat, etc. At the end of each fishing day, there is a lot to be done and you are expected to help; the boat needs to be washed, the gear needs to be rinsed, fish need to be cleaned, etc. Do your share of the work; don't disappear when it's time to pitch in.

Offer to bring any gear you feel might be beneficial, but don't bring a bunch of stuff without your captain's approval. Do bring your own rain gear, cap/hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, medication, etc. If you are prone to seasickness, take whatever medications/treatments necessary to minimize your discomfort; the captain won't be making a special trip to bring you back to shore. Expect to get wet; dress appropriately.

Don't be confrontational with the captain or other crew. You are a guest on someone else's boat and everyone is on board to have a good time; one argumentative person ruins it for everyone else. Don't be a know-it-all. You will meet people with lower and higher skill levels than your own; often crewmembers have completely different skill sets. Learn from others when possible and graciously pass on your knowledge when you can.

Be respectful of your crewmates and captain. Treat the boat, gear, tackle, vehicles, and others' property as if it was your own; you'd expect the same of them. Be honest and honorable; no one wants to fish with someone they can't trust. Be prompt; show up on time; pay attention. Pay your share of expenses without delay.