

Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Department's
Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament
2024 Fishing Tournament Rules

A. PRE-TOURNAMENT

1. Registration Fee is \$500 per boat per day for 6 anglers.
2. The fee to add more than 6 anglers is \$100 per angler, per day.
3. Registration fees paid online with a credit card are \$515 per boat per day for 6 anglers, additional anglers can be added for \$103 each.
4. Registrations received on May 30, 2024 and after will not be guaranteed tournament t-shirts or tournament boat buckets.
5. Online registration will close on June 3, 2024.
6. Paper registrations accompanied by registration fees will be accepted until the Captain's meeting on June 7th, 2024.
7. There is no minimum boat size.
8. **All Anglers must be registered before fishing.**
 - a. Only persons listed on the official registration form are considered anglers who are eligible to participate.
 - b. Captains and mates are also subject to this rule.
 - c. Anglers list may be adjusted up to the Captain's meeting on June 7, 2024
9. Boat Captains must be 18 years.
10. If only fishing one day, you must declare which day you plan to fish by Captains' meeting on June 7th.
11. Boat Captains **must** attend a mandatory Captains' Meeting on Friday, June 7, 2024 at 6:00 pm at a To Be Determined Location in Rock Hall, MD.
12. If a Captain cannot attend the meeting, he/she must send an authorized representative with the Captain acknowledgment form.
13. Any last-minute rule changes will be announced at the Captains' meeting.
14. Tournament officials reserve the right to refuse entry to any one person or team, at their sole discretion.
15. Tournament is held rain or shine. No rain dates or cancellation unless Committee deems it. It is a Captains choice tournament.
16. Entries limited to 200 boats/captains.
17. No refunds on paid entries will be made unless the tournament is canceled by the tournament committee.

B. TOURNAMENT RULES

1. Tournament Boundaries: The southern line is the southern most Bay Bridge and the RT 50 Bridge East at Kent Narrows and the 213 Bridge at the Chester River. *AS permitted by Maryland Department of Natural Resources.
2. Fishing hours: Start from your own dock. No lines in the water before 5:30 AM. Check in time for both days is 2 PM. No exceptions. All contestants must be in line or signed in by 2 PM at Rock Hall Harbor.

3. All boats are required to fly the tournament flag and have their tournament number displayed at all times.
4. Channel 18 VHF will be monitored during the tournament hours.
5. All fish must be caught hook and line. Only MD DNR legal hook and line fishing methods permitted.
6. No Gaffing. No Culling. For definition, see C.O.M.A.R. 08.02.15.
7. Striped bass may only be taken during a designated striped bass season in accordance with pertinent limits, laws, and regulations. Culling of striped bass is prohibited by regulations. Culling, as defined in regulation, means “after a person has a striped bass in possession, the person discards or exchanges that striped bass to possess another striped bass”.
8. It is up to each Captain and anglers to know MD DNR and Coast Guard 2024 Rules and Regulations. Do not ask committee members for legal advice regarding any applicable rule, statute, law or ordinance. Committee is not responsible for any legal infraction committed by any anglers, guest and/or captain.
9. A fish may be hooked by someone other than the angler (Captain, mate or other registered angler); however, the fishing rod must be transferred immediately to the angler after hookup.
10. In the event of a boat disability, contestants may transfer to a second boat and assume the original boat’s registration without paying an additional registration fee.
11. Any boat may be boarded by tournament representatives for thorough inspection of fishing boxes, bilges, containers and compartments.

C. WEIGH-IN AND PRIZES

1. **WEIGH-IN** is open at 10:00am at the Rock Hall Harbor Bulkhead at foot of Caroline Ave.
 - a. All Boats must be inside the jetty of Rock Hall Harbor by 2:00 PM both tournament days.
2. The registered Captain will be the only one allowed into weigh-in area to check in fish.
3. **Largest Fish will be determined by weight.** In the event of a tie, the first fish entered will be considered the winner and the second one will move to second place.
4. All weighed fish will be entered into regular competition unless you specify *prior to weigh-in* that it is a youth division fish.
5. The first fish measured is entered into the competition.
6. Youth division (15 and under as of the day angler fishes): Registered Youth Anglers will be eligible to check in one fish per day. There will be First, Second, and Third place Prizes. All youth anglers will receive certificates for fishing in the tournament.
7. Fish must be checked in on the same day they are caught.
8. Holding striped bass in a live well is prohibited under tournament rules.
9. Fish are subject to internal and external examinations by the judges and the biologists.
10. Any fish entered in the tournament is subject to disqualification if judges decide it bears suspicious marks or characteristics.
11. All winning captains are required to take a polygraph examination at the Judge’s and/or the Committee’s request and agree that examination results are binding.

12. The judges reserve the right to disqualify any boat at any time for suspicious or unsportsmanlike activity for the remainder of the tournament.
13. All decisions rendered by the Judges Committee are final and binding.
14. Disqualification could result in a ban from all future Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament tournaments without the right of appeal.
15. Prizes:
 - a. Youth Prizes - youth prizes are generated through donations only and will be awarded as follows:
 - i. First Place - 50%
 - ii. Second Place - 30%
 - iii. Third Place - 20%
 - iv. If there is no third place winner, first and second will each receive an additional 10%.
 - b. Adult Anger Prizes - adult prizes are generated through entry fees. The Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Department receives 10% of the total proceeds. The remaining 90% is awarded as follows:
 - i. First Place - 50%
 - ii. Second Place - 30%
 - iii. Third Place - 20%.
 - iv. If there is no third place winner, first and second will each receive an additional 10%.
16. Awards Ceremony will be immediately following the close of the tournament on Sunday June 9, 2024.
17. Prize money will be awarded within 30 days of the event unless the tournament winners are contested.
18. All winners will be required to complete a W9 in order to receive any prize money.
19. If a protest is raised, the Judges' Committee reserves the right to delay all awards for a period of time, in its sole discretion, sufficient to conduct a thorough audit and administer any polygraph tests they deem necessary.
20. Any side betting outside of the tournament's official rules is not the responsibility of the RHVFC.

D. PROTESTS

1. Anyone wishing to protest any fish will have to deposit \$100 with the tournament committee.
 - a. If protest is validated, the deposit will be returned to the individual making the protest.
 - b. If protest is deemed invalid, the protesting individual will forfeit his/her deposit.
2. Protests must be made when fish is weighed.
3. If protesting anything other than a winning fish, that protest must be brought to the Judges' Committee no later than the 2pm weigh-in time.
4. Protests should be carefully considered by contestants, as they can cause delay or interfere with the awarding of prizes to the tournament winners.
5. Unjustified protests in recent tournaments have caused undue expense, turmoil, and unfavorable and unacceptable conditions to the *bona fide* prize winners.
6. Any person filing an unsuccessful protest shall reimburse the Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament for all costs and fees incurred by the Guardian of the Pearl

Rockfish Tournament as a result of the protest, including reasonable attorneys' fees and/or costs of litigation incurred as a result of the protest.

7. In the event of a successful protest, the person who was the subject of the protest shall reimburse the Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament for all costs and fees incurred by the Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament as a result of the protest, including reasonable attorneys' fees and/or costs of litigation incurred as a result of the protest.
8. Reasonable attorney's fees include, but are not limited to, providing legal advice, and investigation of legal matters in conjunction with any protest as well as legal fees for any litigation which results.
9. In no event shall Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament, its committee members, management and/or sponsors be liable to any person for any attorneys' fees or costs.
10. If you are the subject of a protest, you will be required to pass a polygraph test to overcome the protest.
11. "Passing" a polygraph requires a negative result.
12. Inconclusive test results will be deemed a "fail."

E. WAIVERS, LIABILITY AND LEGAL

1. It is expressly understood that all registered anglers and their companions, crew members and observers (the "Participants") participate in the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company Rockfish Tournament (the "Tournament") at their own risk.
2. The Participants hereby indemnify and agree to save harmless the Tournament, the RHVFC, and its respective officers, directors, employees, volunteers, agents, partners, members, and/or attorneys (collectively the "Tournament Indemnified Parties") from and against any and all claims that arise from or in connection with any negligent act or omission of the Tournament Indemnified Parties.
3. All persons connected directly or indirectly with the operation of the Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament whether an individual, a corporation or other type of entity, shall have no liability whatsoever for any special, incidental, consequential, punitive, exemplary and/or any other damage including, without limitation, any damages arising from libel, slander, loss, damage, negligence, harm, injury or death.
4. The Tournament Directors reserve the right to refuse entry to any boat, team or person.
5. This liability Release shall be binding upon the Participants and their respective heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns.
6. All captains, by submission of their entry, accept responsibility for the safety of their crew, anglers and guests, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament management, leadership, organizers, volunteers, agents, partners, members, attorneys and/or sponsors from any liability therefor.
7. All participants and guests of participants are responsible for their own personal safety and security of their personal property and expressly assume any and all risks to their personal safety and wellbeing.
8. Participants specifically agree and consent to the use of any photograph or video in which they appear, and/or audio recordings of such participants, by the Tournament for any purpose whatsoever including, but not limited to, resale, advertising and promotional material without compensation or restriction of any kind.

9. By registering in the Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament and paying the entry fee, Participants acknowledge that they have read these Rules and the Liability Release.
10. As a condition for the entry into the Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament, all Participants hereby agree to be bound by all the Rules, and by the Liability Release.
11. Participants agree to abide by all applicable statutes, laws, ordinances and applicable rules while participating in the Guardian of the Pearl Rockfish Tournament.