

Official National Walleye Tour (NWT) 2023 Rules - Strict adherence to the following rules is required by all contestants. Additionally, it is suggested that co-anglers help share fuel expenses each day of competition to help offset the high cost of boat operation. NWT also recommends the use of livewell additives to help promote the healthy release of fish. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 first and then notify the tournament director ASAP. (Modified 1/16/23)

ALWAYS CHECK EACH SPECIFIC EVENTS FACT SHEET FOR THAT EVENT'S DETAILS.

1. Rules, Safety Regulations, Interpretation & Enforcement

Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director whose decisions are final in all matters and are not subject to any appeal. Contestants agree to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. In the event of a rule violation, officials may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate including, without limitation, fines, forfeiture of prizes or weight, in all or in part, by fish, by day or overall, disqualification and/or prohibition from future participation.

2. Payback, Participation & Entry

Payback includes cash and prizes and is based in part on number of paid entries in each event. National Walleye Tour (NWT) participants must be active members of NWT or join/pay the membership at time of registration for your first event each year. Memberships are non-transferable and non-refundable and expire on 12/31 each year. All credit card transactions will incur a 3% credit card fee which is non-refundable.

Participation is open only to members of NWT who are 16 years of age or older. Any person under the age of 18 (19 in Alabama and Nebraska) must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian on the liability release. Each participant must complete, agree to and submit an official entry form with payment by the due dates. During any "official" tournament days no contestant may use a boat unless they have documented proof of boating liability coverage in reasonable amounts on that particular boat that covers all claims connected with the event. **Proof of insurance must be with the boat and/or produced upon request. Random checks may be conducted at events.**

NWT reserves the right to refuse participation, (including championships) to anyone for any reason including, but not limited to, suspension, disqualification or banning from this or other events, criminal behavior, felony convictions, or any unsportsmanlike behavior that would reflect dishonorably on our sport. All contestants must have a valid fishing license, produce it upon request and follow all state and federal regulations for the waters they fish.

Pro and Co-angler entry: - No refunds once confirmed in. All Pro-anglers and all Co-anglers will make entry separately and independently into the events of their choice. Correct SSN#'s is required at time of entry, no exceptions. Entry fee is \$1,750 for Pro's/\$500 for Co's for each event, there will be. Payout at each event is over 100% in cash and prizes, (Final payouts will be announced at the tournament briefing.)

Pro-Anglers – Entries will open for Pros, 9am CT Thursday January 12, 2023. Those who enter and pay for all 4 events at once (a \$7,000 one-time charge, plus 3% CC fees) before **March 1, 2022** will gain entry before all other Pros that enter less than 4 events at once. There are NO refunds if you sign-up for all four at once and NO refunds once confirmed into an event. No exceptions. All entries will be based on date/time they were marked complete and paid. With a verifiable emergency the tournament director may at his sole discretion allow an entry fee to be transferred to another event.

Co-Anglers – Entries will open for Co's, 9am CT Thursday January 12, 2023. Those who enter and pay for all 4 events at once (a \$2,000 one-time charge, plus 3% CC fees) before **March 1, 2022** will gain entry before all other Co's that enter less than 4 events at once. There are NO refunds if you sign up for all four at once and NO refunds once confirmed into an event. No exceptions. All entries will be based on date/time they were marked competed and paid. With a verifiable emergency the tournament direct may at his sole discretion allow an entry fee to be transferred to another event.

All anglers are highly encouraged to enter online at NationalWalleyeTour.com starting at 9am January 12, 2023. Entries may also be made by mail, 5998 N Pleasant View Road, Ponca City, Ok 74601, or by phone (580-765-9031.) ALL entries paid with credit card will incur a non-refundable 3% CC fee. ALL entry types including mailed entries, and payments must be received by the entry closing date on Friday two weeks prior. **If, you use mail track your shipment and MAIL EARLY we must receive it in hand before the deadline.** A fee will be applied to all declined checks. Do not make entry by more than one method. Once entered into a tournament you will immediately receive an email invoice with

links to important details. It is your responsibility to confirm receipt of entry.

Angler Advantage (AA) is an OPTIONAL payout bracket anglers can choose to get into if they wish. An additional \$250 (pro) or \$100 (co-angler) is the OPTIONAL AA fee in addition to the standard entry fee and will be 100% cash payback minus CC fees. It is payable only to those anglers who pay into it. If you do not understand how AA works ask an official before signing up. All entry fees including AA entries must be made before entry registration closes on Friday 2-weeks prior to the event. **Anglers Advantage entry's CANNOT be paid on-site in 2023.** It is unknown how many will enter AA program for each event, however an example of 125 Pro's & Co's entering AA is listed on the website.

No refunds will be made or credit extended for any cancellation by an angler. Disqualification from a tournament for any reason will result in forfeiture of entry fees. No refunds or credits are extended to anglers that choose not to fish due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances.

3. Point Standings

200 points are awarded to the winner of each qualifying tournament, 199 to 2nd, 198 to 3rd, etc. All anglers who receive weight credit will receive points. The top 40 pros and co-anglers from the final point standings qualify for the Championship. If the pro-angler and co-angler field is not even, we will continue down the points list until there is a full field of 40 boats.

NEW for 2023! Qualifying Tournament Winners -Once the above 40 field is set, NWT may at its sole discretion, add any NWT Pro or Co who wins a qualifying event during the season to that championship field of 40. **If, a.)** They are not already qualified and into it and **b.)** As long as that angler actually fished all days of all four regular season events. Then NWT will pull up the next highest angler in the pro/co standings as the case may be, to even the field if needed.

The NWT Championship will be a NO entry fee event for NWT Pro-Anglers. The Championship Co-Anglers will pay an entry fee of \$500 which will be paid back more than 100% in cash and prizes. Both Pros and Co-Anglers may get into the optional Anglers Advantage pots before the registration deadlines, if they so choose.

Angler of The Year Points- Pro & Co-Anglers - All 5 scores (4 qualifier points and the championship points) from a season will combine to award the AOY prizes.

4. Purchasing Of Information

The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted 30 days prior to first tournament day of the event.

5. Off-limits, Practice & Competition

Competitors must be paid in full (Entry fees and AA fees) the Friday, 2 weeks before each event to participate. Competitors must be off the water by 3pm the evening before the 1st day of competition. After this time participants are prohibited from fishing or pre-fishing on tournament waters except during designated tournament hours. Participants must 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 an equipment test-run are needed on the water without a sponsor service tech on board then an NWT official must give pre-approval before getting on the water for equipment testing.

Qualifying events will have (2) scheduled competition days with full field fishing both days. Pros and co-anglers fish together for a combined daily boat weight and each will carry that weight forward. Winners determined by heaviest cumulative weight for all days fished.

In the event severe weather threatens, tournament waters may be altered or a day of competition canceled. Tournament director in his sole discretion may or may not add only one (1) blow day depending on location, permits and availability. If a blow day cannot be added and conditions dictate that we are unable to finish, the results will be based on days fished.

The championship event will be a three-day event with the full field of pros and co-anglers fishing the first two days and the final 10 pros and co-anglers fishing the final day. Winners determined by heaviest cumulative weight for all days fished. A blow day on either of the first two days will be lost. The top 10 will fish the final day of the championship if it is at all possible and safe, even if the waters have to be altered or restricted.

During competition days, pros may not follow a non-contestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers by non-contestant's or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. Co-angler's who share a pro partner's fishing locations with another contestant will be disqualified along with the contestant requesting and/or using the information. On cut days, once the cut is made, anglers still fishing cannot get information or assistance from anglers who were cut.

During competition hours from takeoff until check-in, all on-water communication by contestants (excluding partners in the same boat) for the purposes of locating or catching fish is strictly prohibited.

Flights over tournament waters are not permitted 30 days prior to first tournament day.

6. Pretournament & Pairing Meeting

On-site registration and the rules briefing is mandatory. Check each event fact sheet for exact details. Each contestant should receive an entry verification with dates, time and location of that meeting. Please follow those directions for each event. If you do not receive this information, it is your responsibility to contact us and gather it. Contestants not present or represented for pairings may forfeit their entry fee and not be entered in the tournament.

In a verifiable emergency an angler **MUST** request permission from the tournament director to send a person 16 years of age or older to represent them. If permission is granted, non-contestants can represent one person; contestants can represent themselves and one other person. This representative must attend the full meeting to meet your partner, exchange full contact info, and gather all details (flights, takeoff/check in times, boat #, off-limits, size & creel limits, and exact location to meet prior to takeoff. Any contestant who does not attend in person or uses a representative, gives up any claims of lack of knowledge on any subject or rule. Otherwise, if an angler (or his pre-approved representative) arrives 15 minutes or more late without approval they will be removed from the event and forfeit all entry fees.

7. Pairings

Pros and Co-anglers will be paired by random draw. All contestants or their representatives must contact their assigned partners following the pretournament meeting. Partners should advise each other of their respective lodging and phone numbers and **establish a meeting time and place away from the boat ramp** for the following morning's takeoff. The tournament director, at his sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to takeoff.

8. Safety

Safe boating must be observed at all times. Boat operators are solely responsible for the safe operation of their vessel at all times, and responsible for the safety of any and all passengers. Participants must abide by all local navigation laws and avoid restricted areas at all times. Each contestant is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved type III or greater chest type personal flotation device anytime the boat is on plane.

Officials may restrict or alter tournament waters and reserve the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. In the event of lightning, severe weather, limited visibility or any unsafe condition, participants should remove themselves from competition and seek safety or shelter until it is safe to continue. Participants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except in case of emergency. Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer if required. The horsepower rating of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this plate. Changing or altering standard factory motor parts to increase horsepower over factory rated horsepower is forbidden. Each contestant agrees to submit their boat and/or motor to an inspection, if so requested by NWT.

At the sole discretion of the tournament director, tournament days or waters may be altered, shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions.

9. Sportsmanship

Participants will conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike, courteous, safe and ethical manner at all times maintaining professional demeanor in public and in communication with officials. Any unfavorable conduct, speech or action by a participant in our efforts to promote sportsmanship, clean waters and conservation can be grounds for disqualification. Each competitor is expected to participate in the marshaling of the field to help maintain the highest integrity of competition. Use of or possession in the boat of alcohol or marijuana/cannabis products, ("medical" or otherwise) or any mind-altering drugs by any participant during the official event or tournament days or in our weigh-in process area and/or any use by the final day designated "leaders" until any polygraph examinations are complete will not be tolerated and shall be cause for disqualification. Any incidents observed during tournament hours should be reported to tournament officials for investigation. Any violation of these basic sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. In case of conduct not complying with these standards, NWT shall have the right at its sole discretion to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete by returning the entry or to disqualify a contestant.

10. Boat Operation

Pros will make all decisions regarding boat operations and waters to be fished. Pros must provide all presentation equipment such as downriggers, planer boards, side planers, rods, reels, bait, line and terminal tackle for their own use and the use of their co-angler partners. With the exception of two rods and reels, co-anglers are not permitted to bring tackle into their pro's boat without permission from the pro. **Co-anglers are HIGHLY encouraged to bring their own PFD to ensure comfort as well as a safe and proper fit.** The use of mobile communication devices, including but not limited to, cell phones, texting, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc., during tournament hours is strictly prohibited except in an emergency (severe weather, breakdowns, etc.) or to communicate with lockmasters about locking or with the tournament officials.

Co-anglers are not allowed to record GPS waypoints or use any type of handheld GPS during any competition day.

Contestants are expected to compete every day for which they are qualified; failure to do so may result in ineligibility to compete in future NWT tournaments.

11. Boat, Motor & Safety Equipment

All tournament boats are required to have in their possession all Coast Guard-required safety equipment, including but not limited to approved type III or greater **CHEST TYPE** personal flotation devices, a type IV throw cushion, fire extinguisher, distress horn/flag/whistle, and display a boat marker (supplied by NWT). Great Lakes, Canadian border and some other navigable waters require flares. Tournament boats are required to have a functioning bilge pump and emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver anytime the boat is on plane. A driver must be seated behind the steering wheel or at the tiller and in full control of the boat whenever the primary combustion engine is in operation and in gear. In addition, a marine band radio is required.

All tournament boats must be cleaned of all harmful exotic aquatic species **CLEAN, DRAINED and DRY** prior to entering the water and upon departure from infected waters.

All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 16 feet in length. All boats must be equipped with wheel or tiller steering; no other steering device will be permitted. No barges or similarly cumbersome craft will be permitted unless being used as an adaptive device.

All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the boat is on plane. Each boat is required to have a fully functional marine band radio.

Boats must contain a properly aerated livewell space to maintain alive a limit catch of fish.

Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks. Optional remote engine fuel tanks must be factory- or factory-authorized-dealer installed and be strapped or otherwise secured. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle. An event official or NWT approved person may approach or board your boat at any time for any reason and at any time during the event, refusal to allow an approved official on board or any efforts to impede their work may result in disqualification.

12. Official Safety Checkpoint

Each boat MUST be given prior to each day's start, a livewell and SAFETY INSPECTION check by officials, also a boat marker, which MUST remain in or on the boat and turned in during check-in at the end of each day. NWT reserves sole discretion to assign boat numbers in any manner.

There shall be one official safety checkpoint for checkout in the morning / check-in in the afternoon. At the time of checkout/check-in all competitors and their boats shall be in full compliance with all rules set forth by officials. At check-in all boats shall identify themselves to the check in official and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. YOU MUST CHECK-IN EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FISH. Failure to go through boat checkout in the morning or failure to check in at the check-in point in the afternoon will result in disqualification. **It is each angler's responsibility to know what time they are due in.** All fishing must cease upon check-in.

13. Permitted Fishing Methods

Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line with the lure in the water. All fish must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. Live bait may be used. Trolling as a method of fishing is permitted.

No more than two fishing rods with one lure each, or one fishing rod with two lures per angler may be used at a time unless the state or lake limit is more restrictive, in which case the state or lake limit will prevail.

14. Permitted Fishing Locations

Tournament waters shall be established for each event. Any boundaries or known restricted zones will be listed on the event fact sheet and/or announced at the mandatory rules briefing and may be further altered if needed.

Contestants may fish anywhere on tournament waters available to the public and accessible by boat, except areas posted or otherwise designated as "off-limits," "no boats," "keep out," or "no fishing" (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by NWT, local, state or federal officials, or within a contestant's first-marked fishing area. A "marked fishing area" is defined as a 50-foot diameter area around a marker buoy placed by the contestant on the same day of competition. The contestant placing the buoy must remain within the marked area and may leave only to play and land a fish. When limited out or not fishing, the buoy must be picked up. A "marked fishing area" may be navigated through if it restricts access to other fishable waters.

All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Contestants must leave and return to the check-in by boat. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No tournament boat may be loaded on a trailer before the weigh-in except with the permission of the tournament director.

The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs after the start of the pretournament meeting and/or the removal of official local, state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament.

In the event of equipment failure or emergency, there are two permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both anglers remaining in their boat and being towed by water by another contestant or a designated rescue boat. (2) By one angler transferring the clearly marked fish to another boat as described above and proceeding directly to the weigh in. Only under these two conditions will contestant's catches be counted. 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. No one in a "tow, ride -in or rescue boat" is allowed to fish until after proceeding directly to weigh in site and all parties communicating directly with tournament officials. Arriving late, because of offering or needing assistance, even with the aid of a rescue boat, as the towed boat or the towing boat is still late and all late or other penalties will still apply. No exceptions.

Both parties (the team with boat trouble and team lending assistance) should file separate incident reports with tournament officials. Any angler(s) involved in a break down "Ride In" that involves transferring fish in which an angler involved wins/places high in that event, in the Tournament Officials sole opinion, **WILL BE POLYGRAPHED.**

Any contestant returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the tournament director or his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of contestants to locate the tournament director to request a restart.

15. Late Penalty

Contestants who are not at the safety check-in point at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight. Any contestant more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case will a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time." Return time shall be defined as off-plane and plainly visible to the official timekeepers.

16. Catch & Release

An 8-ounce deduction will be made for each legal fish presented to the bump master for weighing that is determined to be dead. Every boat must have adequate livewell space, properly aerated to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch by competitors using the boat. NWT recommends the use of livewell additive and ice, in warmer water months to improve oxygen levels and promote a healthy release of fish into natural habitat. Tournament Officials shall have the sole responsibility for accessing any penalty points or for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate."

17. Scoring

Scoring is determined by the combined pounds and ounces of both contestants' catch during each tournament. Pros and co-anglers fish together for a combined daily boat weight and each carries that weight forward.

Walleye, sauger and saugeye will be weighed where permissible by permit or by state law. Species, length limits and bag limits of eligible fish will be set, listed on each events fact sheet and announced prior to the start of each event.

The weigh-in limit will be five fish per boat unless the state or lake limit is less than five, in which case the state or lake limit prevails. **(Check each event's fact sheet for that events details.)** All fish weighed must be kept in aerated livewells to keep fish alive and as fresh as possible for release. Any fish mauled, mashed, frozen, stringered, containing foreign or unnaturally placed matter to add weight or showing white gills, soft flesh or other signs of decomposition in tournament official's sole discretion will result in disqualification. All balancing weights, markers, buoys or attachments must be removed before fish are presented at the bump tank. Any attachments in the bump sink will result in a 1-pound penalty. Tournament officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision. In the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, officials shall cull, starting with the largest fish first, etc., down to the stated limit.

Fish will be measured by a tournament official with fish's mouth closed and longest straight line. Only fish which measure the official length(s) shall be weighed-in. Any fish presented for weigh-in which fails to measure the official length limits shall accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each non-legal fish plus loss of that fish. Once a competitor's catch has been presented to officials, they may not add to or later their catch or return to their boat until that catch has been recorded.

Each contestant's catch must be presented in an official weigh bag.

18. Ties

Tie breakers are as follows. 1.) Most number of legal fish weighed, 2.) Most number of legal fish weighed alive, 3.) Heaviest single days catch, 4.) Second heaviest single days catch, 5.) Means selected by tournament director. However, no cash awards will be given to any zero weights. Ties for AOY will be broken by total weight for all 4 regular season tournaments combined, then number of fish for the year, number of live fish for the year, heaviest single days catch, second heaviest single days catch and means selected by tournament director.

19. Protests & Truth Verification Tests

RANDOM TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS WILL BE GIVEN. An official written protest with \$100 fee must be made with a tournament official within 15 minutes of the last flight check in time OR within 10 minutes of the last fish being weighed that day, whichever is latest. The fee will be returned if the protest is found valid. Tournament officials, in their sole discretion, reserve the right to consider rule violations reported or not and discovered at any time for any reason, by any persons, before or after a tournament has ended and assess penalties for any past or future event including denying entry to compete. Following interviews with concerned parties or truth verification testing if required, a final ruling will be made. In the event rules infractions occurred a penalty of daily and/or tournament weight may be applied, and cash, prizes and awards must be returned if so requested. If a protest is found valid, the disqualified party must pay all investigative costs.

Each participant agrees with submission of their entry form and by their participation in the event, to submit to a polygraph

or voice stress analyzer test or Truth Verification Test, should they be asked to for any reason and to abide by its conclusion. Tournament officials shall have sole discretion to select scope, when, where and who shall administer such an exam. Participant will make themselves available at their own expense for testing as scheduled. In the official's sole discretion, refusal to submit to exam or failure to pass a truth verification exam will result in disqualification.

20. Insurance

Liability insurance with coverage of not less than \$300,000 per occurrence is required of all pro contestants in NWT tournaments. The Pro angler is solely responsible for the safe operation of the vessel at all times, and responsible for the safety of any passengers aboard. Said insurance must be issued by a reputable insurer and must cover all injury and/or damage incurred in connection with this Tournament and cover the dates of the event(s). Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat. Random checks will be conducted. Failure to provide proof of insurance when requested by the tournament director may result in disqualification.

21. Media Coverage

Contestants are required to comply with all requests (including but not limited to: video, still camera, access to boat and access to fishing area) made by NWT film crew for the purpose of gathering media coverage throughout events. Failure to coordinate with and accommodate the NWT film crew needs will result in disqualification of that event.

22. Live Streaming by Competitors During Final Day Only

Competitors are allowed to post one live stream on the final tournament day only to the social media channel of their choice (Facebook, You Tube, etc.) No websites are allowed. Competitors are allowed to start the stream at takeoff and can stream all day until boat check in. However, if at any time the stream drops competitors are not allowed to reconnect and start the live stream again. Competitors must tag National Walleye Tour on the page they are streaming to.

23. Awards

Participants are responsible for all applicable taxes on all cash and prizes.

24. Captions

The captions at the beginning of each paragraph are intended to facilitate convenience in referring to the various rules. The captions are not part of the substance of the paragraph and should not be used in construction of any paragraph or of this overall set of rules.



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For questions contact us at 580-765-9031 or email NWT@OutdoorTeamworks.com