



2023 Official Reeling for Kids Rules

Captains and Anglers: Ahoy! We are pleased to have your participation in the 2023 version of the Annual Reeling for Kids Saltwater Challenge. We very much appreciate your continued support as we enter our 20th tournament season. The rules below are the culmination of 40 years of saltwater tournament experience. They have been modified as necessary over time to reflect changes in species and seasons as well as to provide clarity where we have had questions. As the author, I am intimately familiar with the Rules and attempt each year to interpret them in a fair and unbiased way. There is no way to write a rule for every possible situation that arises, but I will attempt to ensure that every entrant is protected from not only the potentially fraudulent acts of others but also a Captain/Angler's misinterpretation of the rules. Please enjoy your time on the water and know you are supporting good kids in need of direction with your entry/sponsorship!

Very respectfully, Capt. Wiley Horton, Tournament Director

*No late entries accepted by mail if postmarked after October 1, 2023 they should be brought to the tournament or one of two Captain's meetings. See entry form. Enter by mailing completed entry form postmarked no later than October 1, 2023 with a check, credit card, or money order made payable to the Reeling for Kids, Inc. 2130 NW 133rd Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32606. Entry fee is \$400 for the Inshore division and \$500 for the Offshore division. Entry fee covers your boat and all anglers on your boat.

Tournament Schedule: This year's tournament fishing days are Friday, October 13th and Saturday, October 14th, 2023. Entrants may fish one or both days competing for awards. Refer to the Prize Guide for specific category awards. Friday Fish of the Day Jackpots: Boats fishing both days of the tournament will have the opportunity to win special prizes for fish weighed in on Friday. The boat weighing in the heaviest legal Kingfish will win \$250. The boat weighing in the heaviest legal Redfish will win \$250. The boat weighing in the heaviest legal Cobia will win \$250. Trout Stringer: Pick your heaviest five Trout on Friday to compete for this award. You must decide which of your trout you want weighed and present them to the weigh master in a bag. Regardless of the number of anglers on the boat, only one of the fish to be weighed can be over 20 inches. The winner will be the boat with the heaviest total weight of five legal trout and will be awarded \$1,000. Second place will be the boat with the next heaviest five fish and will be awarded \$500. Third place will be awarded \$250. *Measure carefully; more than one fish over 20 inches will remove you from the Trout Stringer award consideration.

*The Reeling for Kids Tournament uses FWC rules for measuring fish. Fish are placed on a measuring board and the tail is pinched to make the fish as long as possible. Our measuring device will be on display at Captain's meetings for your inspection. Because minute differences can mean a legal or illegal fish, please make sure you determine how your measuring device compares. The winning fish on Friday are also eligible for the Tournament's other prizes and can be counted toward the Master Angler categories. Basis of Awards Eligible fish categories are listed in the Awards guide. Other than the Friday

Jackpot Awards, a boat/ entrant can be a winner in only one place within a category, but can win in multiple categories. Awards are based on a 100 boat tournament. (Subject to change if less than 100 boats) Awards will not increase if there are more than 100 entrants.

Winners must pass an onsite polygraph examination. This is a boat tournament, however all cash and merchandise awards will be made to the tournament entrant and a valid SSN is required to receive awards. Checks will be paid out by Reeling for Kids, Inc. Types of Awards Cash and merchandise will be awarded to category winners. All winners must be present at the awards presentation Saturday evening to receive their awards. Exception due to hardship will be made at the discretion of the Reeling for Kids, Inc. management. If an exception is granted, it will be the sole responsibility of the winner to arrange for pickup of all merchandise awards at their own expense within 30 days after the awards presentation. CASH AWARDS: A valid SSN is required before we can write a check to winners.

This year we will do the awards as usual, but the actual check will be mailed to winners along with a 1090 form within three days of the Tournament's conclusion. Please make sure your SSN and mailing address are correct on your entry form to avoid any issues getting paid. **Ties:** All boats will be assigned a tournament number. This number will be recorded on the weigh-in slip. In the event of a tie, the boat with the earliest dated registration shall be declared the winner. The loser shall assume the next lower position in the category.

Fishing Rules

1. Payment of the entry fee constitutes a representation by each Captain that he/she has read and understands the Tournament Rules and the Captain and crew will abide by such rules and the decisions of the Tournament Director and the Tournament Rules Committee.
2. The tournament will be fished in accordance with the FWC/NMFS rules for size and catch limits for the state of Florida.
3. All tournament fish must be caught on a rod and reel. Any state law or United States federal law that conflicts with these rules shall override these rules, and all anglers are responsible for knowing and abiding by state laws and United States Federal regs also governing fishing in this tournament.
4. Any illegal fish brought to the Weigh-In Station could disqualify the boat and all anglers from the tournament. FWC Officers will be present on the water and at the weigh-in each day. An illegal fish could result in a citation as well as a disqualification.
5. Gag grouper are in season and as such, will be eligible in the grouper prize category.
6. The "Open Fish" category is open to any fish outside of the prize categories, except for Sharks and Stingrays. Sharks are an over fished public resource, the tournament will not consider any species of shark for the "Open Fish" category.
7. The Grouper division is limited to Gag Grouper only. Warsaw and other deepwater grouper species are not allowed. Scamp and Black Grouper will qualify for the "Open Fish" category.
8. Cobia category is open to both inshore and offshore anglers, three places will be paid.
9. Amberjack is CLOSED; do not bring one to the weigh-in station.

Master's Category

The Master's Category was created to recognize fishing prowess. The Offshore and Inshore awards will be won by the boat with the heaviest combined weight of one fish from each of the identified species

Fishing Hours

10. Official Time: All times given represent Eastern Daylight Savings Time in Steinhatchee, Florida occurring Friday, October 13th and Saturday, October 14th, 2023. Tournament fishing hours begin (First Lines in the Water) at 6:00am, Friday, October 13th. Fishing in all divisions continues without interruption until 3:00pm, Saturday, October, 14th, 2023.

11. Official Weigh Station hours are 3:00pm-5:00pm, October 13th and 1:00-4:00pm, October 14th, 2023. Friday's Fish of the Day Prizes will be determined after the close of weigh-in on Friday, October 13th at the Official Weigh Station. Friday FOD Prizes will be awarded at the Tournament Awards Ceremony.

12. Tournament Awards Ceremony will be held Saturday, October 14th, 2023 after the Weigh-In has been completed and polygraphs performed, at the Tournament Headquarters located at Steinhatchee Marina.

13. ALL FISH WEIGHED-IN MUST BE CAUGHT FROM ENTERED BOATS DURING OFFICIAL FISHING HOURS. NO FISHING FROM ENTERED BOATS DURING NON-FISHING HOURS, THIS WILL BE PART OF THE POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION. Check-Out and Check-In

13A: Special Rules Update: There are many ways to gain an edge in competitive fishing and it can be difficult to detect those who put winning above ethical behavior. If you are seeking a way to make your fish longer, shorter or heavier in order to win money and defraud other contestants then you should probably consider another event. To that end, we are refining Rule 13 to say that fish must be fresh caught and never frozen. Fish that have been frozen possess distinct characteristics that the Tournament Director will look for. Fish that have been frozen will not be considered for weigh-in. It is the responsibility of fishing teams to care for your catch so as not to present a challenge to the weigh-in staff in determining its condition. We will also be paying special attention to stomach contents this year to make sure nothing has been artificially inserted into any fish.

14. Entered boats may leave from your port of choice between Dekle Beach to the north and the Suwannee River on the southern end. Departure can be any time after midnight on Thursday, October 13th, 2023. This rule is clarified as follows: Departure means leaving the dock if your boat is in the water or leaving the ramp basin if trailering.

15. Fishing times are clear: "Lines In" is at 6:00am on Friday, October 13th, 2023. Fishing may continue through 3:00pm on Saturday, October 14th, 2023. All lines must be out of the water at 3:00pm on the October 14th. 2023.

16. Catching bait is allowed until 7pm on Thursday, October 12th, 2023. No fishing after 7pm until lines in on Friday, October 13th, 2023.

17. THIS TOURNAMENT IS A TEST OF BOTH MAN AND MACHINE. All fish must be brought by the entered boat to be weighed at the official tournament Weigh-Station at Steinhatchee Marina. You must make it to the weigh station by water without assistance. No boat may be trailered from another port to the weigh station; once caught, the fish must be brought totally unassisted by water. To ensure rules are

observed, departure times, lines in and lines out times will be questions asked of the boat Captain on the polygraph.

Polygraph

18. Winning teams agree to the polygraph to ensure rules and fishing hours are observed. All participants in tournament agree to be subject to and bound by a polygraph at the request of the Reeling for Kids management. Failure to successfully pass such an examination will result in automatic disqualification of the boat and all anglers and forfeiture of any awards. This is at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director and Reeling for Kids Rules Committee.

Weigh-In

19. The official weigh-in station is where all fish considered for awards must be weighed in. All fish must be caught during tournament fishing hours on Friday the 13th and Saturday the 14th of October, 2023. Fish must remain on and be removed directly from the entered boat. Fish will be weighed with at least one participant of entered boat in attendance. All fish must be of legal size to be considered in this tournament.

20. Only one fish per category may be unloaded to be weigh in. It is the responsibility of the fishing team to determine which fish they want weighed. The Weigh Master reserves the right to hold and examine internally and externally any fish weighed in as a tournament catch to determine if the fish is eligible for an award. Any fish that has any unnatural material in or on the fish will be disqualified.

20A. Redfish entered for the most spots are not eligible for the Redfish category on the leaderboard and vice versa. You must identify redfish you wish to be considered for the most spots category prior to weighing in the team's redfish. This is done via a supplied tag that must be attached to the spotted fish prior to leaving the boat.

21. Fish caught by Junior and Lady Anglers must be properly identified by a tag provided by the tournament prior to unloading at the weigh dock. It is the Captain's responsibility to make sure this rule is observed and no exceptions will be granted once the fish is on the dock. Should you lose your tags, you may request new ones when docking but prior to offloading your fish.

For Clarity: There are three species of fish in the Offshore category and three species of fish in the Inshore category. How the FWC classifies a fish's habitat is not relevant to the prize categories of this tournament. An Inshore registered boat may only enter inshore category fish for Lady and Junior Angler Awards. The same is true for Offshore registered boats, only offshore category fish may be weighed in for Lady and Junior Angler Awards.

For additional clarity, a Junior angler is defined as an angler who has not yet turned 16 at the time of the tournament's conclusion.

22. The tournament VHF channel will be 72. The Weigh-In Station will broadcast official tournament time and other important information via channel 72. It is recommended all boats monitor channel 72 during the day. Channel 9 will also be monitored by local marinas.

Disqualification

23. If any boats come together or if anything is passed between boats for any reason after the official start of that day's fishing and before each boat has weighed in, then such boats shall be disqualified. However, as safety is of prime importance to the operation of the tournament, exceptions may be

granted by the Reeling for Kids management for emergencies, but only to boats granting assistance and not to boats receiving assistance in such case.

23A. This is a boat tournament and only the registered boat may be used to fish. Should a boat become inoperable during Friday's fishing, permission may be granted to change boats for Saturday by the Tournament Director. This permission must be obtained in advance regardless of inconvenience to assure fairness. **Changing boats for convenience will not be allowed and will result in disqualification.**

Protests

24. All protests must be presented in writing to the Reeling for Kids Tournament Director at the weigh-in station on the day of the alleged infraction, within one hour after the closing of the weigh-in station. A \$100 cash deposit, refundable if the protest is upheld, must accompany protest. The Reeling for Kids Tournament Director will make all decisions, and his/ her decision is final. If the protest is not upheld, then such deposit will be forfeited to the tournament. Reeling for Kids management reserves the right to modify/change the rules prior to any tournament.

Captain's Meetings / Amendments

25. Captain's Meetings are not mandatory but are highly recommended. The statements and rules contained herein may be amended by additional verbal instruction and/or printed matter distributed by the Reeling for Kids management.

26. All Captains are responsible for knowing the rules and any additional verbal instructions presented at the Captain's Meetings. Failure to follow the rules could result in disqualification. While it is possible for good people to disagree, the Tournament Director is the final authority on rules interpretation.

Weather Conditions

27. The Reeling for Kids management reserves the right to terminate the tournament day because of unsafe conditions at sea. If due to bad weather, we are unable to fish one of the tournament days, the remaining day will constitute a tournament. If both days are not fishable, the event will be postponed to a future date yet to be determined. Entry fees are not refundable.

28. Even though it is the Captain's personal responsibility to ensure the safety of his/her vessel and crew, the RFK Tournament Committee takes an interest in setting minimum parameters for the event. We rely on NOAA Weather to issue advisories should dangerous weather be forecast. Should NOAA issue a Small Craft Advisory on the evening forecast before a fishing day, all fishing for the following day will be suspended. The evening forecast is usually issued in the 9-11pm timeframe. If issued Friday night, fishing should cease immediately upon this announcement. To continue fishing is to violate the rules. Winners will be questioned on the polygraph.

If no advisory is issued in the evening but weather is upgraded to advisory levels in the following morning forecast, fishing may commence or continue as is appropriate per the rules. It remains the personal responsibility of the Captain to determine the capabilities of his/her craft to safely navigate any weather encountered.

Weigh-in Time: The weigh-in station officially opens at 3:00 PM and closes at 5:00 PM on Friday, October 13th except for boats already in line. The weigh-in station officially opens at 1:00 PM and closes at 4:00 PM on Saturday, October 14th except for boats already in line. Boats with fish to be weighed in must be visually checked in by 4:00 PM by management stationed at Steinhatchee Marina. Official tournament

time will be kept by the Tournament Director and announced periodically during the day via VHF channel 72.

BOATS NOT VISIBLE IN THE RIVER AT 5PM ON FRIDAY AND 4PM ON SATURDAY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO WEIGH FISH. CALL TOURNAMENT BASE TO MAKE SURE WE SEE YOU!

Sportsmanship

29. All participants will exercise good and courteous sportsmanship whether at the dock, underway, or fishing. Violators will be subject to disqualification at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director without refund.

30. The Tournament Director, at his sole discretion, reserves the right to refuse the entry of any angler/team/boat he deems unsuitable for participation in this tournament.

Optional CALCUTTA-Tournament within a Tournament (TWT)

Entry fees and winnings under this division are in addition to the Tournament Awards. This is a separate TWT available only to participants whose boats are already entered in the Tournament. Only the entrant of the Tournament Within a Tournament (TWT) may claim the winnings at the awards presentation held on Saturday. All rules pertaining to the Tournament shall apply to the Tournament Within a Tournament, specifically the Masters Awards rules...you must catch each of the four species in the Offshore or three species in the Inshore category to be eligible for the Tournament within a Tournament. If you enter each category, you may win in each category. Sign up by mail or email with your Entry Form or purchase at the registration table located at Tournament Headquarters by 6:00 AM on October 13th. The entry fee is \$200/boat for offshore category fish (Red Snapper, Gag Grouper and Kingfish) and \$100/boat for inshore category fish (Spanish Mackerel, Redfish and Trout). The total entries in each TWT category will be divided as follows: 50% to first place, 20% to second place and 10% to third place, with 20% going to the Tournament charity. Based on 50 entrants in the offshore category, the winner would pocket \$5000, second place would be \$2000 and third place would be \$1000... this calculation is provided for illustrative purposes only. Actual payouts will be based on the number of participants.