



CAN'T-MISS TOURNAMENTS

FROM THE BIGGEST MARLIN AND HEFTIEST PAYDAYS TO THE BEST PARTIES AND THE
TOUGHEST COMPETITION, THERE'S A BILLFISH TOURNAMENT TO SUIT JUST ABOUT ANYONE

BY SAM WHITE

TWO ANGLERS FISH SIDE BY SIDE. EACH CHALLENGES THE OTHER TO CATCH THE MOST FISH, OR THE LARGEST. PERHAPS THEY PLACE A SMALL WAGER ON THE OUTCOME. SPECTATORS GATHER TO WATCH THE ACTION — AND JUST LIKE THAT, A FISHING TOURNAMENT IS BORN. AND WHILE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO LIST EVERY EVENT, HERE ARE JUST A FEW THAT DESERVE A SECOND LOOK. THERE'S A TOURNAMENT FOR NEARLY EVERYONE, SO GET OUT THERE AND FISH IN 2016.



Tournaments bring together some of sport fishing's most passionate owners, captains, anglers and crews as they go head-to-head against the toughest species of game fish in the world.



MONEY

BEST ODDS OUTSIDE THE TOURNAMENT
MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST BILLFISH CLASSIC
 Biloxi, Mississippi

Hosted at the luxurious Golden



Nugget Casino Hotel in Biloxi, Mississippi, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Classic is a gambler's paradise. Hit the tables and then hit the water for a shot at some oversize blue marlin and yellowfin tuna in the fish-rich waters of the upper Gulf of Mexico. The tournament record for blue marlin is a 1,054-pounder caught by Barry Carr on *Sea Wolff*, so the big blues are ready for you.

BECOME A MILLIONAIRE WHILE GETTING A SUNTAN
BISBEE'S BLACK AND BLUE
 Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

It's one of the richest events in all of sport fishing, so if you want a shot at the big bucks, be sure to enter as many of the optional jackpots as your wallet will allow. On the plus side, you'll be wetting a line in one of sport fishing's greatest destinations, so you're already a winner the moment you step off the plane in Cabo.

LARGEST PARTICIPATING FLEET
WHITE MARLIN OPEN
 Ocean City, Maryland

By any measure, the White Marlin Open is a big one. In 2015, 300-plus boats vied for their share of a total purse exceeding \$3.9 million. The winning white marlin took home better than \$1.1 million, with the second-place white worth just over that magical



million-dollar mark as well. The weigh-ins are a tremendous spectator affair the whole town comes out to watch.

OUTSTANDING VALUE
CLUB NAUTICO DE SAN JUAN IBT
 San Juan, Puerto Rico

For an entry fee of just \$1,900, a visiting angler can hop aboard a top-flight sport-fishing boat and fish for four days in a world-class tournament against some of the best rods in all of the Caribbean. Puerto Ricans are famous for their hospitality, so a good time is nearly guaranteed at some great dock parties and social events each evening. This year marks the 63rd anniversary for the Club Nautico de San Juan International Billfish Tournament, making this one of the sport's most historic marlin tournaments.

GO BIG OR STAY HOME
WORLD CUP BLUE MARLIN CHAMPIONSHIP
 Worldwide

It's a one-day shootout occurring every year on July 4: the World Cup. Teams fish for eight hours in their respective time zones for blue marlin in a winner-take-all format with a 500-pound minimum. Since 1985, teams fishing the event have tallied three granders — the biggest being a 1,195-pounder caught off Bermuda — and 11 more blues over 700. Better bring the heavy tackle for this one.



A GREAT WEEK OF SUMMER VACATION
BIG ROCK BLUE MARLIN TOURNAMENT
 Morehead City, North Carolina

Mark your calendar for a week of summer vacation in the middle of June and head to coastal North Carolina for the Big Rock. The tournament week kicks off with a lady angler shootout and goes right through to the main event, which offers participants a choice of fishing for four of a possible six days. And while the early winners of the tournament took home a child's red wagon filled with silver dollars, the stakes are now considerably higher: The event's total purse has topped the \$1 million mark for the past 16 years, and the Big Rock celebrates its 58th anniversary in 2016.

BEST SHOT AT A BLACK MARLIN
LIZARD ISLAND BLACK MARLIN TOURNAMENT
 Lizard Island, Australia

If it's a nice black marlin you're after, pack the bags and head Down Under for the Lizard Island Black Marlin Tournament. The tournament adopted a catch-and-release format after the 20th anniversary event in 2006, but if you're fortunate enough to release a fish deemed to be in excess of 1,000 pounds, you'll have your name engraved on the Lizard Island 1,000 Pound Tag and Release Club