

## **Ladies & Kids Fish Friday - Friday July 21, 2023**

**Tournament HQ: HERITAGE LANDING In Front of the Big Stage**

Entry Fee: \$100 per team / Weigh Your Best 5

### **REGISTRATION / CAPTAIN'S MEETING / WEIGH IN / AWARDS:**

On site Registration Begins Thursday July 20th at 5:00 PM at the Heritage Landing Main Stage in Muskegon. Captain's Meeting follows at 7pm. Weigh in scales will open 1 hour prior to end of fishing period. Award ceremony will begin asap after weigh in is complete. Payouts will be 100% based on registration.

### **RULES:**

1. Fishing Period: **6:00am-1:00pm**
  - Shot Gun Start: 6:00am from Muskegon, Whitehall or Grand Haven Harbor. Boats must be within ½ mile from pier heads at start. No fishing before 6:00am. Boats must be back inside the pier heads of the port they left by **1:00pm**. Boats outside their respective pier heads at **1:01pm** will be disqualified.
2. Communication: Open Communication is allowed among teams. Shotgun Start, Fishing Period End and any other pertinent announcements will take place on Channel 68. Tournament Control will periodically monitor marine radio throughout the fishing period, but can best be reached via phone at (231) 690-1102.
3. Crew must consist of a minimum (2) Ladies and/or Kids (15 & under) in any combination. A maximum of 9 rods can be used if you have at least 3 licensed crew members.
4. When fish bites, Ladies and/or Kids must remove the rod from holder, set the hook and net the fish. The rest of the crew can set lines, drive, and if necessary, release from riggers or boards and assist in hand lining.
5. All boats must have a marine radio and be at least 17' long.
6. **Limits:** DNR limits. Weigh your best 5.
7. **Weigh-in** will begin 1 hour prior to end of fishing period on Friday. DNR minimum length all species.
  - There is no fish drop. Teams are to return to their dock or trailer and bring their catches to the scales at the big stage at Heritage Landing. Parking is available behind the stage.
  - Best 5 Fish will be brought to the weigh station. Extra fish or undersized fish will be disqualified and penalty of 1 extra fish disqualified starting with smallest for each extra fish brought in.
  - Tournament cooler with no more than 5 fish must be brought to weigh station within 2 hours of the end of the tournament fishing time.
  - Drain coolers before weigh-in, excess water or loose ice may result in 5-lb. reduction of total weight.
8. Total weight will determine the winner. In the event of a tie, prize will be split.
9. 3-hour minimum fishing time is required to complete this tournament. If Tournament is cancelled due to bad weather, \$90.00 will be refunded to each team by mail within 7 days. Monitor marine radio and/or [www.facebook.com/tournamenttrail](http://www.facebook.com/tournamenttrail) for weather related announcements.

Rules will be reviewed and discussed at the Captain's Meeting. If you have questions contact Scott any time at 231-690-1102.

# **2023 MUSKEGON OPEN OFFICIAL RULES**

## **TOURNAMENT HQ WILL BE THE BIG STAGE AT HERITAGE LANDING IN MUSKEGON**

**CAPTAINS MEETING / REGISTRATION** – On site Registration Begins Friday July 21st at 5:00 PM at Heritage Landing Stage in Muskegon. Captain's Meeting follows at 7pm. THE TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS ATTEND THE CAPTAIN'S MEETING TO ENSURE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALL RULES. **Failure to be familiar with rules may result in disqualification.** It is the responsibility each individual participant to read and understand all rules pertaining to this event. Ignorance is no excuse! **Questions? Contact Scott any time at (231) 690-1102.**

**TOURNAMENT TIME: 6:00am – 1:00pm / each day, all levels, all ports. Start & End will be announced on Channel 68.**

Fishing period will begin each day by "shotgun start". Boats must stage outside their harbor of choice (1/2 mile max distance) while waiting for the start to be announced over marine radio. No fishing or running is allowed prior to the start of the fishing period. Boats not back inside their respective harbor by 1:00:59 will be disqualified for the day. Fishing is allowed after day 1 weigh in.

### **TOURNAMENT BOUNDARIES:**

New for 2023 the Muskegon Open will have fishing boundaries as follows:

- North Boundary: Stony Lake: 43.33617
- South Boundary: North Pier of Port Sheldon: 42.901172
- West Boundary: Michigan Waters Only

Fishing outside these established boundaries will be grounds for disqualification.

**COMMUNICATION:** Open Communication All Divisions. Shotgun Start, Fishing Period End and any other pertinent announcements will take place on Channel 68. Tournament Control will periodically monitor marine radio throughout the fishing period but can best be reached via cell phone at 231-690-1102.

**ELIGIBLE PORTS:** Muskegon, Whitehall, Grand Haven. Boats must leave from and return to the same port each day.

### **WEIGH IN PROCEDURE:**

- Coolers must be transported by vehicle to Heritage Landing for the weigh in.
- Scales will be set up in front of the Heritage Landing Stage. Parking is available behind the stage.
- Teams must be in line at the scales within 2 hours of the end of the fishing period.
- Observers must accompany the tournament catch to the scales and must present the observer log to the weigh staff.
- **Additional Weigh In Rules & Info:**
  - Drain coolers before weigh-in. Block or bagged ice only. Excess water / loose ice may result in 5 Point Penalty.
  - **Your cooler may only contain your tournament limit at the scales. (10 fish max for Open / (5) fish max for Ams and 333 Only)** Extra fish or fish under legal DNR size limit will be disallowed, PLUS a penalty of one fish will be deducted from your catch for each extra or undersized fish you have starting with the smallest. Stretching fish, squashing fish, breaking their neck, or any manipulation to increase the length of the fish will disqualify team.
  - **Weight slips must be signed before leaving the scales. Check your weight slip before you sign. After signature re-weighing is not allowed and no changes can be made.** Any team may request a re-weigh prior to signing their weight slip. The re-weigh weight will then be recorded as official regardless of whether it is higher or lower than the original weight. Weight slips will be utilized until after payout of prizes. After that weight slips will no longer be kept.

**CAPTAIN & CREW** - A Captain for each team must be designated and identified on registration form. The number of fishermen may vary. The same fishermen do not have to fish both days.

**BOAT SIZE** - Boats must be at least 17' long and have a marine radio.

**TOURNAMENT LIMITS:** DNR Rules Apply. 9 Rod Limit (must have 3 licensed anglers). 1 slider per rod, max length 72".

- Open Division: Catch 15 / Weigh 10. (6 Lake Trout Max)
- Amateur Division: Catch 15 / Weigh 5. (1-Man Legal Limit)
- 333: Weigh your best 3 fish over both days.

### **OBSERVERS:**

- **OPEN DIVISION:** Observers ARE REQUIRED for the Open Division. Observers must accompany your catch to the scales and shall be responsible for turning in your team's log sheet at the weigh in.
- **AM DIVISION:** Tournament Committee shall supply observers to be placed in the amateur division as follows:
  - Day 1 – Observer placements for the Top 3 finishing boats from last years event that are present.
  - Day 2 – Observer placements for the Top 3 teams after Day 1.

### **TOURNAMENT SCORING:**

- **Open & Am:** 10 points per fish / 1 point per pound
  - *Tie Breakers: #1. Total Weight - #2. Big Fish (if available for all tied teams, if not prizes will be combined & split)*
- **333 & Big Fish Side Bet** - Exact weight of fish will be used. Side bet ties will result in prizes being combined and split.

**Adjustments to rules and/or payouts may be made at the Captain's Meeting and will supersede all pre-printed material.**

## 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** – This event is 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.

**BOAT SAFETY** – Boat safety remains your responsibility. Weather conditions vary and the Tournament Director and/or Rules & Weather 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.

**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.

**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 this event and other events in the future.

**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.

>>> NOTE: Per Wisconsin DNR, any lure in the water counts as a rod in Wisconsin. Sliders may be allowed at Wisconsin events, however 9 lures is the absolute maximum number of lures a team can have in the water at one time.

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.

### **DIVISIONS & LIMITS** –

The following divisions and limit structures are commonly found on the Tournament Trail. Refer to individual tournament rules for exact limits, length specifications, scoring methods and additional divisions or contests.

**Open:**

No restrictions on registration. Registered teams will compete in one division. This division generally allows teams to catch their legal limit, but sets a specific tournament limit (i.e. weigh your best 5) that can be weighed.

**Pro/Am:**

Two divisions will run concurrently. Pro Division has no restrictions on registration and is open to any team. Designated Pro Teams (see “Pro Teams Defined” rule) must fish in Pro Division. Amateur teams, or any team that does not qualify as Pro per the “Pro Teams Defined” rule may enter the Amateur or Pro Division.

**U24:**

Eligibility based on boat size. Amateur teams with boats under 24’ in length may enter U24 division. This division generally allows teams to catch their legal limit, but sets a specific tournament limit (i.e. weigh your best 5) that can be weighed.

**Sweet 16:**

Eligibility based on boat size. Amateur teams with boats under 17’ in length may enter Sweet 16 division. This division generally allows teams to catch their legal limit, but sets a specific tournament limit (i.e. weigh your best 5) that can be weighed.

**333:**

One division, open to all. 333 runs concurrently with a host event. Weigh your best 3 fish in two days. Teams may weigh their fish in any combination on Day 1 or Day 2. Catch limits mirror that of the host tournament.

**Big Fish:**

Weigh your biggest single fish each day. Big Fish Divisions may run individually on each tournament day or may be based on your biggest overall fish in a multi-day event.

**LIMIT STRUCTURES****Best 5:**

Catch your legal limit, Weigh Your Best 5 Fish for tournament scoring.

**Best 10:**

Catch your legal limit, Weigh Your Best 10 Fish for tournament scoring.

**No Cull Events:**

No Cull events employ a tournament catch limit which is less than DNR Limits. Teams are required to stop fishing and return to the tournament scales as soon as they fill the predetermined tournament limit. No Cull events may have a Scale Limit which is lower than the Tournament Limit. Observers may be required in No Cull events.

**For example:**

Catch 12 / Weigh 10 represents a tournament limit of 12 Fish and a Scale Limit of 10 fish. Teams must cease fishing immediately after catching their first 12 legal fish. There is no sorting of any kind and teams may not throw back any legal fish regardless of size. They then select their 10 best fish out of their 12 fish catch and weigh only those fish for their tournament score.

**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 can result in DQ

**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. Tournament Director may be reachable on Channel 9 or by cell phone. Disabled boats that arrive late will not be able to weigh. Once tournament begins you cannot change boats for any reason.

**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”. Licensed Charter Captains, Pro Staff Members and teams whose event entry 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 will likely be deemed as Pro.

*(Check individual event rules for more info)*

**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.