



Big Tuna Challenge

OMNIDIRECTIONAL SONAR STYLE FISHING DIVISION

Unofficial Rules and Schedule: *revised 9.14,2026*

Challenge Schedule:1

- A) **Friday, September 18th, 2026, Late Registration** starting at 4pm and **Captain's meeting** at 7pm-**Captain Bill's Landing**— (49 Inlet Drive, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ. 08742), A captain's package will be given to the registrant of each team including "Boat Number" for your day(s) of fishing. **Registration for (Optional) added skill level entries will be available. Captains' Meeting- 7pm.** A team member on each boat **MUST** attend the **captain's meeting** & be responsible for relaying any last-minute changes to their team.
- B) **Available fishing days:** Saturday, September 19 through Wednesday, September 30th, 2026. Choose a maximum of 2 available fishing Days: 1 Overnight (2 consecutive days) or 2 Separate Days.
- C) Un-Official Results will be posted after close of weigh ins each day.
- D) Winner's Award Party-TBD, Sunday Oct 4th, 2026 (1pm-3pm)
Lunch and awards.

Basic Omnidirectional Sonar-Style Boat Entry: \$1,500 (Non-refundable). Based on 25 Boats in Omnidirectional Sonar-Style division competes for **\$25,000** which will be distributed equally & awarded to 1st place Winner for the Heaviest Yellowfin, Heaviest Longfin, Heaviest Big Eye and Heaviest Bluefin Tuna. Cash prize will be prorated if less than 25 boats. If boat entries exceed 25, so will the cash prize. Any unwon Tuna species will be distributed equally to the won Tuna species. **This challenge is separate from the Non-Omnidirectional Sonar-Style Boat division and its cash prizes.** Cash & Checks are acceptable forms of payment. If payment is made by check, please issue separate checks for the Basic Boat Entry fee and for the Optional Added Skill Level Entry fees. **Zelle payments are accepted for Basic Boat Entry Fee ONLY on-line, processing fees apply.** Basic Boat entry may be completed online: www.rtusachallenges.com or at Captains' meeting. Registration is by boat rather than by angler. An unlimited number of anglers are allowed per boat. Captain & Mates are eligible to be an angler.

Omnidirectional Sonar Style Boat may not register to compete in the Non-Omnidirectional Sonar-Style Boat Entry.

Optional: (95% payout) Added Skill Levels Entry Fee (Check or Cash ONLY) for cash prizes are available to register at Captains' Party **ONLY**. You must register for the Basic Boat Entry & pay the fee in order to enter the optional added skill levels. (Displayed on website): www.rtusachallenges.com

In order to be eligible for awards & cash prizes, fish must be caught in compliance with all Challenge rules. Said rules include conformance to state and federal size limits and possession of a current NMFS angling, general or charter/head boat category HMS permit. For permit and registration information, visit www.nmfspermits.com or call 727.824.5399 and visit www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov/

IMPORTANT: For this event, Recreational Bluefin limits apply to all boats participating in the Big Tuna Challenge, regardless of whether you are a charter boat or not. Once your vessel has reached its recreational retention limit, no additional bluefin tuna may be harvested. Please be aware of the limits & **DO NOT HARVEST ANY FISH AFTER YOUR LIMIT HAS BEEN CAUGHT.**



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- 1) All boats may depart for their fishing day(s) from any inlet between Great Egg Inlet to Sandy Hook but must return to Manasquan Inlet if you have a fish to weigh. Official weigh station we be at Captain Bill's Landing ONLY. (49 Inlet Drive, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ. 08742).
- 2) Boundaries are 125nm from Manasquan Inlet Sea buoy.
- 3) Tournament channel is VHF 71, alternate 69.
- 4) Only one day need be fished for the tournament to be considered official & prizes to be awarded.
- 5) Available fishing days are as follow: September 19th-30th,2026.
- 6) Each registered Boat will choose to compete a maximum of 2 fishing days. The options for fishing those 2 days are as follow:
 - Option 1: Overnighter:** Each registered boat may fish one overnight (two consecutive days) fishing trip. In this case, the boat must return to the inlet on the day after the boat departed the inlet with the exception If boat has a fish to weigh, then you must return to Manasquan Inlet first to weigh in at Captain Bill's Landing- 49 Inlet Drive, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ, 08742) (Further explained at Captain's meeting).
 - Option 2:** Separate Days: Each registered boat may fish any 2 separate fishing days. On each of those days, the boat must return to the inlet on the same day the boat departed from with the exception if you have a fish to weigh, then the boat must return first to Manasquan inlet by 7pm for weigh in at Captain Bill's Landing (49 Inlet Drive, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ, 08742) Further explained at Captain's meeting.
- A) The times for departure from your inlet are as follow:
 - 1) Registered boats may not depart the inlet no earlier than 12:01 AM on their fishing day. No official lines in or lines out time, however you must be inside the Manasquan Inlet by 7pm if you have fish to weigh with confirmation. (Further explained at Captain's meeting).
 - 2) Registered boats having fish onboard to weigh must return to the Manasquan inlet by 7PM on the day from Saturday September 19th to Wednesday, September 30th, 2026. If registered boats are not inside Manasquan inlet by the 7pm deadline with confirmation, that boat will be disqualified and will not be able to weigh in.
 - 3) Weigh station will be opened starting a 4pm each day. Official weigh station only at Captain Bill's Landing (49 Inlet Drive, Point Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742).
- 7) All boats must declare their fishing day(s) by 11:59 PM. (Text to 732.351.6363) the evening before each day the boat is fishing and must state whether fishing a single day trip or 2-day overnight trip. Entrants failing to declare the number of days will be recorded as a 2-day trip. It is the entrant's responsibility to ensure that all fish days are declared properly and in accordance with the rules. (2 of 4 pages)



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- 8) To declare a fishing day, the captain on each boat **MUST** text Tournament Director Lenny (732)351-6363 before 11:59 PM the evening before each day the boat is fishing the following information noted below. Should there be a problem with the phone number, the alternate phone number for texting is: (609)377-0529.
- a) Captain's Name
 - b) Boat Name, Boat Number & Dock location.
 - c) Date of Departure.
 - d) Declare an overnight or single fishing day.
 - e) A team photo displaying boat number in cockpit. (further explained at meeting)
- 9) Participants shall comply with I.G.F.A equipment & angling rules with the following exceptions: Hook & Hand is permitted (ONLY one pass). (further explained) You can fight fish in a stand up or a fighting chair. You can lean your body or use your hand on gunnel for support while fighting fish. With the exception of using Electric reels for Day/Night time Swordfishing, High speed Wahoo fishing, Tile fishing, Kites, Teasers and Dredges, Fish may NOT be fought from rod holder or using the covering board, rail or any other tool for leverage (further explained at captain's meeting), Spreader bars, J-hooks, Bait/J-hook, trolling, kite fishing, popping, jigging, live baiting, chunking, chumming, daisy chains with a hook, wire lines, planers, dart gaffs are permitted. No commercial gear such as green sticks, bandit gear etc. may be used. Spearfishing, Spotter planes or Drones are not permitted. Tournament Director retains sole authority of interpreting and implementing I.G.F. A's rules.
- 10) **This is an Omnidirectional Sonar Style fishing challenge. Definition of Omnidirectional Sonar Style fishing:** The use of any deployable omni-directional sonar or deployable searchlight-style sonar system is **Allowed** before, during & after declared fishing day(s). For the purpose of this rule, "deployable" means any sonar device capable of being lowered, extended or otherwise positioned beneath the vessel's hull while underway or fishing, and "omni-directional" or "searchlight-style" means sonar system capable of continuously scanning 360 degrees around the vessel or projecting a steerable, directional beam. (Further explained at captains' meeting).
- 11) There is no limit on the number of lines or teasers.
- 12) Line class shall be limited to the manufacturer's stated rating of no greater than 130 lbs. The use of Tournament Grade Line is not required. The use of any pound test backing is permitted.



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- 13) The captain or a member on each team should take a photo using cell phone of every Tuna, Swordfish, Mahi-Mahi, Wahoo or Tilefish immediately after fish has been boated with the angler and texted to Lenny (Director). Make sure you have phone charged. Scales open at 4pm each day & will stay open until last boat that made the 7pm deadline inside the Manasquan inlet with confirmation. All boats having fish to weigh-in must call in to Weigh Master (VHF #65, 71, or Phone (732)351-6363 upon entering inlet. Each team captain chooses a maximum of (3) Yellowfins, (3) Big Eyes, (3) Longfin, (1) Bluefin (27" to <47"), (1) Bluefin (47" to <73") & only 1 Mahi-Mahi, 1 Wahoo, 1 Swordfish & 1 Tilefish for weigh-in. **Captain Bill's Landing is the official weigh-in station.** In case of a tie in weight, the award for the tied placements is combined and averaged for awards determination. All weights will be rounded off to the nearest 0.2 lb.
- 14) In the event of a participant's boat disability prior to a fishing day, participants may transfer to a substitute boat and assume the disabled boat number without paying an additional entry fee or added skill level entries. Note: Added skill levels for the Boats under 50 ft do not transfer and are non-refundable if the substitute boat is greater than 50 ft or Boats with outboard motors do not transfer and are non-refundable if the substitute boat is not powered by outboard motors. The disabled and substitute boat must be reported to Tournament Director (Lenny Strobel) prior to departure for that day of fishing by contacting Lenny at (732)351-6363
- 15) Only participants of tournament may submit a dispute or protest with a signed document on the day of the allegation and must pay a \$1,000 fee to director on the day of alleged infraction. All disputes will be settled at the discretion of the committee. All decisions of committee are final.
- 16) Tournament Director has the right to cancel, postpone event or refuse any boat or participant from participating in this event.
- 17) All winners may be subject to a "polygraph".
- 18) The Tournament director and hosting facilities assume no liability or responsibility for any damage or loss.
- 19) Award money will be paid by check in the name of the Entrant whose name appears on the Basic Boat Entry Form or any individual crewmember. All winners will be required to submit federal/state tax information before any award will be presented. An IRS Form 1099 will be issued to all award recipients. Awards will be mailed within 14 days after the treasurer receives the entrant's completed IRS Form W-9. If a protest or polygraph test has not been resolved by that time, the disputed award will be made as soon as the issue is resolved. (4 of 4 pages)



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