



MWT DETROIT RIVER RECAP – APRIL 11-12TH, 2026

The Michigan Walleye Tour (MWT) kicked off its 31st season April 11 and 12 on the Detroit River, launching out of the Lake Erie Metro Park. A full field of 150 boats entered this year all competing for a total purse of \$67,525.00 with a check for \$12,000.00 going to the winners.

While the Detroit River is the traditional opening tournament of the MWT dating back to the 1990's, it is different every time the anglers visit. Water color, water temperature, walleye behavior and other factors make the Detroit River a tough challenge each year, depending on what the anglers are faced with.

Pre-Fishing Set the Stage – Until it all Changed

Pre-fishing was fantastic for most of the field. Consistent weather patterns, warming waters, perfect water color and clarity put fish on the bite. Pre-spawn females were being caught all over the river and anglers were putting together patterns that could produce five fish baskets over 40 lbs.! It was setting up for an amazing tournament with lots of big fish and big baskets expected, but.....

As always on the Detroit River mother nature must be heard from and this year, she decided to muddy up the river terribly on Friday night. Teams who went to sleep Friday night thinking about 40 lb. baskets were snapped back to reality when they saw the water color on Saturday morning. Some teams panicked, some teams stayed with their original plan and some teams started all over, coming up with new plans on the fly to adapt to the dirty water. Walleyes – and big ones – were still around, but the dirty water made it hard for them to see lures the anglers were presenting.

Day One: Big Weights Despite Tough Conditions

If one thing has been proven over the seasons, it is that the anglers on the Michigan Walleye Tour are good – really good – at adapting to conditions and catching walleyes when they count. At the end of day one, the team of **Tyler Wolan, Alex Koncz and Mike Peters** were on top of the leader board with an amazing 37.44 lb. weight. During the day, 17 teams weighed in over 30 lbs. Big fish for Day 1 was caught by the team of **Chris Allred, James Allred and Chad Walters**, bringing a 9.76 lb. beauty to the stage.

Second place on day 1 was secured by **Josh Gordon, Crystal Dittenbir and Keith Grear** with 34.04 lbs. Holding down third place was Fred Wallace, Brian Eaton and Tylor Wallace, weighing in with 33.74 lbs. Looking down the leaderboard, 20th place was only a little over 8 lbs. from first, just one big bite on the Detroit River, so the day one leaders would need to follow up with a good day two. At the end of day one, 702 fish weighing 3275 lbs. crossed the stage: a great result in tough conditions.

Day Two: The Best Adjustments Decide the Winners

As day two dawned, the water started to clean up a little and anglers had a better idea of what the walleyes were doing with the changing conditions, and while the number of 30 lb. baskets dropped to 8, the average basket was bigger on day two. As the weigh-in headed toward the end, the team of **Cory Palacio, Mark Manyen and Brody Herbert** were in the **Skeeter Boats "Hot Seat"**, hoping to hang on to the lead as the top 10 teams from day 1 hit the stage. It didn't take long for another team to claim the hot seat as day one 9th place team of **Philip Maher, Pete Pappas and Dave Scroggins** brought in a day two weight of 33.51 lbs. grabbing the lead with only 8 teams remaining to weigh.

Team after team tried but 7 teams could not knock off our leaders of **Maher, Pappas and Scroggins**. That left only one team with a chance to overtake them, day one leaders **Wolan, Koncz and Peters** who knew their weight was going to be lower than day one, but did they have enough to pull out the win? The scales settled in at 28.76 lbs. giving them a two-day total of 66.20 lbs. and the victory by 1.27 lbs.! The difference maker for the tournament was the day two big fish, and the biggest fish of the weekend, that pushed the scale to 9.89 lbs. Emotion filled the stage as **Wolan, Koncz and Peters** finally won the event they were working hard for and have been close to winning several times, only to always fall a little short, but today they were the Champions!

The winners, **Josh Wolan, Alex Koncz and Mike Peters** used every trick they learned over countless hours on the river to pull off the victory. On day one they trolled crankbaits behind inline planer boards and ran handlines in shallow water, focusing on 8-10 feet in the dirty water. On day two they jigged 3/4 oz jigs and plastics in natural colors in 10-16' of water near steep drops. Finding weed cover on the bottom was a key to finding the better fish, including the 9.89 lb. beast that was caught around noon.

The second-place team of **Philip Maher, Pete Pappas and Dave Scroggins** jigged all weekend in 10-20 feet of water with jigs and plastics designed by Pappas. Antifreeze jig heads and "vampire" plastics took most of the fish. They fished 3/4 oz jigs, looked for stained water and concentrated on a slow lift/drop cadence to entice finicky walleyes. Their day two weight of 33.51 lbs. was anchored by an 8.65 lb. big fish.

Coming from 11th place after day 1 to grab third in the tournament was **Cory Palacio, Mark Manyen and Brody Herbert** finished the event with 64.87 lbs. just .06 lbs. out of second place. They jigged in the dirty water on day one in 8-14' of water using 1/2 and 5/8 oz jigs tipped with Finesse Minos and thin, worm shaped plastics. Using a very slow jigging motion and pausing at the top paid off. In the dirty water they focused on using dark colored plastics, and when the sun came out, they switched to plastics with glitter to create more flash. Time management was one of the keys to their finish, and writing down when the bites were best in each spot during pre-fishing put them in the right place at the right time.

Talking with the top 3 teams, all of them used Forward Facing Sonar in some capacity to help them spot, find and catch fish. The winners used it to locate areas with subtle weed growth on the bottom, and all three teams used it to find the "bumps" on the bottom that were fish laying in shallow water. Fishing where the fish are is always a great plan!

Congratulations to Josh Wolan, Alex Koncz and Mike Peters on well-deserved victory in tough conditions. Being versatile in changing conditions paid off!

Here is a rundown of other awards presented at the MWT Detroit River Event:

- **Big Fish Day 1:** Chris Allred, James Allred and Chad Walters 9.76 lbs
- **Big Fish Day 2:** Josh Wolan, Alex Koncz and Mike Peters 9.89 lbs
- **Full Season Team Bonus:** Cory Palacio, Mark Manyen and Brody Herbert 64.87 lbs
- **Church Tackle Bonus:** Dan Mccatty, Brent Elowsky and Ed Dippel 53.73 lbs
- **Lure Lipstick Bonus:** Jason Trapp, Matt Dubs, Kyle Everitt 54.15 lbs

The next stop on the Michigan Walleye Tour is in Linwood, Michigan on May 2-3rd at Linwood Beach Marina. Weigh-in starts at 3pm both days.

You can follow the Michigan Walleye Tour, watch live weigh in and see daily results on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Michiganwalleyetour> and at the website www.michiganwalleyetour.com

The Michigan Walleye Tour is brought to you by Skeeter Boats.