2026 National Championship Rules
Beaufort, NC

NOVEMBER 18-22, 2026

THE FOLLOWING RULES APPLY FOR ALL TEAMS AND ANGLERS FOR THE 2026 SKA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP POWERED BY YAMAHA:

All members of a National Championship Powered By Yamaha crew must be current SKA competition members PRIOR TO 12:01 AM on the National Championship FISHING DAY 1. ALL participants must agree to understand and abide by tournament rules listed below.

Active SKA Competition Membership Required. Every person who fishes or assists the team's fishing effort must be listed on the team's declared roster and must be an active 2026 SKA Competition Member in good standing before 12:01 AM Eastern Time on the actual first fishing day, including an activated alternate day. Junior and NextGen Competition Memberships qualify. Associate Membership does not qualify. Eligibility must be maintained throughout the Championship.

A team that fishes with an ineligible or undeclared participant will be disqualified and will forfeit all Championship and optional TWT winnings, regardless of when the violation is discovered.

Registration Certification and Crew Acknowledgment

The Captain or Co-Captain submitting registration must certify that they have verified each participant's membership and roster eligibility and that every rostered participant has read and acknowledged these Championship Rules and the SKA Code of Conduct. A parent or legal guardian must complete any required acknowledgment for a minor participant. SKA may verify

compliance before, during, or after the Championship.

Tournament Officials' Decisions Are Final. All decisions made by authorized Tournament Officials within their assigned responsibilities are final and binding for the Championship, subject to the published protest procedure. This includes eligibility, rule interpretation, check-in, weigh-in, scoring, conduct, disqualification, standings, and awards. The Tournament Director's ruling on a timely protest is final, with no further internal appeal. The Tournament Director alone certifies official results and may correct errors or act on later-discovered ineligibility, fraud, or other rule violations. Applicable law governs, including any rights or remedies that cannot lawfully be waived.

Open and Small Boat Class boats are competing for their own set of prizes in the Nationals and are unable to win any prizes in any other Class.

The **Captain or Co-Captain who submits the registration** must certify that they are responsible for verifying membership and ensuring every person on the fishing roster has read and acknowledged the rules and SKA Code of Conduct. **Everyone who fishes in Nationals must be an active SKA Competition Member in good standing. No exceptions.**

Non-participating passengers are PERMITTED ONLY WITH PRIOR WRITTEN SKA APPROVAL AND REQUIRED RELEASES. An approved passenger may not assist the fishing effort unless all participant eligibility requirements have been met.

It is expressly understood that all registered participants and non-registered occupants of their boats enter into the events in the Southern Kingfish Association, LLC voluntarily and at their own risk. Further, each registered and non-registered participant on behalf of other family members and/or executors agrees to release and hold harmless Southern Kingfish Association, LLC, its officers, directors, owners, members, representatives, agents, employees, independent contractors, volunteers, promoters, advertisers, sponsors, partners, joint ventures, affiliates, assigns, polygraph examiner, the city and county where the events are held and all other persons connected directly or indirectly with the operation of any event

in the Southern Kingfish Association, LLC (collectively, “Released and Indemnified Parties”) from any and all claims, losses, damages, demands, causes of action, suits and liabilities of every kind arising out of, related to, or resulting from the tournament, activity or event, including but not limited to all events in the Southern Kingfish Association, LLC, including without limitation, any claim for loss, damage or destruction of property, or injury (including death), regardless of whether such loss arises in whole or in part from the negligence of any Released and Indemnified Party. This release is intended to be as broad and inclusive as possible under applicable law, and if any portion of this release is held invalid or unenforceable, the balance shall continue in full force and legal effect.

Winners, or any anglers, may be requested to submit to and pass a polygraph test and/or sign an affidavit prior to being presented any prize. This must be done in a timely manner. Failure to submit to a polygraph test automatically revokes all claims to any prizes won. All members of any SKA team or tournament participants entering and participating in National Championship event agree that all polygraph results are final and agree that the subject of the polygraph will not be challenged beyond the posting of the results.

The Tournament Director and designated Tournament Officials interpret and enforce these Rules within their assigned responsibilities. The section titled “Tournament Officials’ Decisions Are Final” governs the finality of their rulings. The tournament committee reserves the right to refuse an entry into the tournament.

A North Carolina saltwater fishing license is required for each team member for anyone not excluded by NC law. Go to https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/licenses-permits-and-leases/recreational-fishing-licenses to purchase licenses and view current North Carolina fishing regulations.

FISHING DAYS

Day 1 – ~~November 20, 2026~~ November 19, 2026

Day 2 – ~~November 21, 2026~~ November 20, 2026

LINES IN

On tournament days, competition hours are:

Day 1 – 7:00 AM until 4:30 PM

Day 2 – 7:00 AM until 4:00 PM

There will be NO checkout. NO CHECK-OUT! Honor system - lines in the water at 7:00 AM (official GPS time). No fishing with rod and reel before 7:00 AM, this includes bait jigging. Fish must be hooked and caught during tournament hours. No purchasing of bait, passing of bait between boats or obtaining bait from bait pen after 7:00 AM on each fishing day.

Boats may leave from any inlet/location.

BOUNDARIES

All tournament fishing must occur within a 100-statute-mile radius of the designated Beaufort Inlet reference point: 34°41.545′ N, 076°40.283′ W (WGS 84). Distance is measured directly from this fixed coordinate, not by distance traveled. The published coordinate controls regardless of buoy locations.

Boats may transit outside the boundary but may not fish, including for bait, outside it during competition hours.

BAIT LIMITS:

SKA Teams are required to adhere to local, state and federal RECREATIONAL bait limits regardless of licensing.

NATIONALS CREW:

Teams may fish with their original crew or select a crew that meets all Championship eligibility requirements. Each team must have at least two eligible members, including the Captain. The Captain or Co-Captain who submits registration must declare the crew by the roster deadline under “Nationals Teams” and meet the verification and acknowledgment requirements under

"Registration Certification and Crew Acknowledgment." SKA may verify membership, roster status, and acknowledgments at check-in or at any time during or after the Championship. The addition of a hired local captain is prohibited.

NATIONALS TEAMS:

Crew members may ONLY FISH WITH ONE TEAM during Nationals. Team members are declared at registration and no later than the end of the Nationals Captain's Meeting.

CATEGORY AWARDS:

If a crew member does not fish one day for any reason, the team's points from that day will not be included in that crew member's Category Awards rankings. Category Awards points can only be earned if that crew member actively fishes. A crew member can still rank for Category Awards with a single day's points. It is the Captain's responsibility to notify the SKA, preferably by email, if a checked-in crew member is not fishing. Category Awards include Junior, NextGen, Lady, Senior and Veteran Anglers.

CLASSES

The Open Class is open to ALL teams. **Small Boat Class is ONLY available to boats 26' 6" LOA and under.** Class is declared during registration. Regular season class declarations and/or rankings do not apply to Nationals. Any changes to class must be reported to SKA Tournament administrators PRIOR to Fishing Day 1.

A team entered in Small Boat Class whose vessel is determined to exceed the Small Boat Class length limit will be moved to Open Class for Championship scoring. Subject to all other eligibility requirements, its accepted fish will remain eligible for Open Class Championship awards and any all-team TWTs the team properly entered.

The team will be ineligible for Small Boat Class awards and Small Boat-specific TWTs. Small Boat-specific TWT entry fees will be forfeited and will not transfer to an Open Class TWT. No new TWT entry may be made after the entry deadline.

Intentional misrepresentation of a vessel's length or eligibility may result in disqualification and forfeiture of all Championship and TWT winnings.

These provisions apply regardless of when the violation is discovered. The Tournament Director may correct results and require the return of improperly awarded prizes.

Open Class and Small Boat Class teams compete separately for Championship awards and class-specific TWTs. Teams in either class may enter and win TWTs expressly designated as open to all teams. A team may not receive Championship awards in both classes.

COMMUNICATIONS

Official National Championship communications will be sent to Team Captains via text message, phone, emails and/or on https://skanationals.com/.

Tournament officials will monitor and communicate with boats on VHF Channel 68 during check-in.

KINGFISH CALCUTTAS

SKA Nationals competitors may enter optional Kingfish Calcuttas. Details and definitions of each Kingfish Calcutta can be found pages 10-11 of these rules under the heading **Kingfish Calcutta (TWT) Definitions and Payouts**. To qualify for a Kingfish Calcutta, a team must enter the Kingfish Calcutta and any respective fees must be paid in full prior to Fishing Day 1.

CAPTAINS' MEETING

The Captains' Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2026 at the Maritime Education Center - Maritime Museum at Beaufort at approximately 6:00 PM; it will coincide with Divisional Awards and Captains' Party. Each boat should be represented at the Captain's Meeting, although attendance is not mandatory. Each Captain is responsible for knowing any changes that may be announced at the Captain's Meeting. Each Captain is responsible for picking up their assigned boat number card before Fishing Day 1.

Official rules, amendments, schedule changes, and tournament notices will be posted at https://skanationals.com/ and distributed to the Captain's registered contact information by text message and/or email. Each Captain is responsible for providing current contact information and monitoring official notices.

TOURNAMENT

Captains and crew members are responsible for following and adhering to all local, state, and federal fishing and boating laws. This includes having the proper fishing license.

A registration fee is required to participate in the SKA National Championships. The registration fee must be paid in full prior to Fishing Day 1. Once officially registered, **all entry fees are non-refundable.**

IMPORTANT: Final rankings will be determined by the aggregate weight of two kingfish. A team may weigh a maximum of TWO kingfish per Fishing Day. The heaviest TWO kingfish, regardless of day weighed, will count toward the team's aggregate score. If a team only weighs one kingfish, the single fish's weight will be used to determine final rankings.

Two-Fish Aggregate TWTs will use the team's two heaviest accepted fish, or its single accepted fish if only one is weighed. The Four-Fish Aggregate TWT will use all four of a team's accepted fish; however, four fish are not required and aggregate weights will be based on any number of fished weighed up to the maximum of four. All other eligibility and entry requirements apply.

All fish must be caught on rod and reel.

Everyone who fishes in the Championship or assists a team's fishing effort must meet the membership, roster, and acknowledgment requirements in the opening section of these Championship Rules.

All boats must adhere to state of North Carolina recreational bag limits as they pertain to all eligible species. Boats possessing commercial licenses may not utilize them during tournament competition.

All participants must follow the SKA Code of Conduct and demonstrate good sportsmanship throughout the Championship. Cheating, collusion, threats, harassment, unsafe conduct, interference with officials, or other violations of the Rules or Code of Conduct may result in disqualification and forfeiture of awards. The Tournament Director determines the event penalty. The mandatory disqualification for fishing with an ineligible or undeclared participant applies as stated in the opening section.

If a participant receives a ticket for violating any local, state or federal law that team is subject to disqualification at the tournament director's discretion.

Beginning at 7:00 AM on each fishing day, a competing boat may not dock, beach, or otherwise make landfall before completing its fishing for that day, except as permitted under Emergency Assistance and Breakdowns.

Teams presenting fish may dock at the designated tournament weigh-in docks under officials' direction. Such docking and the authorized unloading of fish do not violate this rule. Teams may not unload fish at any other location or transport fish over land.

Teams without fish may return to port after ending their fishing for the day and must report their safe return as required below. Once a team makes landfall, it may not resume tournament fishing that day.

Safety takes priority. Participants must obtain or provide emergency assistance when necessary. A team receiving assistance must notify Tournament Officials as soon as safely practicable and report any towing, landfall, transfer of people or equipment, or other assistance received.

Except during an emergency, no person, bait, fish, equipment, or other item may be transferred between a competing boat and another vessel or shore after 7:00 AM and before the team completes its fishing for that day.

A team receiving a tow, making an emergency landfall, or receiving a transfer during competition is ineligible to score fish for that day. Providing emergency assistance does not, by itself, disqualify the assisting team. Officials may verify the circumstances. Check-in deadlines remain in effect unless officially changed for the field.

Fish presented for scoring must arrive aboard the boat that caught them, under that boat's own power. Fish may not be transferred to another vessel for weigh-in.

All hooks, wire, rigs and/or any other foreign objects must be removed from kingfish eligible for competition.

There will be no feeding and/or stuffing of any kingfish with any baitfish, fish and/or any foreign objects (i.e. ice, weights, etc.). This will result in immediate disqualification.

The Tournament Director may require any participant to submit to a polygraph examination and/or sign an affidavit concerning compliance with tournament rules. SKA may withhold awards pending completion of required examinations and review.

Participants must cooperate with scheduling and appear at the time and location designated by SKA. Refusal or failure to appear without an explanation accepted by the Tournament Director will result in team disqualification and forfeiture of Championship and TWT winnings.

An inconclusive examination may require further examination or investigation. The Tournament Director will determine the resulting eligibility or disciplinary action after reviewing the examination and available evidence. Any ruling is subject to the published protest procedure.

WEATHER

In the event that weather conditions arise that are deemed unsafe for the average registered boat by the tournament officials, the tournament may be called off for that day. No refunds will be made in the event of cancellation. It is expressly understood that the permitting of fishing by tournament officials does not ensure the safety of registered anglers or any other occupants of their vessels. Captains, anglers and all other members of registered boats must determine in their own judgment whether to fish under the given conditions based on factors including but not limited to the seaworthiness of their boat and their own seamanship.

November 20 and 21, 2026, are the scheduled fishing days. November 19 and 22 are alternate fishing days. The Tournament Director may activate an alternate day, cancel a fishing day, or revise the schedule because of weather or unsafe conditions.

WEIGN-IN / SCALES

Scales Open at 3:00 PM Fishing Day 1 and 3:00 PM Fishing Day 2 at the Maritime Education Center - Maritime Museum in Beaufort, NC.

Boats MUST be checked in with a tournament official by **VHF Radio Channel 68** no later than **4:30** pm on **Day 1** and **4:00** pm on **Day 2**.

If VHF communication fails, the team must reach the designated check-in vessel and obtain an official's acknowledgment by the deadline. That acknowledgment satisfies the radio requirement when equipment failure prevents radio contact

All boats with fish to weigh must be visually checked in by displaying their boat number at the location designated by the tournament committee (just off the US Coast Guard base at Fort Macon; look for the TowBoat US check-in vessel) no later than **4:30** pm on **Day 1** and **4:00** pm on **Day 2**. **Teams must declare if they have a fish to weigh at boat check in.**

Specific check-in instructions will be updated and/or announced at Captain's Meeting.

Teams that do **NOT** have a fish to weigh-in **MUST** check in with a tournament official to announce they have made it back in safely. Anglers can call or text **704-807-8265** and please reference your **team number** and **team name**.

SKA may report overdue or unaccounted-for vessels to the Coast Guard or other appropriate authorities.

All fish must be brought to the tournament headquarters by boats catching same under its own power. Fish must be unloaded at designated docks only. Fish cannot be transported over land.

The tournament committee reserves the right to inspect any boat entered in competition, including an on-board inspection.

Teams cannot touch land until their fish has been off loaded at weigh-in.

All king mackerel submitted for weigh-in must be at a minimum of 10 lbs. to count for points and caught on tournament day during competition hours.

Fish must be fresh, edible, and otherwise eligible under these Rules. Ordinary hook marks, normal gaff wounds incurred during landing, and healed injuries do not by themselves make a fish ineligible.

A fish may be rejected if damage sustained before or during capture significantly impaired its fighting ability, or if its condition prevents officials from reliably determining eligibility. The Weigh Master determines fish acceptance, subject to the published protest procedure.

Teams will be weighed in the order they are checked in.

Fish being weighed in the tournament will be inspected by a tournament official for all signs of cheating.

For single fish Kingfish Calcuttas, in the event that two or more king mackerel are the same weight, the winner shall be determined by the earliest weigh-in time.

In the event that two or more teams rank with the same aggregate weight, the winner shall be determined by the first team to achieve that weight according to weigh-in time and date.

The Weigh Master's rulings on fish acceptance and recorded weights are final for the Championship, subject to the published protest procedure. Posted results remain provisional until certified by the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may issue an official correction under "Tournament Officials' Decisions Are Final."

The winning fish and all fish entered and/or donated become the exclusive property of the tournament.

PAYOUTS

Published payouts are based on 100 Open Class boats and 25 Small Boat Class boats. Payouts will decrease in percentage equivalent to the difference between 100 boats for Open Class/25 boats for Small Boat Class and actual entries. For instance, 75 Open Class entries will decrease payouts by 25%. Conversely, 125 Open Class entries will increase payouts by 25%. 90% of all entry fees (minus credit card processing fees) go toward Open Class and Small Boat Class payouts.

KINGFISH CALCUTTA (TWT) DEFINITIONS AND PAYOUTS

50/30/20 Split TWTs:

Open Class Big Fish TWT - $100

Small Boat Big Fish TWT - $100

Big Fish TWT - $250

High Roller TWT - $1,000
Big 40 TWT - $100 (Closest to 40lbs)
2-Fish Aggregate TWT - $250
4-Fish Aggregate TWT - $500

Winner Take All (WTA) TWTs:
High Roller 2-Fish Aggregate WTA TWT - $1,000
Super Pot 2-Fish Aggregate WTA TWT - $5,000

50/30/20 Split TWTs pay 50% of pot to first place, 30% of pot to second place and 20% of pot to third place for TWTs with 10 or more entrants. For TWTs with 9 or fewer entrants, 100% of pot will be paid to first place. SKA retains a percentage of all TWT pots. Should only two teams rank in any 50/30/20 Split TWT, 60% of pot will be paid to first place, 40% of pot will be paid to second place. Should only one team rank, 100% of pot will be paid to first place. A team can not hold more than one ranking in any single TWT category; in that rare circumstance, the next ranking team(s) will move up.

Winner Take All (WTA) TWTs pay 100% of pot to first place. SKA retains a percentage of all TWT pots.

Should only one team enter any single TWT category, that team's TWT entry fee will be refunded at 100% within 10 business days after Fishing Day 2.

Open Class Big Fish – Heaviest single fish weighed by an Open Class team ANY Fishing Day.
Small Boat Big Fish – Heaviest single fish weighed by a Small Boat Class team ANY Fishing Day.
Big Fish – Heaviest single fish weighed by ANY team on ANY Fishing Day.
High Roller TWT – Heaviest single fish weighed by ANY team on ANY Fishing Day.
Big 40 TWT – Single fish weighing closest to 40lbs (over or under) by ANY team on ANY Fishing Day. (All weighed fish are eligible, even if the fish is not one of the team's two

championship fish.) Ranking is determined by the smallest absolute difference between the accepted fish's recorded weight and 40.00 pounds. Fish equally distant above and below 40.00 pounds are tied. Ties will be broken by the earliest official weigh-in date and time.

2-Fish Aggregate TWT – Heaviest two-fish aggregate weight of ANY team. Single fish count toward ranking.

4-Fish Aggregate TWT – Heaviest four-fish aggregate weight of ANY team. One to four weighed fish count toward ranking.

High Roller 2-Fish Aggregate Winner Take All – Heaviest two-fish aggregate weight of ANY team. Single fish count toward ranking.

Super Pot 2-Fish Aggregate Winner Take All – Heaviest two-fish aggregate weight of ANY team. Single fish count toward ranking.

PROTESTS

All protests concerning the determination of tournament prize winners shall be made to the Tournament Director in person no later than **fifteen minutes** after the last fish has been weighed and shall be accompanied by $500 cash. **Emails or text messages sent without required in-person protest and fee will not be considered.**

ANY AND ALL PROTESTS WILL BE ADDRESSED THROUGH THE TEAM CAPTAIN OR CO-CAPTAIN ONLY

In the event that a protest is upheld by the tournament, the $500 cash deposit will be returned.

Any disqualifications will result in forfeit of winnings and may result in expulsion from the Southern Kingfish Association. This protest procedure is the sole internal process for contesting a Championship ruling. The Tournament Director's decision on a timely protest is final and binding for the Championship, with no further internal appeal. Expiration of the protest period does not limit the Tournament Director's authority to correct results or act on later-discovered ineligibility, fraud, or other rule violations.

RELEASE

By registering for the tournament, all captains, anglers and occupants of their boat hereby consent that tournament officials may use without payment or restriction, any photographs, video or interviews in which he or she may appear for any purpose whatsoever, including but not limited to resale, advertising and promotional material.

ADMINISTRATIVE

All winnings over $600 will receive an IRS 1099 Form, and the winnings will be made out to the individual or company listed on the W9 Form.

Applicable law governs. These Championship Rules control the conduct and administration of the 2026 SKA National Championship. The applicable SKA Membership and Angling Rules and SKA Code of Conduct also apply. If an SKA provision conflicts with these Championship Rules, these Championship Rules control for this event. Decisions by authorized Tournament Officials are final and binding for the Championship, subject to the published protest procedure and applicable law.

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Last revised November 18, 2026 8:30 PM