

40th Annual LAKE PEPIN OPEN Tournament Rules

Tournament Director: Caleb Buenger (507) 272-9278

Email: cbuenger@yahoo.com

Co-Director: Steve Iverson (507) 438-8746

Email: sji52@hotmail.com

Payback and Prizes:

The total payback for the tournament will be 90%, based on a full field of 50 boats, each paying a \$250.00 entry fee. With a \$25 optional Big Fish Pot paying 100%. Paying the top 2 each day.

The payout structure is as follows:

***** BASED ON A 50 BOAT FIELD**

1st Place - \$3,000 + Plaques

6th Place - \$650

2nd Place - \$2,350 + Plaques

7th Place - \$500

3rd Place - \$1,500 + Plaques

8th Place - \$450

4th Place - \$1,300

9th Place - \$250

5th Place - \$1,000

10th Place - \$250

1. Participant Eligibility

- Teams must consist of two individuals. Any participant under 16 years old must be paired with a parent or legal guardian. Those under 18 years of age require written parental permission.
- The first 50 teams submitting entry forms along with the \$250.00 entry fee will comprise the tournament field.
- An optional Big Fish Pot is available for an additional entry fee of \$25.00 per boat, covering both tournament days.
- All contestants are required to possess a valid Minnesota or Wisconsin fishing license, as mandated by local regulations.
- Sponsors, tournament directors, assistants, and related agencies are not responsible for any deaths, injuries, damages, liabilities, theft, fire, or loss of any kind incurred by entrants.
- Signing the entry form serves as a waiver, indicating acknowledgment of tournament risks.
- Refunds of entry fees may incur a service charge and will only be processed if the Tournament Director receives proper notification at least 10 days prior to the tournament date.
- The pre-tournament headquarters is: Walleye Searchers of Minnesota, P.O. Box 5812, Rochester, MN 55903
Email inquiries can be sent to <http://walleyesearchers.org>.

2. Orientation and Rules Meeting

The mandatory orientation meeting will take place at 6:00 P.M. on Friday, April 24th, 2026 at the location indicated on the tournament announcement flyer (Elks Club, Red Wing, MN). Immediately following the orientation, a Calcutta Auction will be held.

Attendance at the orientation is **required** for at least one member from each team, unless an exception is granted by either the tournament director or co-director. **Prior** to the 6:00 P.M. start time of the orientation meeting.

3. Flight Order Procedures

Day One – Boat # will be determined by the boat # selection process. We will have an auto generator 1 thru 50.

Day Two – We will reverse the flight order. Keep your boat number for day 2. We will start with 50 and go to 1.

4. Safety Regulations

All boats must adhere to U.S. Coast Guard safety standards, alongside Minnesota and Wisconsin regulations. Each participant is required to wear a properly secured, Coast Guard-approved chest-type personal flotation device whenever the boat's main engine is operating above idle speed. Consumption of alcoholic beverages during tournament hours is strictly prohibited. Tournament Officials hold the authority to cancel, delay, or restrict tournament waters and/or hours in response to severe weather. Should inclement conditions arise, contestants may seek shelter at the nearest shoreline until it is deemed safe to resume fishing.

Safe boating practices and adherence to all safety precautions are mandatory for all participants. For safety reasons, **every team must check in at the end of each day, regardless of whether any fish were weighed.**

5. Boundaries

Fishing is allowed within Pool 4, specifically between the Red Wing Dam and the Alma Dam, as well as from railroad track to railroad track.

Tournament hours are scheduled from 7:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. on both Saturday and Sunday.

Contestants are prohibited from accessing tournament waters between 4:00 P.M. on the Friday prior to the event and 3:00 P.M. on Sunday, except during the official tournament hours.

6. Penalties

1. Short Fish Penalty: Any team that brings in a fish shorter than 15 inches will be disqualified for that day's competition. Measurements will be taken with "The Judge" ruler. Participants may calibrate their own rulers against "The Judge" at the rules meeting or prior to the launch on the first day.

2. Late Penalty: Teams arriving up to 15 minutes late will incur a penalty in the loss of half the day's fish weight. Teams more than 15 minutes late will be disqualified for that day.

3. Cheating: Any individual found cheating will be disqualified from the entire tournament.

7. Equipment and Tackle

All fishing methods must comply with Minnesota-Wisconsin boundary waters regulations. Each contestant is permitted to

have only two lines in the water at any given time. Use of radio communications, including cellular phones, is strictly prohibited during tournament hours unless needed in an emergency. All fish must be caught by conventional means using hook and line. This tournament follows a catch and release format, allowing only live or apparently fresh fish to be weighed. The judgment of tournament officials regarding fish condition is final. Fish must be kept in an aerated live well. Stringers, boat bags, wire baskets, and similar methods are **not allowed**. Any fish not released will become the property of the Walleye Searchers Club.

8. Fish, Size, and Limits

- Only walleye, sauger, and saugeye are eligible for weigh-in.
- The minimum length for any eligible fish is 15 inches. With only 2 fish over 20". Current State and Local Laws do apply.
- Sorting or culling fish is **ALLOWED**.
- The daily tournament limit is five (5). We will weigh all five (5) fish, with the option to weigh big fish each day at the weigh-in site.

9. Scoring

- Teams will be awarded prizes based on their total combined fish weight, measured in pounds and ounces.
- In the event of a tie, the team with the greater second-day weight will be declared the winner.
- Prizes will be distributed following the final tournament weigh-in.
- All prizes are awarded to teams, except for the big fish prize, which is given to the individual with the largest fish.

10. Protests

- Protests can be submitted only by contestants or Tournament Officials directly to the Tournament Committee.
- All protests must be filed **within thirty minutes (30)** after the end of that fishing day and must include a \$50.00 protest fee.
- The decisions made by the Tournament Committee are final and cannot be appealed to any higher authority.
- If the protest is upheld, the protest fee will be refunded.

11. Miscellaneous

- Contestants are solely responsible for paying any taxes that may be applicable to the prizes they receive.
- For the sake of good sportsmanship, all participants should remember that while rules may have loopholes, the Tournament Committee will apply "The Spirit of the Rule" in all judgment cases.
- If any team is found to be in violation of tournament rules, that team will be disqualified. The reason for

disqualification will be announced publicly at the weigh-in.

- Disqualification for any reason will result in the forfeiture of the team's entry fee.