

2025 MONTANA GOVERNOR'S WALLEYE TOURNAMENT RULES

1. Eligibility: Any applicant under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult (18 and over) partner and have the signature of a parent or legal guardian on application. There will be no more than 200 teams fishing in the tournament. The tournament directors and committee reserve the right to refuse entry to any individual before, during, and after the tournament. We ENCOURAGE applicants to be members of Montana Walleye's Unlimited. **For 2024, a rule change was implemented that reads that an Adult/Child team must include a participant under the age of 17. Any teams with members over the age of 17 will be considered adult teams. There will be 2 separate categories 11 and under (minor) and 12-17(major) for payouts in the adult/child division.**

2. Rules Meeting: At least one team member MUST attend the rules meeting on the evening prior to the beginning of the tournament at 5:00 p.m. at Kiwanis Park, Fort Peck, Montana or by Zoom, pending COVID-19 restrictions at this time. Pre-fishing is not permitted after 3:00 p.m. on Thursday; violators will be disqualified from the tournament.

3. Regulations/Insurance: Each entrant must possess a valid Montana fishing license. All contestants must observe U.S. Coast Guard and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Park's rules and regulations. This includes, without exception, the boat manufacturers recommended maximum horsepower rating for each boat shall not be exceeded and if reported speeding in the NO WAKE ZONE, team loses half their weight for that day. A minimum of \$100,000 liability insurance is highly recommended of all contestants.

4. Teams: Contestants must enter as **two-person teams**. Tournament officials must approve any change of team members, and a new application must be completed by the team and signed.

5. Tournament Headquarters: Tournament headquarters will be located at the Fort Peck Marina in Fort Peck, Montana (unless otherwise stated).

6. Fishing Area: Fishing will be allowed only within the boundaries of the tournament area as described on a map which will be provided to each team prior to the contest.

7. Tournament Hours: Tournament hours are 7 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. In the event the competition is cancelled on either Friday or Saturday, Sunday will become a "make-up" day.

8. Inspection: Boats will receive an inspection each day prior to launching and receive the scorecard for that day. All boats in the tournament must display identifying marking provided by tournament officials. All tournament boats may be subject to an inspection by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks prior to tournament start for exotic plant and aquatic species. No boat may have walleye on board prior to the fishing tournament.

9. Tackle: Artificial and live baits are allowed. Each contestant may fish with up to two lines at a time. Spare rods and equipment may be carried in the boat.

10. Boat Operations: All teams must depart by boat from the starting area under the direction of the tournament officials. The order of departure will begin with a randomly selected team number and be reversed on the second day. Cellular phones/text messaging, CB's or marine band radios may not be used to relay tournament fishing information and should be used for emergency transmissions only during tournament hours. **ALL boats must come back in under their own power, no towing of any kind by anyone is allowed. If not under their own power, scores will be zero for that day.** The tournament director must be notified of all boat changes that occur between days of the contest.

11. Fishing: The tournament will be operated as a "Catch and Release" format. Fish may be measured at patrol boats. A dead fish will receive zero weight. Fish length will be recorded if the fish released is alive and in releasable condition. Any live walleye 24-inches or longer can be tagged and kept as a trophy with no penalty. **The same rules will apply for Big Fish Northern.** Teams will be allowed to have 5 measurable walleyes plus 1 Northern and 1 Wee Walleye (under 10") in the boat at one time. Sauger and Saugeye must be released immediately as they are a species of special concern and may not be in your possession during the tournament. Non-releasable fish (i.e., dead fish) will be tagged, counted in the 5-fish maximum through the rest of the day and counted as a zero on

the score card.

12. Scoring: There is a 14.25-inch minimum length requirement for any walleye caught. The length of the fish must break the 14-inch mark to be scored a legal fish. There will be no 14-inch fish shown on weigh cards. Daily scores will be the total measurement converted to weight of up to 5 walleyes. These 5 will be selected by the team from all the fish measured and recorded for that day. The 5 selected MUST INCLUDE any TAGGED FISH.

Measuring Procedure: One partner will hold the fish on the official AIM ruler. The belly of the fish will face the person measuring the fish. The mouth of the fish may be opened or closed and MUST touch the bump plate on the ruler to the left (head to left), and the tail is extended back to its maximum length on the right end of the ruler (tail to right). You MAY NOT INSERT anything inside the gill plate of the fish while measuring. The hand MUST be behind the gill plate of the fish.

13. Checking in/Late Penalty: All BOATS must be checked in each day with the officials on the official check-in boat at the appointed time even if no fish were caught. Any boat checking in with the official check-in boat up to 15 minutes past the appointed time will be penalized 50% of the day's catch weight and will be eliminated from all big fish prizes for that day. Boats checking in OVER 15 minutes past the appointed time will completely be disqualified for the day and eliminated from all day money and big fish pots.

14. Scorecards: ALL scorecards must be turned in by 4PM at tournament headquarters regardless of flight time. Last flight out will have till 4:15PM each day. Scorecards turned in after 4PM will be disqualified for the day and eliminated from all day money and big fish pots. If a team chooses to quit early, they MUST turn in their weigh cards to the tournament headquarters and NOT weigh boats.

15. Spirit of the Rule: It is the intention of this tournament to promote good sportsmanship and fair play. Interpretation of the rules shall be left exclusively to the tournament officials; ALL DECISIONS ARE FINAL!

16. Sportsmanship and Conduct: ALL contestants are required to follow a high standard of safety, sportsmanship, courtesy, and conservation. Any infraction of these principles may be deemed disqualification. Maximum courtesy must always be practiced, especially regarding angling and boating in the vicinity of the tournament. Any act of a competitor, which reflects unfavorably upon the MT Gov Cup Tournament's effort to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy, will be reason for disqualification. Examples of non-compliant standards include:

a. Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any mind-altering substance during tournament hours extending through the weight in process.

b. Any previous conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation for a felony, a crime involving moral wickedness, or a crime related to any fishing tournament will not be accepted.

c. Words or actions which reflect unfavorably upon the efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, and fair competition of our tournament.

d. Disqualifications from other fishing organizations and tournaments that resulted from rule violations will not be accepted.

The Montana Governor's Cup Walleye tournament director and committee reserves the right to place an official observer in the Contestant's boat at any time during the tournament hours.

19. Protest Policy: Only contestants and tournament officials have the right to protest the actions of another team or contestant. Protests by contestants must be filed in writing to a tournament director. The committee will convene to investigate and decide regarding the protest. **Protests must be made to a tournament director, no later than 30 minutes after results are posted. A \$200 protest fee** must accompany any protest offered by a contestant. The protest fee will NOT be refunded if the protest is found to be invalid. Any person found violating the rules may be immediately disqualified and the reasons for said disqualification announced at the Tournament Headquarters area.

19. Marine Band Radio: Radios are highly recommended in participants'

boats both days for everyone's safety and check-in and penalty purposes. Any team experiencing mechanical difficulties (i.e., dead in water) will radio patrol boats for assistance. The official tournament channel is channel #22.

20. Withdrawal Policy: Entry fee refunds are not refundable from time application is processed until the contest. Any refunds are solely at the discretion of the Montana Governor's Cup Walleye Tournament committee. Day Money and Big Fish monies will be refunded upon **written** withdrawal.

21. Weather: Sustained winds of 25 mph or greater at the start of the day of fishing will result in a delayed start, no later than 9:00 a.m. or a cancellation that day. The cancelled day will be made up on Sunday. *You are fishing at your own risk for weather conditions that arise for the day. If conditions are risky, our patrol boats will be called into Marina Bay.*

22. Entry Fee: Must be paid in full on registration day. We encourage Big Fish and Day Money to be paid up front as well.

23. Partner Changes Charges: Starting May 1st, there will be charges for partner changes and will increase on June 1st, and July 1st.