

## TOURNAMENT TRAIL GENERAL RULES

Port Specific Rules shall supersede General Rules in the event of any contradiction.

*See port specific tournament info for further rules clarification*

**ELIGIBILITY** – Tournament Trail events are open to any fishing team willing to participate and abide by official tournament rules and state specific DNR regulations. We reserve the right to decline entry or participation by any person, team or boat, as deemed necessary to ensure such things as integrity, image, reputation, financial performance and community relationships with sponsors, participants and supporting groups.

**TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE** – The tournament director may decide to establish a tournament committee for the purpose of presiding over the tournament and handling judgment on weather conditions, disputes, protests, rules violations, etc. This committee may consist of any combination of tournament participants, or other persons approved by the tournament director. Your participation in this tournament indicates your acceptance of this procedure and your agreement that the decision of the tournament director and/or committee will be final. Immediate action for non-compliance of tournament rules will be the jurisdiction of the tournament director and/or committee. **Your participation in this event constitutes your agreement to abide by the policies, rules and decisions set forth by the tournament director and/or selected tournament committee.**

**POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS** - All participants who weigh fish and are eligible for cash and prizes may be required to submit to a polygraph examination. Failure to comply will result in immediate disqualification and forfeiture of any and all cash and prizes.

**OBSERVER PLACEMENT** – Tournament Director and/or Tournament Committee will reserve the right to place an observer of their choosing on any registered team at any time. Failure to accept observer placement may result in disqualification and/or banishment from future Tournament Trail events.

**CHEATING** - Cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating may be banned from this event. Their names and details of the incident may also be sent to other Tournament Officials. A reward of up to \$1000.00 is offered for information that results in any team being disqualified for obvious or blatant cheating.

**PROTESTS** - All protests must be submitted within 1 hour after posted tournament fishing time ends each day.

**DNR LAWS** – All state DNR fishing laws must be observed. ANY DNR written violation on tournament days disqualifies team with no refund regardless of outcome. DNR written violation on tournament day may, at the discretion of the tournament director and/or committee, result in team being banned from the event at which the violation occurred and other events in the future.

**BOAT SAFETY** – **Boat safety remains your responsibility. Weather conditions vary and the Tournament Director and/or Tournament Committee will advise when conditions become questionable and may cancel the tournament if deemed necessary. Due to the size variance of boats and varied experience of each captain, the ultimate responsibility for safety belongs to you. If you feel it is becoming unsafe or you are uncomfortable with conditions, your safety and the safety of your crew is absolutely your responsibility. If you feel it is not safe for your boat size or experience level proceed to safe harbor immediately.**

**CAPTAINS MEETING** - Rules amendments or changes may be done at Captains Meeting prior to each tournament. One person from each team is required at Captains Meeting. You will be responsible if any rule changes are made. Entire team is encouraged to attend. See local tournament information for location and times.

**FINAL PAYOUTS** - Posted as soon as possible after the Captains Meeting for each specific tournament. Payouts are based on registration and will supersede **ALL** previously posted possible payouts. Once final payouts are posted there can be no refund of registration fees.

**WEATHER** - 3 hours of fishing will constitute a completed day. If only 3 hours of a 2-day tournament can be fished it will be considered complete. Director and/or Committee is the final authority on weather decisions. If Tournament is called early because of bad weather, you will have 1 hour to return to the Harbor. Boats who return more than 1 hour after tournament has been called off will not be allowed to weigh for that day. Monitor designated marine radio channel (see individual port specific rules) for safety and emergency information.

If we cannot fish the 1st day of a 2-day tournament because of weather, tournament will be canceled for the day. Recreational fishing may be allowed for the rest of that day (see individual port specific rules). After fishing the minimum of 3 hours on the 1st day of any 2-day event, fishing **MAY NOT** be allowed for the remainder of that day (see individual port specific rules). If tournament is called off before a minimum of 3 hours is fished, the whole day will be canceled. Min 3 hours fishing required to weigh-in. If due to unforeseen circumstances, any event is canceled in its entirety, a refund check for 90% of the registration fee will be mailed within 14 days. 10% of the registration fee will be retained to cover Tournament expenses.

**PIERHEAD AND HARBOR FISHING** - No fishing inside any Harbor. No fishing inside a line between the North & South Pier heads. This rule applies to all Lake Michigan Harbors.

**NUMBER OF RODS** - Maximum number of lines fishing is 9. Fishing means “in the water.” 10 or more lines in the water at any one

time disqualifies the team. One slider per rod may be allowed, however, sliders may not exceed 72 inches. Max 2 baits per rod.

CHECK LOCAL RULES AT EACH TOURNAMENT FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION REGARDING THE USE OF SLIDERS.

**RADIO** - Marine radio required. Check specific tournament info for restrictions on communications. The official start and end to each fishing period will be announced over the marine radio. Check individual port rules for specific channel(s) to monitor.

**GAFFING FISH** – Gaffing fish is strictly prohibited in all Tournament Trail events.

**WEIGH-IN** – SEE SPECIFIC TOURNAMENT INFORMATION FOR LOCATION. Captain's Meeting will decide final weigh-in procedures for all levels. Blocked or bagged ice only. No loose cubes or crushed ice, drain water from coolers before weigh-in. 5-LB deduction for loose ice or excess water. Substances, including ice packed into the fish's mouth or body cavities is cheating and will disqualify the entire team.

**CAPTAIN & CREW** - A Captain for each team must be designated and identified on entry application form. The same fishermen do not have to fish both days. Extra crew will be allowed, however tournament rod limit must be adhered to. Short-handed crews are allowed, however sufficient legal fishermen are required to comply with the 9 rod tournament limit. Observers (when required) may be used to comply with 9 rod limit, however, it is your team's responsibility to ensure the observer put on your boat has a fishing license if necessary, to complete your rod allotment.

**IDENTIFICATION** – Failure to display the identification flag (when provided) at all times during the tournament may result in disqualification.

**DISABLED BOATS** - Boats must return under their own power. No boat may come in direct physical contact with another boat or vessel either manned or unmanned for any reason unless authorized by Tournament Control. Physical contact will result in disqualification for any team involved. Boats in distress, dangerous or life threatening situations must be dealt with accordingly. Disabled boats that arrive late will not be able to weigh. Once tournament begins you cannot change boats for any reason. Tournament Director may be reachable on Channel 9 or by cell phone.

**PRO TEAMS DEFINED** – Pro Divisions are open to all teams. However, teams designated "Pro" must fish in Pro Division. Pro Team designation is based on the status of each individual crew member. If any one member of a crew is designated as "Pro" then the entire team shall also be designated as "Pro". The following criteria may be used to determine the status of all teams and individuals:

- Any team or individual that is designated as a Pro Staff Member of a fishing or marine related product or service is required to fish in the Pro Division.
- Any team or individual whose application fee is subsidized in whole or in part by any manufacturer, distributor or retailer of any fishing or marine related product or any other product or service must fish in the Pro Division.
- All licensed charter captains who worked **as captain** on any licensed charter boat in the two years prior to the event in which they are registering must fish in Pro Division.

Field Testers: Field Testers are generally not considered Pro Teams. However, they may be subject to review by the Tournament Committee presiding over the event in which they wish to enter.

Team Attire: There are no restrictions on team attire. The wearing of shirts, hats, jackets, etc. that display logos or images of manufacturers, distributors or retailers of fishing or marine related products or services does not require a team to fish in the Pro Division. However, if the team is compensated in any way to wear such items the team will be required to fish in the Pro Division.

Boat Signs: Logos or images of manufacturers, distributors or retailers of fishing or marine related products or services displayed on a tournament boat do not require a team to fish in the Pro Division. However, any team that is compensated for the display of such images will be required to fish in the Pro Division.

**It is your responsibility to comply with the Pro/Am Rule.** The tournament director and/or committee presiding over the event in question reserves the right to review the Pro/Am status of any registered team through direct contact with the Captain or any member of the crew. Failure to fully disclose all pertinent information may result in disqualification with absolutely NO refund and NO prizes awarded. Criteria to establish pro/am status may vary by port. Check individual event rules for further clarification.