

OPERATION LIONFISH RULES:

TEAM REGISTRATION

- Registration will be available on the Operation Lionfish website (<https://www.warfighterscuba.org/operation-lionfish/>) through an online registration system.
- All participants must read and understand the tournament rules before registering. Payment is due at the time of registration. Payment and completed registration shall constitute a representation by each participant that he/she has read and fully understands the tournament rules and that he/she will abide by such rules and decisions of the tournament committee.
- Non-refundable registration fees are \$50 per participant and \$100 per Team. Each registrant will receive a tournament event shirt. Shirts can be picked up by the participant at the Captain's meeting. If you are not attending the Captain's meeting, you can pick up your shirts at the awards ceremony. Shirts will not be mailed to participants after the event. Thanks to a generous sponsor, current military and veterans can register for the derby for free with qualifying proof of service.
- To qualify for prizes and awards, participants must register, pay, and show proper identification. All applicants must register completely by 6:45 pm Friday, June 13, 2025.
- Teams will be limited to 2 persons, though more than one team may be present on the same private or charter boat. Additionally, teams may split onto multiple boats. Each participant must declare a team name upon registration. Once registration is closed, teams are locked. Teams may not substitute participants during the tournament for any reason and will be subject to disqualification.
- Operation Lionfish is a two (2) diver team tournament; submission should reflect that.
- Commercial harvest is greatly appreciated, but will not qualify.
- Team names must not be offensive in nature. "Offensive" will be determined by the Tournament committee and may require teams to modify their names at any time.

SAFETY FIRST!

- It can't be said enough, no fish or prize is worth your life.
- Plan your dive – dive your plan.
- Check your air consumption and if applicable, decompression times **OFTEN**.
- Reports of any unsafe diving practices shall disqualify the participant. **NO Exceptions!**
- Be mindful of the reef and other marine life. Do not damage the reef in any way.
- Protective gloves should be worn when handling lionfish. Participants are encouraged to carry a safety kit for first aid purposes.

MANDATORY CAPTAIN'S MEETING

- The mandatory captain's meeting will be held: Friday, June 13, 2025 @ 7:00 pm.
 - Luigi di Roma Italian Ristorante, 718 S Federal Hwy, Deerfield Beach, FL 33441
 - Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1APtNc8ATm/>
- A designated representative from each team must check in at the official Captain's safety meeting for rule changes and tournament instructions. The Captain's meeting will also be livestreamed on Facebook Live on the <https://www.facebook.com/share/1APtNc8ATm/>
- The team representative must either be present in person or comment on the Facebook page that they are watching the livestream event.
- Registered teams that do not check in at the mandatory captain's meeting will not be eligible for participation.

ACCEPTABLE FISH

- Lionfish (*Pterois volitans/miles*) eligible for entry may only be taken during tournament hours. No previously caught or frozen lionfish will be allowed; however, please keep all lionfish on ice.
- Only legal means of capture in areas that use those gear types will be allowed. **All existing federal, state, and local laws must be followed, and all state and Federal laws will be strictly enforced.**
- Participants should be aware of all recreational saltwater rules and regulations that may apply in the State of Florida. Learn more at: <https://myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/recreational/>.
- Lionfish may be taken by spear, hand net, slurp gun, or hook and line. No chemicals, traps or other collecting mechanisms are allowed. Please mind the reef and the surrounding environment.
- All lionfish must be in whole condition (no missing heads or tails). The largest and smallest fish will be determined by the total length of the fish in millimeters, measuring from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. If the tail is damaged, the scientifically recognized standard length may be used as determined by the weighmaster.
- Lionfish caught during the tournament may be donated for sampling, research, for consumption during the event, or to benefit Warfighter Scuba. Fish must be preserved on ice. All other lionfish not donated must be disposed of properly by the individual capturing the lionfish.
- Protective gloves should be worn when handling lionfish. Participants are encouraged to carry an appropriate first aid kit specific for Lionfish stings.
- After final submission details are taken, you may cut the tails for the FWC Reef Rangers Lionfish Challenge (<https://fwcreefrangers.com/lionfish-challenge/>). Participants are responsible for following the tournament rules and submissions.
- For each donated Lionfish, the Team will receive a raffle ticket.

TOURNAMENT HOURS

- Teams may start from any waters where lionfish are legal to harvest. Tournament Hours are first light, Saturday, June 14, 2025, until Saturday, June 14, 2025 at 5:00 pm when the scoring station closes. All fish must be present at the scoring station before 5:00 pm on Saturday, June 14, 2025. Any fish not present at the scoring station by the designated time will not be counted for the tournament.
- All waters are eligible for tournament harvest. The tournament shall take place regardless of weather conditions. Captains make their own decisions about whether to venture out.

SCORING STATION HOURS

- Lionfish may only be taken during tournament hours, and the fish must be presented to the scoring station. The scoring station will be located at Luigi di Roma Italian Ristorante, 718 S Federal Hwy, Deerfield Beach, FL 33441. The Scoring Station will open on Saturday, June 14, 2025 from 2:00 – 5:00 pm. All fish must be present at the scoring station by Saturday, June 14, 2025, 5:00 pm to be counted.

SCORING STATION PROCEDURES

- All fish must be present at the scoring station by Saturday, June 14, 2025, 5:00 pm.
- Teams must have lionfish in coolers and adequately iced.
- Team captain or designee must deliver the coolers to the designated scoring location and check in with the scoring station staff, who will verify the number of coolers and place tape across the cooler lid indicating the team name and number of coolers associated with the team. Teams need to declare at this time whether lionfish will be donated or kept.
- One (1) raffle ticket will be given for every Lionfish donated.
- It is required that the team captain or designee be present when the fish are being counted and measured by scoring station staff. If there is a backup at the scoring station, the team captain or designee does not have to stand next to their coolers, but stay close enough where scoring station staff can locate them quickly.
- Scoring station staff will remove the lionfish from the cooler, measure and record the total length of each fish according to current scientific established methods.
- An overall count, minimum and maximum size will be recorded by the scoring staff on the team scoresheet and submitted.
- If there is any discrepancy over measurement or count, the team captain should bring it to the weighmaster immediately while the fish are still at the scoring station table.
- **Decisions of the weighmaster and rules committee are final.**
- Teams are required to separate the fish they believe to be their largest and smallest Lionfish. Separation can include, but is not limited to: water bottles,

zip-lock bags, and trash bags. These fish should then be placed inside the team's coolers. Check-in staff will denote the cooler that includes fish marked separately. These fish will be measured before the rest of the team's fish to expedite the measuring/counting process and provide a cross-reference to scoring procedures.

TOURNAMENT AWARDS

- Only one winning entry per team will be allowed in EACH category. In the event of a tie, the winning team or individual will be determined by the earliest check-in of their lionfish at the scoring station.
- Cash awards will be presented to the team according to the following schedule:
 - **Scuba Per Winning Team**
 - Most:
 - 1st: \$500
 - 2nd: \$300
 - 3rd: \$100
 - Biggest:
 - 1st: \$400
 - 2nd: \$200
 - Smallest:
 - 1st: \$300
 - 2nd: \$200
 - **Freedive Per Winning Team**
 - Most:
 - 1st: \$400
 - 2nd: \$200
 - Biggest:
 - 1st: \$400
 - 2nd: \$200
 - Smallest:
 - 1st: \$300
 - 2nd: \$200
- Teams that wish to donate their catch may do so for the raffle prize drawing. One lionfish equals one raffle ticket during the tournament.
- Raffle prizes will be drawn randomly until all prizes have been distributed.

PAYMENT OF CASH AWARDS

- All cash prizes will be awarded in cash.
- Each team must designate a representative payee to receive payment of all team cash awards.
- The Tournament accepts no responsibility for the division of any cash awards between team members.

ADHERENCE TO TOURNAMENT RULES AND PROTESTS

- The Lionfish tournament is an honor system tournament with all registrants being responsible for compliance with the rules.
- Any violation of these rules resulting in disqualification will result in forfeiture of entry fees, prizes, and cash awards, and at the sole discretion of the tournament officials, will be prohibited from entry in any future tournaments.
- If non-compliance with tournament rules is suspected, the tournament committee reserves the right to conduct a polygraph. Without a successful polygraph, the team will forfeit all prizes.
- All protests must be presented in writing, and the team captain must deposit \$250 with the tournament committee no later than 15 minutes after the results are posted on the tournament day.
- The tournament committee will refer to the submitted count sheets for any protests relating to count or size. If teams are not present during the counting, they forfeit their ability to protest the accuracy of the count sheets.
- Poor sportsmanship will be grounds for disqualification from this tournament.

PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES

- All entrants agree to allow tournament officials to use participants' names, awards, and photos for any media and promotional purposes.

ALL DECISIONS OF THE TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS ARE FINAL.