



## 2024 UNITED STATES NATIONAL SPEARFISHING CHAMPIONSHIPS

*Sanctioned by the Underwater Society of America (USOA) - member of  
World Underwater Federation (CMAS) and United States Olympic Committee (USOPC)*



Host Club: **Triton Freedivers**

Date: **July 15 - 19, 2024**

Location: **Islamorada, FL**

Prepared by Joe Fernandez – President of Triton Freedivers

**Contact:** Joe Fernandez 305-562-1944 [jfernandez@fendzusa.com](mailto:jfernandez@fendzusa.com)

Experience the excitement of the 2024 US National Spearfishing Championships, where skilled participants showcase their underwater prowess in thrilling action-packed battles. Witness the best spearfishers from across the country compete for the coveted title, showcasing their precision, agility, and endurance. Immerse yourself in the world of spearfishing and be captivated by the intense battles unfolding beneath the surface. Don't miss out on this prestigious event – reserve your spot now and be part of the adrenaline-fueled spectacle!

[Click here to Register](#)

### **Location:**

Islamorada, FL.

This location was chosen because of its abundance of fish, extensive public artificial reef program, relatively shallow diving, and reduced boat traffic.

**Rules are subject to change**

### **Competition:**

The tournament will be a 2-day tournament (Wednesday & Thursday July 17 & 18) with 6 hours of diving and ½ hour travel times at both the beginning and end of the dive time. The tournament days may be moved later in the week or reduced to one day in case of bad weather.

## Schedule of Events

### Monday July 15th, 2024

- 7pm ..... **Mandatory Competitor's Captains Meeting**  
Location: Islamorada, FL (exact location to be determined)  
Meeting attendance is **MANDATORY** by at least one team member, but it's highly recommended that all competitors attend.  
Boat Observers will be assigned at the meeting.
- 8:00pm ..... **National Competitive Committee Meeting**
- 9:00pm..... Meeting will adjourn.

### Wednesday July 17, 2024..... **National Championship Tournament Day 1**

- 7:00am ..... Roll call, assembly, and sign in at Islamorada, FL (exact location TBD)
- 7:30am ..... Competitors and observers briefing.
- 7:45am..... Invocation
- 8:00am ..... Boats allowed to leave Islamorada and proceed to the sea buoy.
- 8:30am ..... Start of ½ hour travel time. All boats at sea buoy will start at sound of horn.
- 9:00am ..... Official dive time begins.
- 3:00pm ..... Official dive time ends.
- 3:30pm ..... All boats must be inside of sea buoy when horn blows ending tournament.
- 4:00pm ..... All divers must be back at boat ramp and checked in with a tournament official.
- 5:00pm ..... Weigh-in begins.

### Thursday July 18, 2024 ..... **National Championship Tournament Day 2**

- 7:00am ..... Roll call, assembly, and sign in at Islamorada, FL (exact location TBD)
- 7:30am ..... Competitors and observers briefing.
- 7:45am..... Invocation.
- 8:00am ..... Boats allowed to leave Islamorada and proceed to the sea buoy.
- 8:30am ..... Start of ½ hour travel time. All boats at sea buoy will start at sound of horn.
- 9:00am ..... Official dive time begins.
- 3:00pm ..... Official dive time ends.
- 3:30pm ..... All boats must be inside of sea buoy when horn blows ending tournament.
- 4:00pm ..... All divers must be back at boat ramp and checked in with a tournament official.
- 5:00pm ..... Weigh-in begins.

### Friday July 19th, 2024.....**National Championship Awards Banquet**

- 12pm – 4pm ..... **Awards Banquet** Location: Islamorada, FL (exact location TBD)

### Diving Conditions:

Visibility            30-100 feet typical

<u>Temperature</u>	78-84 degrees but can get thermoclines on bottom in summer down to low 75s.
<u>Depth</u>	20-65 feet average but tournament zone goes out to 150 feet.
<u>Seas</u>	Tournament Day(s) will be moved if seas over 4-5' and/or small craft advisory.
<u>Current</u>	0 to 3 knots, usually slight but can be stronger deeper and further south in zone.
<u>Tides</u>	3 feet.
<u>Bottom</u>	Reef, sandy bottom, hard and soft coral, and abundant public artificial reefs.

## **Fish List**

### **FWC will be present**

*(Rules and fish list will be updated with any new regulations and/or by USOA director up to captains meeting)*

20 fish maximum, 1 point per pound + 1 point per fish with 25 point maximum per fish. In addition to the 20 fish aggregate, lionfish are worth 1 point each, up to maximum of 10 fish.

Local and visiting teams are highly encouraged to bring their own knowledgeable observer.

### **Grouper**

Grouper - black or gag x1 (24" total length)

Grouper - red up to x3 (20" total length)

\*Total aggregate 3 grouper - only 1 can be black/gag.

**Snapper** - x10 (5 maximum per species)

Snapper - mutton (18" total length)

Snapper - mangrove, dog, schoolmaster, yellowtail, lane, mahogany, cubera\* (12" total length)

\*Allowed 2 cubera over 30" per diver or vessel per day, whichever is less - included in 10 snapper total aggregate

### **Jacks**

Amberjack x1 (28" fork)

Other Jacks – yellow, almaco, x 5 (16" total length)

### **Mackerel**

King x2 (24" fork)

Spanish/Cero x5 (12" fork)

### **All Other Species**

Cobia x1 (36" fork, max 2 per vessel) Since only two per vessel, we will vote at captains meeting.

Hogfish x1 (16" fork)

Porgy - any species x 5 (12" total length)

Rainbow runner x 5 (16" total length)

Triggerfish - gray/ocean x5 (12" fork)

Margate white x 2 (12" total length)

### **Bonus**

Lionfish x 10 (1 point per fish, any size)

### **Disqualifications:**

If a diver brings more than 20 fish to the table, the largest fish will be disallowed until only 20 fish remain on the table. Also, if the total count of any species is exceeded, the largest fish in that category will be disallowed until the maximum number is met. All legal possession limits must be adhered to. Any violation of State or Federal law will result in automatic disqualification of the diver. Every diver must possess a State of Florida Saltwater fishing license. Fish must be iced down and kept separated (separate coolers, stringers, etc.) while on the boat during tournament. Fish appearing not fresh or improperly handled will be disqualified. Fish reaching the measuring table in such condition that their original size is in doubt shall result in disqualification of either the individual diver or the entire team, at the discretion of the Meet Committee. Chumming and flashers are not allowed. Fish may not be upgraded. Once a fish is on the boat, it stays on the boat! Team members may help each other land fish but no other help is allowed between teammates - including no sharing/trading of catch. No loaded spearguns allowed on the boat. All guns must be loaded and unloaded in the water.

### **Points & Scoring:**

Entered fish will be donated to the Men's & Women's World Team and local Florida Keys charity TBD.

Each diver will receive one point per fish and one point per pound up to a maximum of 24 pounds per fish for a maximum score of 25 points per fish. Any fish over 24 pounds will only count as 25 points. Plus, Lionfish bonus of 10 points (1 point per lionfish). Scoring shall be calculated by percent (%) of first place individual's score for each diver on each day and then both day's percentages will be added together for a total 2-day score. The converted percent scores will also be used to determine Team standings. The exact method used is the same one in place to determine USOA's National Team for the World Championships. (For Club 1, 2 & 3 placement, it will be determined by last day club aggregate score)

### **Observer:**

Local and visiting teams are highly encouraged to bring their own knowledgeable observer. Observers should be intimately familiar with FL fishing laws and be knowledgeable about spearfishing in general - to best protect their team's interests. Triton Freedivers reserves the right to assign observers in the event a team cannot provide one. Observers are encouraged to be present at the competitor's meeting and will be

assigned to a team then. Observers will receive a special package for \$50.00 that includes tournament shirt, awards banquet entry and 20 raffle tickets. This package is also available for team boat captains.

### **Protest:**

In the event of a protest, protester must submit protest in writing within ½ hour of completion of weigh-in (preferably earlier!) along with \$50.00. The \$50.00 protest fee will be refunded if the protest is upheld. One representative from each Council/Club present at the weigh-in will have a vote on the protest committee along with any USOA officers present. The National Director will only vote in a tie. Any decision of the protest committee is final. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and is grounds for the immediate disqualification of a diver or entire team.

For more information, please refer to: USOA Skindiving Rules (October 1, 2022) and USOA Standardized Competitive Rules (October 1, 2022).

### **Eligibility:**

Competitors must represent a USOA Club or Council in good standing which has been in existence at least 3 months prior to the National Championships (May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024) and must be individually registered with USOA at least 30 days prior to the Championships (Friday June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024). Competitors must be citizens or legal residents of the United States of America and must be at least 13 years old.

### **Teams:**

There are 4 team categories: Men's, Women's, Mixed Team and Masters. A Men's Team is made up of 3 men, a Women's Team is made up of 2 women, a Mixed Team is made up of 2 divers - either an adult male with adult female or an adult (male or female) with a minor (male or female ages 13-17 yrs. old), and a Masters Team is made up of 2 divers 55 and older male, female and/or one of each.

### **Trophies:**

All categories: 1st, 2nd & 3<sup>rd</sup> place teams. Individual overall: men and women 1st, 2nd & 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Masters Individual: 1st, 2nd & 3<sup>rd</sup> place (you can be of Master's age (55) but choose not to compete in the Master's Division). Top rookie and top junior trophies. Top Clubs: 1st, 2nd & 3<sup>rd</sup> place, based on aggregate club points. USOA Spearfishing Athlete of the Year Award. Perpetual USOA US National Championship Trophy – Churchill Trophy (Men) Kate Miller Trophy (Women). Largest fish trophies for the following: Grouper, Mutton, Yellowtail, Mahogany, Cubera, Dog and mackerel (Spanish, cero or king).

### **Entry Fees:**

The entry fee is \$150.00 per competitor and includes a tournament T-shirt, awards banquet, tournament flag, and 20 raffle tickets and other goodies. All are welcome to attend the awards banquet on Wednesday July 17<sup>th</sup> from 12pm to 4pm at a cost of \$50.00 per person and includes 20 raffle tickets (for participating observers and team boat captains, it also includes a tournament shirt). Tournament T-shirts are \$25.00 each, Tournament Flags are \$20 each while supplies last. Children 13 and under are free (limited seating).

**The deadline to register and/or receive a refund for the 2024 US Nationals is Friday June 7th.**

**After June 7th, the price goes to \$170.00 for competitors and must be approved by USOA National Director. In addition, team and/or individual appearance on tournament program is not guaranteed. In addition, there may be no banquet/awards tickets available for additional guests.**

***Registration, awards banquet, T-shirts and flag purchases will be online- Link will be provided soon.***

### **Zone 1:**

The Nationals zone 1 is bounded on the North by Molasses Reef Buoy C, the South Alligator Reef Buoy B, the West by land and or 3-mile no spearfishing boundary (no diving in the Intracoastal Waterway), and the East by the 150-foot depth mark. It is exactly 18.24 miles long. The tournament will launch out Islamorada, FL at location TBD. There are areas that do not allow spearfishing, please make sure you learn the boundaries well, FWC will be present. They are usually marked with yellow buoys but don't count 100% on the buoys being there. All boats must have GPS tracking on, and the track must be viewable at the end of day. If there is a question as to a Team's location and they cannot prove their location through their track for the day, the Team faces possible disqualification at either the discretion of Triton Freedivers or the Protest Committee. **No spearing of fish is allowed in the Nationals zone 1 or 2 starting June 15th, 2024.**



### **Zone 2:**

The Nationals zone 2 is bounded on the North by Alligator Reef Buoy B, the South Tennessee Reef Light, the West by land and or 3-mile no spearfishing boundary (no diving in the Intracoastal Waterway), and the East by the 150-foot depth mark. It is exactly 12 miles long. The tournament will launch out Islamorada, FL at location TBD. There are areas that do not allow spearfishing, please make sure you learn the boundaries well, FWC will be present. They are usually marked with yellow buoys but don't count 100% on the buoys being there. All boats must have GPS tracking on, and the track must be viewable at the end of day. If there is a question as to a Team's location and they cannot prove their location through their track for the

day, the Team faces possible disqualification at either the discretion of Triton Freedivers or the Protest Committee. **No spearing of fish is allowed in the Nationals zone 1 or 2 starting June 15th, 2024.**



### Artificial Reefs:

The State of Florida has an extensive public artificial reef program. Artificial reef GPS numbers and other information can be accessed from the following website:

<https://myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/artificial-reefs/>

### Boat Rental & Accommodations:

There are plenty of boat rentals in the area. Please see google. Any special arrangements will be published on the tournament web site (tournament web site to be published soon). For accommodation, we suggest Airbnb and bookings.

Triton Freedivers is honored and excited to be hosting their 1<sup>st</sup> ever Nationals. We sincerely hope everyone has a great time and enjoys both the tournament zones and the surrounding area of The Florida Keys. We wish all the divers the best of luck and a fun and safe Nationals! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joe Fernandez  
USA 2024 Nationals Tournament Director & President of Triton Freedivers  
305-562-1944  
Jfernandez@fendzusa.com