

2023 Michigan Walleye Tour Official Rules and Regulations

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICIAL RULES & SAFETY REGULATIONS:

The following rules and safety regulations will remain unchanged for the year indicated above, except for special tournaments. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to Tournament Officials.

2. TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS:

Tournament Officials shall be comprised of the designated MWT Tournament Director and Tournament Committee members only. In the event of a rule violation, only Tournament Officials may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate including, without limitation, fines, forfeiture of prizes, disqualification and prohibition from participation in future events. Official's decisions shall be final in all matters and will not be subject to appeal. For further information regarding rules violations and protest, refer to Section 23.

A Tournament Official may approach or board your boat at any time for any reason and at any time during the event. Refusal to allow an approved official on board or an effort to impede their work may result in disqualification.

3. SPORTSMANSHIP:

Participants will conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike, courteous, safe, and ethical manner always maintaining professional demeanor in public and in all interaction/communication with Tournament Officials and Volunteers. Any unfavorable conduct, speech, or action via any format (E.g., messaging, social media, phone calls, etc.) by a participant in our efforts to promote sportsmanship, clean waters and conservation are grounds for immediate disqualification.

Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any participant during the event or use of alcohol before you have weighed in will not be tolerated and shall be cause for disqualification. Use of cannabis, in any form, is not permitted during tournament hours or at any tournament event, including, but not limited to, the rules meeting, tournament days, weigh in area or any other area deemed to be a tournament venue.

Any incidents observed during tournament hours should be reported to Tournament Officials for investigation. Any violation of these basic sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. Tournament Officials will have final say in all rulings regarding sportsmanship violations and consequences.

4. PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY:

Upon sign up, it is all the participants responsibility for knowing and abiding by all MWT rules, State, Provincial *and* Local boating, and fishing regulations for all the designated tournament waters. Any change, exception, or addition to the MWT rules as determined necessary by the Tournament Committee, will be communicated as soon as possible and be covered during the Captains meeting prior to the 1st day of the tournament.

All Michigan Walleye Tour (MWT) participants must be active members in good standing of The Saginaw Bay Walleye Club (SBWC) during or prior to registration for your first event entry of the year (See Section 8). All SBWC memberships expire on 3/31 each calendar year. Memberships are non-transferable and non-refundable.

Any person under the age of 18 must have the signature of a parent or legal guardian on the liability release. No persons under age 12 may participate without explicit MWT Committee approval and must have a parent or legal guardian present during all tournament events.

Teams may enter up to three participants per team and no "partner TBD" or unknown partner names are allowed. Any use of TBD or unknown will be considered a blank entry.

Eligible partner changes may be allowed up until the close of on- site registration/Captains meeting but note, changes in teams may affect season point totals used to qualify for Championship if made after first event of the year (See Section 22). Each team must complete, sign, and submit an official entry form with payment online by the due dates.

During any "official" tournament day, no participant or team may use a boat unless they have documented proof of boating liability coverage in reasonable amounts on that boat. Proof of insurance must be always with the boat and available upon request by Tournament Director. Random checks may be conducted at events.

The MWT Board and MWT Tournament Committee reserve the right to refuse participation, (including championship/special events), to anyone for any reason including, but not limited to, suspension, disqualification or banning from this or other events, criminal behavior, violation of game laws, or any unsportsmanlike behavior at any time (See Section 3) that would reflect dishonorably on our sport.

5. SAFETY:

Safe boating conduct must be always conducted and observed by all participants. Participants must always abide by all local navigation laws and avoid restricted areas. All participants are required and agree to wear a Coast Guard-approved type III or greater CHEST TYPE personal floatation device anytime the boat is above trolling speed.

Tournament Officials may restrict tournament waters and reserve the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of inclement weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the participants. In the event of lightning, severe weather or any unsafe condition, participants should remove themselves from competition and seek safety or shelter until it is safe to continue. Participants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except in case of emergency.

All teams are required to have two (2) participants on a boat to compete. In the event of an emergency, unforeseen circumstance, or Committee decision that only one registered participant is available for a boat, the tournament Committee will try to assist designating a spotter for the boat. It is the team participants responsibility to avoid this circumstance to best of their ability. If a spotter is designated, this is only for safety reasons and the spotter is not able to fish or help in any fishing activity. The tournament participant will be limited to three (3) rods or indicated State, Provincial and Local fishing regulations, whichever is more restrictive.

All MWT qualifying tournaments will have published days of competition, unless delayed, or shortened due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. Any boundaries or restricted zones will be announced at the Captains meeting and may be further altered if needed. Blow days may or may not be added to events at the discretion of Tournament Officials.

In case of any emergency, please contact authorities first (e.g., U.S. Coast Guard, Emergency Medical, etc.) and then contact the MWT Tournament Director at (810) 288-8145 when it is safe to do so.

In the case of an non-emergency boating situation (E.g., engine/boat malfunction, etc.) that requires you to return early or moor boat in a location other than the designated tournament location, contact the Tournament Director at (810) 288-8145 for assistance and direction.

6. BOAT, MOTOR & SAFETY EQUIPMENT:

All tournament boats are required to have in their possession all Coast Guard-required safety equipment, including but not limited to approved type III or greater CHEST TYPE personal flotation devices, a type IV throw cushion, fire extinguisher, distress horn/flag/whistle, and display a boat marker (supplied by MWT). Great Lakes, Canadian border and some other waters tournaments require flares and it is the participants responsibility to understand acceptable types for waters being used.

Tournament boats are required to have a functioning bilge pump.

Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer if required. The horsepower rating of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this plate. Changing or altering standard factory motor parts to increase horsepower over factory rated horsepower is forbidden. Any modifications made to the boat and or equipment that violates U.S. Coast Guard regulations for that vessel will result in disqualification.

All boats are required to have an engine cut-off switch (ECOS) that IMMEDIATELY shuts off the main engine when pulled. This ECOS MUST have engine cut-off switch link (ECOSL) and be attached to the driver anytime the main engine is in operation. A ECOSL is typically a coiled lanyard but may also be an electronic fob serving the same purpose.

In addition, a fully functional marine band radio, fixed mount or portable, is encouraged for safety purposes but not mandatory. Note, this radio is the only source of communication with the official spotter for launch “check out” and “check in” times on tournament days, so it is highly recommended.

The use of binoculars or any other “sight enhancing” device is prohibited.

NO alcoholic beverages, or illegal substances (including cannabis) may be consumed, or in the possession of participants until they have weighed their daily catch, retrieved their official weigh slip, and returned their boat to the trailer or boat slip.

All tournament boats must be cleaned of all harmful exotic aquatic species CLEAN, DRAINED and DRY prior to entering the water and upon departure from infected waters.

7. TACKLE, EQUIPMENT & REGULATIONS:

Participants must possess all necessary fishing licenses and commit to following all State, Provincial *and* Local fishing regulations. Any additional regulations (E.g., reduced possession limit, etc.) deemed necessary by the MWT to assure even competition will be specified at the Captains meeting.

All angling must be done from the boat. Participants are not permitted to leave the boat for any reason regarding the act of fishing, even if to just complete the actions necessary to land a fish successfully.

The MWT will follow all State/Provincial/Local laws regarding the number, limit and size of rods/hooks that can be used, abiding by whichever is more restrictive. HOWEVER, NO sliders, clips, or other removable or detachable “type” lines are permitted to be used. All lines and or baits must originate from and be permanently tied to the one main line coming off of one (1) main reel, per each rod. No lines may be unfastened or able to be unfastened, unclipped, or unsnapped from the one main line to facilitate landing a fish or aiding in landing a fish, all lines must be permanently tied or attached to the one main line coming off of one (1) main reel, per rod. The only exceptions herein are traditional walleye hand line set ups which are allowed. The intent of this rule is clearly to limit detachable lines, sliders, “curtain rings” or other such similar devices, which may result in too many lines in the water at one time per state laws. If ANY set up is in question, the more restrictive interpretation will always be used following all State/Provincial/Local laws. Any questionable homemade multiline sets up should be reviewed by Tournament Officials prior to use and the most restrictive interpretation will always be used.

Teams are limited to using six (6) rods per boat regardless of regulations that allow more due to number of participants present.

Only fish caught on hook and line in a normal and usual manner will be accepted. Usage of live or prepared (dead) bait and artificial lures are permissible in MWT events, except where prohibited by any State, Provincial and/or Local laws in which those regulations would be deemed more restrictive for their waters.

8. REGISTRATION & ENTRY:

When registration opens online, you may enter as many events as you wish. Entry fee is \$550 per team *per event unless otherwise noted* at time of registration. Each event entry deadline is close of business on MONDAY prior to the event.

Online entry registration at michiganwalleyetour.com is the **only** way to enter a MWT event. During entry of first event, the SBWC membership will be verified and if participants are not members, it will be collected (See Section 4) Entries will be accepted based on a first-come, first-served basis until the tournament is deemed full (based on date and time stamp when received at MWT website/office). Once you have entered the tournament you will receive an email confirmation and it is the participants responsibility to confirm and retain receipt of entry.

All entries must submit payment in full for all tournament fees at the time of application. No refunds will be made, nor will credit be extended for any cancellations. Disqualification from a tournament for any reason will result in forfeiture of entry fee. No refunds or credits are extended to teams that choose not to fish due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances.

9. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE, ONSITE REGISTRATION & COMPETITION:

There are no restrictions on how early a team can pre-fish, unless prohibited by State, Provincial and Local boating and fishing regulations. There are no "official" practice days or off-limits days unless otherwise announced in advance for a specific\special event. On the day of onsite registration and mandatory rules meeting (referred to as "Captains meeting"), you must be "off the water" by 3:00 p.m. "Off the water" is defined as boat is at launching location and in process of being loaded/moored or present on trailer. At least one (1) member of each team must sign in and register in person with official MWT staff at the appointed time/place prescribed for onsite registration. At least one participant from the team must fully attend the mandatory Captains meeting for rules and safety information related to each event. If no participant from the team is available to attend due to unforeseen circumstances, then contact the MWT Tournament Director at (810) 288-8145.

During competition, no tournament participant may leave their boat for any reason unless stated allowable in another section of these rules (E.g., emergency). Participants **MUST** stay in their boat, within indicated tournament waters, at all times, beginning with when their boat is launched post pre-

tournament inspection until it has been safely moored at the weigh-in location. Once tournament launch has begun (i.e. typically 7:00 AM), stopping at any location to purchase bait, food, or conduct any other activity not specifically permitted within these rules (E.g. refueling) during tournament hours, whether participants leave the boat or not, is strictly prohibited and cause for immediate disqualification from the event.

10. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:

Tournament waters will be established by the opening of registration and defined on the registration information. Any necessary adjustments (E.g., weather, regulation change, etc.) to tournament waters will be reviewed by the Tournament Officials before each event and changes will be announced at the rules meeting. Each team/participant must obtain this information from the MWT Tournament Officials only.

Only water open to all public fishing will be considered tournament waters and any water closed to public fishing will be closed to tournament participants. Fishing on tournament waters is only permitted within the boundaries defined by the Tournament Officials that are available to the public and accessible by boat except: Any water within tournament boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" established by any State, Provincial and/or Local laws will be off-limits. The removal of any official State, Provincial and/or Local law property or barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited.

Once the Captains meeting is completed, participants are prohibited from fishing except during designated tournament fishing hours. Participants must stay off tournament waters before and after tournament hours except to navigate to and from the check-in site and launch facilities. In the event boat/equipment repairs require a "on water" evaluation/test an MWT Tournament Official or Board member must attend launch and retrieval during the evaluation period. In the unlikely event a boat/equipment requires this, contact to the Tournament Director must be made prior to evaluation.

Also, any live fish release area established by the Tournament Officials will be off-limits and will be announced at the Captains meeting.

11. FISH AND LIMIT INFORMATION:

Walleye, sauger, and saugeye caught on hook and line in a conventional sporting manner (See Section 7) will be accepted at all MWT tournaments.

Only eight (8) fish can be kept per boat on each tournament day and only five (5) fish with a minimum 15" size limit will be utilized for weigh in. Exceeding the tournament catch limit will result in loss of all credit for that day's catch.

Culling of dead fish is strictly prohibited.

The Tournament Officials holds the right to announce and enforce additional and/or more stringent regulations for any event. Any additional specific tournament restrictions, size limits, creel limits and other information will be announced at the Captains meeting.

All fish must be kept in an *aerated* live-well or cooler. Use of stringers, wire fish baskets, boat bags etc. is prohibited.

Any fish mauled, frozen, on a stringer, injected with water or other material to add weight, showing white gills, soft flesh, sunken eyes, or gills that will not bleed may result in disqualification from the tournament and future MWT events at the discretion of the MWT Tournament Officials.

If an external weight is utilized for the purpose of which is to keep fish alive/upright in the live-well, it should be removed before arriving at the bump tank for weigh in. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the event.

12. TOURNAMENT DAY BOAT INSPECTION & IDENTIFICATION:

Each boat **MUST ATTEND** and will be given, prior to each tournament day's start, a live-well, compartment and safety inspection check by a Tournament Official and/or deemed Official Volunteer. During inspection, a boat marker will be provided and, **MUST** remain in or on the boat during tournament hours. The boat marker will be turned in during check-in at the end of each day, typically during the weigh in process. MWT reserves sole discretion to assign boat numbers in any manner.

Boat numbers will be provided during registration at Captains meeting and must be placed on your outboard (or an easily visible location near rear of I/O vessels) prior to arriving for morning inspection. Numbers must always remain on during the tournament.

13. FISH DISCOVERED IN LIVEWELL DURING INSPECTION:

If a MWT fish species (walleye, sauger, saugeye) is found in a boat live-well or cooler during check in inspection and the boat has yet to be launched, the fish MUST be removed from the boat immediately and observed by a Tournament Official.

If a MWT fish species (walleye, sauger, saugeye) is found in any other compartment then one utilized for the maintenance of fish for a tournament, it will be raised to Tournament Director for review and may result in possible disqualification from that event day or entirety of tournament.

14. OFFICIAL CHECK POINT(S):

There shall be an official checkpoint location established for check-out in the morning/ check-in during the afternoon and this point shall be designated at the Captains meeting. At the time of check-out/check-in all competitors and their boats shall be in full compliance with all rules set forth by Tournament Officials and referenced in this document.

At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves to the check-in official and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. It is each team/boats responsibility to know what time they are due in as communicated at the Captains meeting.

Notice: You must check-in with a Tournament Official even if you don't have any scorable fish. Failure to check in at the end of the day could result in a \$50 fine or prohibition from future participation in MWT events.

15. REFUELING:

Boats are permitted to refuel at state certified marina/harbor fuel stations during competition hours. Participants are not allowed to leave the boat for any reason other than to complete fuel payment transaction (only one participant should conduct payment). No other product(s) shall be purchased during a fuel stop, see Section 9 as required.

16. PURCHASING AND/OR BARTERING FISH INFORMATION:

The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is strictly prohibited during tournament days.

17. LATE PENALTY:

Participants who are not at the official safety check-in point as described above at the appointed return time shall lose all credit for that day's catch. This return time will be noted by the check-in official (timekeeper) at the established area (See Section 14). Obtaining acknowledgement by the check-in official for the purpose of timekeeping is solely the responsibility of the participants. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case will a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time". Return time shall be defined as off- plane and past the check-in official & point.

18. PARTICIPANTS MUST REMAIN TOGETHER/BREAKDOWN INSTRUCTIONS:

Participants must not depart the boat to conduct fishing or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Participants must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must always remain in boat except in case of dire emergency if they wish their fish to be counted for the day. In case of break down or emergency (this does not include running out of fuel), in which a team is not able to travel back to the weigh-in site under power, participants should contact Tournament Officials. The only legal way to return for weigh-in without your own power is:

- 1.) By being towed in by a boat operated by another competitor in the event or a designated rescue boat.
- 2.) By one team member transferring their clearly marked fish to another boat as described above and proceeding directly to the weigh in.
- 3.) If a Tournament Official cannot be reached or an Official Tournament boat is not able to assist, the team with mechanical problems may seek assistance from a fellow competitor or any vessel on the water.

This may not be done by phone or transmission on the radio to link up with a particular team. Physically flagging down another boat would be allowed or a radio call that was seeking help from any boat in proximity to return to the weigh-in site. No one in that rescue boat is allowed to fish until after proceeding directly to weigh in site and all parties communicate directly with Tournament Officials. Arriving late, because of offering or needing assistance, even with the aid of a rescue boat, as the towed boat or the towing boat is still late, and all late penalties will apply. No exceptions.

Both parties (the team with boat trouble and team lending assistance) should file separate incident reports with Tournament Officials. Any Team involved in

a break down "Ride In" that involves transferring fish in which either boat/team wins/places high in that event, in the Tournament Officials sole opinion, may be polygraphed (Section 23).

19. SCORING AND WEIGH IN:

Only eligible fish will be utilized for the purpose of scoring (See Section 11).

Scoring shall be determined by the pound/ounce weight of each team's catch during the tournament. Each team's total weight will determine the final standings.

Teams may present up to five (5) fish of 15" minimum length to the bump tanks (number of fish and minimum length and/or other restrictions may be used and will be announced at the rules meeting per Section 11). Any fish presented for weigh-in which fails to measure the official length limits shall accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each nonlegal fish and the short fish will be removed from the weigh in process.

Once a competitor's catch has been presented to Tournament Officials, that team may not alter nor add to their catch or return to their boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded.

If a team brings more than five (5) fish to the bump tank, Tournament Officials will remove fish from the basket starting with the largest fish first, etc., down to the stated five (5) fish limit for weigh in.

Teams will be allowed to weigh the five (5) fish presented and inspected at the bump tank and then may select one "big fish" from those five (5) to be weighed for the Big Fish Pot prizes. A team member must choose the fish to be weighed for the big fish prize with no input from audience or Tournament Officials/Volunteers.

Once fish are weighed, there will be no re-weighing of fish. The weight on the scales stands.

The official ruler will be "The Judge." Fish will be measured by a Tournament Official with fish's mouth closed and longest straight line. Only fish which measure the official length(s) shall be weighed. Any modification made to fish (clipping) in order to achieve a certain length may result in loss of that days weigh in totals and/or disqualification from the tournament.

MWT does not require the live release of tournament fish and they may be kept for consumption or donation. If a “live” release process is created (on a per tournament basis), directions regarding that process will be provided at the Captains meeting.

20. VERIFICATION OF SCALES:

Prior to each day’s weigh in, the following will be performed by the Tournament Director AND witnessed by a second Tournament Official.

The process for verification will be:

1. Weigh-in table will be verified for level in all directions. Adjustments made to have a level weigh in table.
2. Scale accuracy will be verified with an object of known weight and any needed scale adjustments made.
3. EACH official weigh-in basket (total of 8) will be verified on the scale to record a “tare” weight of zero (0) lbs./oz.
4. ONE of the official weigh-in baskets will be designated as “Big Fish” basket for that tournament day.

21. TIES:

If a tie occurs at an event, Tie breakers are as follows:

1. Highest number of legal fish weighed
2. Heaviest single days catch
3. Second heaviest single days catch
4. Means selected by Tournament officials.

For Team of the Year standings, MWT point standings or other qualifying positions, tie breakers are as follows:

1. Most number of legal fish weighed in counted scores
2. Prior event yearly points standings
3. Next closest previous yearly standings in which there is no tie.

22. SEASON & CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS:

As defined below, in most cases MWT teams will receive 2 sets of points added together:

1. Performance-based points
 - a. Performance points: 150 points for first place, 149 for second place, etc. with each place reducing by one point down to the last team to weigh-in a fish.
2. No points will be awarded to teams for zero weights or DNF

A total of 40 (for 2023CY) teams will be selected as State Championship Qualifiers on the following criteria:

1. Top 40 teams in the point standings at the end of the 4 qualifiers qualify for the Championship.
2. Additional boats may be added at the Tournament Committee's discretion.

To gather points throughout the year, the participants of the team that registered and/or fished together in the first event of the year (up to three (3) participants), must fish together in subsequent events with zero substitutions. If a substitution is made for any subsequent event after the first, that team points will be tallied as a "separate or new" team starting with that event and not count towards the cumulative total of the original team. It is highly recommended to include three (3) participants for initial registration.

Any disqualification from an entire event will result in the loss of all Championship points for that event. Disqualifications do NOT entitle the team and/or participants to a refund.

23. RULES VIOLATIONS, PROTESTS & TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS:

Any team participant has a right to protest another team. To protest, the following process must be initiated within 30 minutes of the last flight check in time OR within 10 minutes of the last fish being weighed that day, whichever is latest.

- a. An official written protest with \$100 fee must be made with the Tournament Director.
 - I. (Note: the fee will be returned if the protest is found valid and a ruling is enforced.)
- b. All evidence supporting the protest is provided to the Tournament Director (e.g., photos).
- c. A meeting of the Tournament Committee is held as soon as possible (may be AFTER completion days weigh-in) to review.
- d. Details of the infraction are presented and discussed.
- e. Tournament Committee votes and makes a recommendation to the Tournament Director.
- f. Tournament Director reviews recommendation, makes and enforces final decision.

- I. It is the discretion of the Tournament Director whether to follow the above listed procedure or require the team reporting the infraction to file an official protest per the MWT rules. In some cases, rules may be enforced with no formal written protest if adequate information is available.

Tournament Officials, in their sole discretion, reserve the right to consider rule violations discovered, reported or not, at any time for any reason, by any persons, before or after a tournament has ended and assess penalties for any past or future event including denying entry to compete. Following interviews with concerned parties or if required, truth verification testing, a final ruling will be made.

In the event rules infractions occurred a penalty of daily and/or tournament weight may be applied, and any cash, prizes and awards must be returned if so requested. If a protest is found valid, the disqualified party must pay all investigative costs if necessary.

Each participant agrees with submission of their entry form and by their participation in the MWT event, to submit to a polygraph or voice stress analyzer test or Truth Verification Test, should they be asked to for any reason and to abide by its conclusion. Tournament Officials shall have sole discretion to select scope, when, where and who shall administer such an exam. Participant will make themselves available at their own expense for testing as scheduled. In the official's sole discretion, refusal to submit to exam or failure to pass a truth verification exam will result in disqualification from event and all future MWT events.

24. AWARDS

No cash/physical awards will be given to any zero weights and/or non-finishes (DNF).

Participants are responsible for all applicable taxes on all cash and prizes. All requests for information regarding such will be provided to MWT Treasurer and/or Secretary upon request.

25. OFFICIAL MEDIA PERSONNEL/FILMING:

Participants are required to comply with all requests (including but not limited to: video, still camera, access to boat and access to fishing area) made by official MWT media personnel for the purpose of gathering promotional

coverage throughout events. Failure to accommodate the official MWT media personnel will result in disqualification of that event.

26. INTEREPTATION & ENFORCMENT OF RULES:

All rules have “loopholes”. It is the intention of the MWT Board, MWT Tournament Committee and the MWT Tournament Director to provide a tournament and atmosphere with the utmost of integrity and sportsmanship.

All questions or problems are to be referred to the Tournament Director and the Tournament Committee directly. They have sole jurisdiction in determining the application of the rules (Section 2). Official’s decisions shall be final in all matters and will not be subject to appeal.