

Big Water Walleye Championships 2020 Official Rules

PARTICIPATION & ENTRY

A. Each team must fully complete, sign and submit an official Big Water Walleye Championships entry form along with payment by the published entry deadline dates. Payment of entry fee acknowledges that all team members understand and agree to these rules. Incomplete forms will result in a team not being registered and their entry fee will be refunded accordingly.

B. Events will be considered a full field at a 60-boats. Teams will be registered for the specific event on a "first come, first served basis". Receipt (date/time) of payment in full of the entry fee for that specific event determines the field participants.

C. Any Big Water Walleye Championships Tournament will be capped at an 80-boat field. Teams will be registered for this specific event on a "first come, first served basis". Receipt (date/time) of payment in full of the entry fee for that specific event determines the field participants.

D. Contestants must enter as teams (no "Partner TBD" or unknown partner names on the entry forms). Any person 17 years of age or younger must be teamed with a parent or guardian or have written permission from a parent or legal guardian. Big Water Walleye Championships will limit teams to 2 to 5 person teams. Maximum of 6 rods in use. In order to be eligible for a "Family Team Bonus" (Vic's Open – Ashtabula) 50% or more of team members must be family. Team must consist of 3 or more members, a 2-person team that is immediate family constitutes a family team. The Big Water Walleye Championships committee reserves the right to use their best judgement in awarding this bonus. Entry forms must be completed and submitted. Emergency contact information must be filled out.

E. The use of approved alternates will be permitted. The use of an alternate must be submitted to the tournament committee for approval no later than 7 p.m. the day prior to the tournament.

F. Big Water Walleye Championships does not discriminate based on race, creed or gender. Big Water Walleye Championships is not required to accept all applications and retains sole discretion on acceptance or rejection of any application.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

A. All Big Water Walleye Championships Tournaments are \$300 Entry Fee Per Team. An Optional \$20 side pot for Includes Big Fish B. Payment in full must accompany each entry. Payment via PayPal available at www.BigWaterWalleyeChampionships.com Payments via PayPal must be received no later than 5-days prior to the event. See Big Water Walleye Championships website or Official Entry Form for entry deadline dates.

PAYOUT

85% OF THE TOURNAMENT ENTRY FEE WILL BE PAID BACK

A. 85% of the Tournament entry fee will be paid back to the tournament field per event.

B. Sponsorship donations and membership dues will supplement Big Water Walleye Championships operating costs.

C. 100% Big Fish and Side Pot Entries will be paid back to eligible contestants.

BLOW DAY

A. If weather conditions do not allow fishing on the regular scheduled tournament day or (blow day) for Big Water Walleye Championships Tournament the Tournament will be rescheduled as soon as practicable. If a tournament is deemed "canceled" all entries will be refunded minus a 20\$ processing fee. The Tournament Committee members will assess weather conditions acknowledging Small Craft Advisories and using current conditions/reports that are available.

B. Every Effort will be made to fish on the scheduled dates. The Call to fish will be made by the tournament director by 4am. on each tournament day. See the Big Water Walleye Championships Facebook page for up to date info.

C. Any team needing a refund must submit in writing via email to the tournament director before deadline set by TD.

SCORING

A. Scoring shall be determined by the pound weight of each team's (5 Fish) catch during the tournament. Each team's total weight will determine the final tournament standings. If a tie occurs, Big fish will be the next tie breaker. If a second tie occurs then a coin flip will be conducted by the tournament director to establish a clear winner. (OR) both teams may elect to tie and split any cash awards of the two or more finishers will be added together and divided equally to each team.

B. Walleye, sauger and saugeye will be weighed where permissible by state law. The weigh-in limit will be five fish per boat. Contestants presenting more than the weigh-in limit at the official scales will have their team's catch disqualified for that day of competition.

C. The minimum length limit will be 15 inches.

D. The official ruler will be "The Golden Rule." Fish will be measured by a tournament official with fish's mouth closed and tail squeezed (based on Tournament regulations, but not violating state or local laws).

E. If a "short" fish is presented for weigh-in, the biggest eligible fish weighed that day will be disqualified for each non-acceptable length fish presented. If a state or local violation occurs by bringing a "short" fish to the scale, the team will be disqualified from that day's event.

REFUNDS & CREDIT

A. Refunds will be distributed at the discretion of the Big Water Walleye Championships committee. No refunds will be distributed within 24hrs of a tournament start

B. Disqualification from a tournament for any reason will result in forfeiture of entry fee.

C. No refunds or credits are extended to teams that choose not to fish due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstance

D. In the event that a tournament must be cancelled and cannot be rescheduled or relocated entry fee for that tournament/event will be refunded.

TOURNAMENT INTEGRITY, POLICY & SAFETY

A. Contestants will conduct themselves in a true sportsmanlike, courteous, safe and ethical manner at all times. Any unfavorable conduct, speech or action by a contestant could be grounds for disqualification or rejection of entry application. Every competitor is expected to participate in the marshaling of the field in order to maintain the highest integrity to the competition. Any incidents observed during tournament hours should be reported to tournament officials for further investigation.

B. Any tournament official or Big Water Walleye Championships contestant may protest another team. If an incident has progressed to the point of needing protest, an official written protest must be made with a tournament official within 30 minutes of completion of daily weigh-in. Following interviews with concerned parties, a ruling will be made. Penalties up to and including disqualification may be applied. A polygraph or CVS Voice Stress Analyzer may be utilized. If the protest is valid the disqualified party must pay all investigative costs. The tournament director will decide what company will conduct the VSA or Polygraph test.

C. Big Water Walleye Championships Lake Erie Tournaments are designated as "harvest" tournaments.

D. Big Water Walleye Championships will randomly assign boat numbers at the captain meeting.

E. All fishing must be conducted from a boat. All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 13 feet in length. Canoes are not permitted. All tournament boats must have all the Coast Guard required safety equipment, including a type IV throw cushion, fire extinguisher, a distress horn/flag/whistle, and display tournament credentials. Great Lakes tournaments require flares. All tournament boats are recommended to have a marine band radio. Boat owners must have property damage \watercraft liability insurance coverage from a reputable insurer with reasonable amounts of coverage. Insurance must cover injury and/or damage incurred in connection with above tournaments. Proof of insurance may be asked for at any time.

F. All teams are subject to official inspection during the tournament and agree to an inspection at any time. No other boats may come in contact with contestants' boats with the exception of a TV camera/media boat. No fishing information or schedule information may be given to contestants during tournament fishing hours by anyone in any fashion. Cell phones are allowed for emergencies only including safety, family and work matters. Cell phone use between competitors is strictly prohibited. If a competitor is required to talk on use a cell phone during tournament hours, they must report the use via text to at least two (2) official committee members. A quick text explaining the use of the cell phone and with whom is required. If this contestant(s) does not report use prior to leaving the water. If the team will be disqualified for that day of competition. A team can also report anticipated possible use prior to the start of the tournament at the morning check in. No Internet access is allowed, nor is text messaging, paging, or walk-talkie to another person (competitor or non-competitor) during tournament hours to gain fishing information. Big Water Walleye Championships may request cell phone records in the course of investigation and all contestants agree to provide such records if requested of them.

G. In the event of equipment failure or emergency, there will be only two permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both partners remaining in their boat and being towed by water, or (2) by one, or both, of the partners entering the boat of another tournament contestant. Under these two conditions the contestants' catch may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish

penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules). Contestants who elect to return to the check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day's catch to that point in time of the tournament day.

H. Contestants must wear a Coast Guard approved personal floatation device when on plane.

I. Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower rating of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this plate. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor to increase horsepower over factory rated horsepower is forbidden and will result in disqualification.

J. All applicable Federal, State and local boating and fishing laws and regulations must be followed. Any citation for violation of these laws or regulations will result in disqualification. This includes following all applicable laws during pre-fishing.

K. In the event of a thunderstorm, lightning and/or severe weather; contestants may pull into the nearest shoreline until it is safe to continue fishing. Contestants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except at a commercial gas dock, the official weigh-in site or if severe weather forces them ashore.

L. Participants can access shore for bathroom emergencies. A Big Water Walleye Championships committee must be called via cell phone, texted and or a voicemail must be left by the participant prior to official end time of the tournament. If no communication is made prior to the official end time of the time and the participant is reported on shore, the team will be automatically disqualified from the event and will not be eligible for any awards or points for that day.

M. Tournament participants cannot access shore to retrieve fishing equipment that may have been forgotten in their vehicles. Live bait cannot be purchased during tournament hours and contestants may not share/give live boat or artificial lures during the actual tournament hours. If a team is reported as doing such, that team will be automatically disqualified from the event and will not be eligible for any awards or points for the day.

N. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs may be possessed or consumed during tournament hours.

O. All Big Water Walleye Championships qualifying tournaments will have published days of competition, unless delayed or shortened due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. Tournament boundaries or restricted fishing zones will be announced prior to the event and may be further restricted if needed. Contestants must abide by all local navigation laws and avoid restricted areas at all times.

P. All Big Water Walleye Championships Tournaments will be limited to the contiguous waters of Lake Erie only. Fuel may be obtained during tournament hours if needed from a certified marina or marine fuel station. If you must fuel during tournament hours you must call or text the tournament directors for authorization and verification.

R. All participants must check-in each morning before take-off and check-in each afternoon with the official timekeepers. All fishing must cease upon check-in. There will be only one checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check in the morning or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. Teams running late due to unforeseen circumstances must call an active Tournament Committee member for notification of a

late check in. If a Tournament Committee member can check this team in prior to launching, disqualification will not result. If a member of the Tournament Committee cannot check-in this participant for any reason, disqualification will result.

S. Boat check will be conducted the morning of the tournament. Walleye found in the live well of a participant may result in immediate disqualification. The participant's entry fee/memberships will not be refunded if disqualified. The Big Water Walleye Championships Committee will assess and discuss the situation, and either allow the participants to fish the event or disqualify the participants from the event.

T. Contestants who return 1 to 15 minutes later than the assigned check in time will forfeit one-half of one pound per minute ($\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. / 1 minute) of their total weight for that day. Contestants who return 16 or more minutes later than the assigned check in time will forfeit their total fish weight for that day. These Contestants who are late, no matter how late, are not eligible to participate in the Big Fish Award. If a contestant decides not check in, whether leaving early or coming in after the designated check in times above, contestant must call or text the Big Water Walleye Championships tournament director. Official "check in" will be defined as the contestant being one boat length (15 feet) past the official designated check in boat. If check in time is defined as 2:45 to 3:00 pm, boats arriving at 3:00.01 will be ruled as one minute late. The "official check in boat" will report either written or verbal those teams that are deemed late and their reporting is final.

U. On tournament days, contestants are prohibited from fishing except during designated fishing hours. Contestants should stay off tournament waters before and after tournament hours except to navigate to and from the check-in site and launch facilities. If repairs and/or test-run are needed a Big Water Walleye Championships staff member or designated representative should be notified.

V. Big Water Walleye Championships participants must possess all necessary fishing licenses and commit to following regulations. All state rules regarding fishing will be observed unless more stringent regulations are specified. Only fish caught on hook and line in a normal and usual manner will be accepted. Live bait and artificial lures are permissible. Contestants are limited to one lure per rod. No three-way rigs or sliders are allowed.

CONTESTANT'S WAIVER & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A. Participation Agreement: I understand that this is a professional sporting event governed by the rules that have been established by tournament officials. I acknowledge that I have received/read a copy of these rules

and that these rules relate to the safety of all participants as well as the fair sporting conduct of this event. The Tournament Committee shall act as the referee in all disputes and their decision based on their interpretation of the rules will be final and without legal appeal. I have read, understand and agree to the Big Water Walleye Championships refund policy.

B. Release of Liability: I acknowledge that I am participating voluntarily in the Big Water Walleye Championships LLC. I agree to assume all risk of injury, death, damages, theft and loss to personal property, which may result from my participation in the Big Water Walleye Championships tournaments. I recognize that loss of property, injury or death could arise from the fishing and boating activities contemplated by the tournament and the risks normally encountered in open-water fishing from a boat may be enhanced by exposure to the elements and other risks inherent in outdoor competition. I retain

the right to not compete if I feel the risks are too great on any given day, however, I realize in so doing that I forfeit any claim to my entry fee. I warrant that I am in good physical and mental health and am physically capable of withstanding the rigors and requirements of a professional fishing competition.

C. Photo & Video Release: I understand and agree that any and all photographs, videos or films taken during the course of my participation in the tournament which includes me, my name and/or my boat may be used by the tournament organizers, sponsors or media without my prior consent and without royalties.

Visit us at www.BigWaterWalleyeChampionships.com / email BigWaterWalleyeChampionships@gmail.com for inquires / or visit us on Facebook Big Water Walleye Championships