

Anglers for Veterans Fishing Tournament

Official Rules and Regulations

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All rules must be read before the tournament begins. Any questions regarding rules or tournament operations must be brought up during the Friday night rules meeting. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules rests solely with tournament officials, whose decisions are final in all matters.

1. CHEATING

Cheating will lead to immediate disqualification from the tournament. Entry fees will not be refunded. Disqualified teams may be banned from future Anglers for Veterans tournaments.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Participation is open to all anglers. Teams can consist of two, three, or four people. Participants under 18 may only take part as part of a team with a parent, guardian, or relative who is 18 or older. Each team is strongly encouraged to include a Veteran as part of the crew. Tournament officials reserve the right to refuse entry to any participant.

3. REGULATIONS AND SAFETY

All contestants must follow United States Coast Guard and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks regulations. All boats are required to carry state-mandated safety equipment. Boats may be inspected before and during the tournament.

4. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE

Pre-tournament fishing is allowed at any time before the Friday night rules meeting.

5. SPORTSMANSHIP

Contestants are expected to be courteous, safety-conscious, and to practice fundamental sportsmanship at all times. Unsafe or unsportsmanlike conduct may lead to penalties or disqualification.

6. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT

Artificial and live bait are allowed. Importing bait fish into South Dakota by anglers is prohibited. Each boat can use up to four rods in total, no matter the team size. Stringers and baskets are not permitted. All boats and equipment may be inspected.

7. FISHING AREA

The designated fishing area is Lake Thompson. Participants may fish near the bridge dividing Lake Thompson and Lake Henry. Fishing under the bridge or in Lake Henry is not allowed.

8. FISHING CONDUCT

It is illegal for two contestant boats to come within proximity of each other during tournament hours. Fishing contestants must maintain a minimum distance of 50 feet from other contestants while fishing. Contestants are not allowed to leave their boat at any time to land fish, untangle lines or lures, or for any non-emergency reason. All boats are only permitted to land at the designated tournament headquarters during tournament hours.

9. TOURNAMENT HOURS AND FLIGHTS

Tournament fishing will begin upon launch and will continue for up to eight hours. Boats must return to the launch area no later than eight hours after the assigned launch time. Two launch flights will be used, with launch times of 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. Flight assignments will be announced at the rules meeting.

10. FISH HANDLING

Contestants must use live wells or coolers to keep fish as fresh as possible during the tournament. Fish that appear questionable due to poor handling, such as white gills, soft flesh, or sunken eyes, will not be counted, and the team may be disqualified. Only contestants are allowed to handle fish before the weigh-in.

11. SCORING AND LIMITS

Each boat is allowed to catch up to eight walleyes in total. Six walleyes will be weighed per boat. Only walleyes measuring at least 15 inches will count. No more than two walleyes over 20 inches per boat may be weighed. No other species is eligible for a weigh-in.

12. WEIGHING FISH

The fish weighing scale will be open all day. All rigs must drive through the weigh station line immediately after leaving the water. Boats are not allowed to park and then carry their catch to the scale. Only contestants are permitted to handle or touch the catch until it is presented to the officials at the scale. One team member must stay with the catch until its weight is verified and the scale ticket is signed.

13. LATE PENALTIES

Contestants returning later than the prescribed time will incur a five percent penalty per minute. Teams returning more than 15 minutes late will be disqualified. Failure to report in will result in disqualification.

14. NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN BOAT

No alcohol permitted for participants until after weigh-in.

No alcohol or open containers allowed on stage or in photos.

15. PAYOUTS, CALCUTTA, BIG FISH POT, AND SILENT AUCTION

Tournament prizes will be awarded to teams based on total weight. Standard payouts are 80 percent of the total entries received, with 20 percent supporting Community Action for Veterans. Prize amounts will be announced after final verification.

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A Calcutta auction and an optional Big Fish Pot will be offered in conjunction with the tournament. Participation in each is optional. Both will follow an 80 percent payout to participating teams, with 20 percent supporting Community Action for Veterans. Calcutta bidding procedures, Big Fish Pot eligibility, and payout determinations will be reviewed at the rules meeting. Big Fish Pot participation will be selected during tournament registration.

A silent auction may be held in conjunction with the tournament. Silent auction procedures and item details will be announced separately and are not subject to tournament scoring or payout rules.

16. PROTESTS

Any contestant has the right to protest rules or violations committed by another contestant during the tournament. Such protests must be submitted in writing to tournament officials by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the tournament. A \$50 protest fee must accompany the complaint. The fee will be refunded if the protest is upheld. The protester must be available during the review. Tournament officials' decisions are final in all cases.

17. HEADQUARTERS AND CHECK-IN

Tournament headquarters will be at the designated state ramp or recreation area. Each team must check in and out with tournament officials. Weather conditions might require moving the tournament headquarters. Any changes will be announced at the rules meeting.

18. WEATHER AND CANCELLATION

Tournament officials reserve the right to delay, shorten, or cancel the tournament due to weather or water conditions that may endanger the lives of contestants or tournament staff.

19. FINAL AUTHORITY

Tournament officials intend to provide an honest and sportsmanlike tournament. Interpretation of these rules is left exclusively to the officials, and their decisions shall be final in all matters.