

MASTERS WALLEYE CIRCUIT 2009 OFFICIAL RULES

I. PARTICIPATION & ENTRY

A. Each team must complete, sign and submit an official MWC entry form along with payment by the published due dates. **Late fees apply within 30 days of the tournament date** and can be substantial if a team waits until the last week to sign up. Late fees always kick in on Thursday's at Noon (CST). Two Thursday's prior to the tournament, the late fee will be \$400. Three Thursday's prior to the tournament, the late fee will be \$100. Five Thursday's prior to the tournament, the late fee will be \$50.

B. Contestants must enter as two-person 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. No persons under age 12 may participate as contestants. Partner changes can be made up until the start of the rules meeting.

C. MWC participants must pay for a new MWC membership at the time of registration of their first tournament of the year. Memberships expire on 12/31/09. Memberships are non-transferable and cost **\$40 per person per year or \$45 per family per year** (2 people at the same address).

D. MWC does not discriminate based on race, creed, color or gender. MWC is not required to accept all applications and retains sole discretion on acceptance or rejection of any application.

E. **The entry fee (without late fees) for each team per tournament is \$800.** Payment must accompany each entry. Money order, check or credit cards are acceptable payments (VISA, Mastercard, Discover and American Express). Mailing address is MWC, 12301 Whitewater Drive, PO Box 3425, Minnetonka, MN 55343. Fax is 952-988-7250.

F. **Early Bird** entries must enter all events in a division, and will be accepted from 8 a.m. on Tuesday, January 6, 2009 through Noon on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. Installment billing is an option. If installment billing is elected each tournament fee (**including the first tournament**) will be due 30-35 days prior to the tournament date. A \$20 processing fee will be applied to all declined credit cards or NSF checks. **Early Bird teams are obligated to pay for all tournaments selected on their initial registration form, regardless of circumstances that change throughout the season. MWC Challenge tournaments are just as binding as the division tournaments** and may be included in an early bird team's registration and installment billed accordingly. Early bird teams will be given the same boat number for all their division tournaments.

G. **Non Early Bird entries open** Tuesday, January 6, 2009. Entries may be faxed or mailed to MWC headquarters or submitted online. Any single or multiple entries received prior to February 2, 2009, will be held and processed as though they were received on February 1, 2009. On February 2nd any openings not filled from early bird teams will be filled from the single or multiple entries. If there are more entries than openings a random drawing from these entries will be held until a tournament is filled. **Non Early Bird entries must submit payment in full for all tournament fees at the time of entry application. No refunds or credits are extended (see section II –B below).**

H. Entries will be accepted based on a first-come, first-served basis until the tournament is full (based on when received at MWC office, not regarding any postmark). Rosters will be updated on the MWC website (www.masterswalleyecircuit.com). Please check to make sure your entry has been received.

I. Each tournament will be considered full with 200 boats; however, we will accept up to 10% overbooking and will send a maximum of 220 boats out for any one tournament.

II. REFUNDS & CREDIT

A. **No refunds apply at any time.** No refunds will be made to non-early bird teams, nor will credit will be extended for any cancellations to non-early bird teams. Disqualification from a tournament for any reason will result in forfeiture of entry fee. **No refunds or credits are extended to teams that choose not to fish due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances.**

B. At the discretion of the Director, a credit may extend to an early bird team if a life-threatening emergency situation (or death in the family) has arisen that has caused the early bird team to miss a tournament. Credit must carry over to the identical team the following year or it is forfeited. If more than one tournament is cancelled the team forfeits any claim to

the additional entry fees paid. If the team splits the credit is forfeited. No refunds will be made. Any requests for credit extensions must be made in writing to the MWC office.

III. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE, REGISTRATION & RULES MEETING

A. All MWC participants must be **off plane and within site of the boat launch and no longer fishing by 2 p.m. the day of the registration and rules meeting.** If there's an emergency, please contact the director immediately at 612-710-5584(cell). There are no restrictions on how early a team can pre-fish as long as state law is followed.

B. **At least one team participant must sign in at the registration and rules meeting** held the afternoon/evening prior to each tournament. In the case of an emergency or unforeseen situation, arrangements must be made with the a tournament official if you are unable to attend (**Cell: 612-710-5584**). Otherwise, if a team arrives 16 minutes or more late they will not be allowed to fish the tournament.

IV. TOURNAMENT INTEGRITY, POLICY & SAFETY

A. Contestants will conduct themselves in a true sportsmanlike, courteous, safe and ethical manner at all times maintaining professional demeanor in public and in communication with tournament officials. 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 on an Incident Report for further investigation. Incident reports carry no fee and are appropriate for communicating issues that would require warnings but not necessarily lead to disqualification. If a team feels an incident has progressed to the point of needing protest they should move to that level of official reporting.

B. Any tournament official or participating MWC angler has a right to protest another team. An official written protest with \$150 fee must be made with a tournament official within 1 hour of completion of daily weigh-in. The fee will be returned if the protest is found valid. Following interviews with concerned parties, a 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. A polygraph or CVS Voice Stress Analyzer may be utilized. If the protest is valid the disqualified party must pay all investigative costs.

C. The Director will interpret these rules according to the spirit and intent of the rule and his/her decision in any dispute is final.

D. All MWC tournaments will be conducted as catch and release events unless specified otherwise by state law.

E. MWC reserves sole discretion to assign boat numbers in any manner.

F. All tournament boats will be inspected to have all the Coast Guard required safety equipment, including a type IV throw cushion, fire extinguisher, a distress horn/flag/whistle, and display tournament decal credentials. Great Lakes and border water tournaments require flares. All tournament boats are recommended to have a marine band radio. Tournament boats will also be inspected for functioning and empty live-wells. All tournament boats must be cleaned of all harmful exotic aquatic plants prior to entering the water and upon departure from infected waters.

G. All teams are subject to official inspection during the tournament and agrees 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 safety purposes only. Only friendly non-fishing conversation between competitors is allowed during tournament hours. No Internet access is allowed, nor is text messaging, paging, or walk-talkie to another person during tournament hours to gain fishing information. MWC may request cell phone records in the course of investigation and all contestants agree to provide such records if requested of them. Please review and follow the "Trouble On The Water Procedures" as listed on the MWC website and handed out at each tournament.

H. Contestants agree to 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. 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.

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

L. All MWC 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 at the rules meeting and may be further restricted if needed. Contestants must abide by all local navigation laws and avoid restricted areas at all times.

M. All participants must check-in each morning before take-off and check-in each afternoon with the official timekeepers.

Failure to check in at the end of the day could result in a \$50 fine.

N. Contestants who return 1 to 15 minutes later than their assigned flight time will forfeit one-half of their fish weight for that day. Contestants who return 16 or more minutes later than their assigned flight time will forfeit their total fish weight for that day. Returned is defined as off-plane and visible by the timekeepers.

O. 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 an MWC staff members or sponsor service technician should ride along.

P. MWC 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 at the rules meeting. Only fish caught on hook and line in a normal and usual manner will be accepted. Live bait and artificial lures are permissible.

Q. All fish weighed must be kept in aerated live wells to keep fish alive and as fresh as possible for release. Any fish mauled, mashed, frozen, stringered, injected with water or other fluids, containing foreign matter to add weight or showing white gills, soft flesh or eyes (as per a tournament official) will result in disqualification. An external snap weight, whose purpose is to keep fish alive/upright in the livewell, should be removed before arriving at the bump tank. Failure to do so would result in a zero for the day.

R. A .20 lb. deduction will be made for each fish determined to be non-releasable in a catch and release tournament.

S. Walleye, sauger and saugeye will be weighed where permissible by state law. The minimum length (if applicable) and maximum limit of eligible fish will be set for each tournament and will be announced at each event.

T. The official ruler will be "The Judge." 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).

U. If a "short" or "long" 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" or "long" fish to the scale, the team will be disqualified from that MWC tournament.

V. SCORING, POINTS, PAYOUT & SPECIAL AWARDS

A. Scoring shall be determined by the pound weight of each team's catch during the tournament. Each team's total weight will determine the final tournament standings. If a tie occurs any cash awards of the two or more finishers will be added together and divided equally to each team, however, no cash awards will be given to any zero weights.

B. The first place team at each tournament will receive the number of points equal to the number of boats registered descending down to the last team with a weight. All teams with no weight will receive one less point than the lowest weight. Teams must check-in and launch on the first tournament day to be eligible for Division or Challenge points or to be counted as a Division or Challenge team.

C. Points are distributed to teams and may not be transferred in the event of partner changes. A partner change constitutes a new team.

D. To qualify for the 2010 MWC World Walleye Championship, teams must fish at a minimum, three tournaments to complete a division. Championship field size will be determined as a percentage for any Division with a minimum of 5% of unique teams. However, if a Division reaches 60% to 69.99% capacity during the year, the percentage will increase to 6%. If 70% to 79.99% - 7%. If 80% to 89.99% - 8%. If 90 to 99.99%- 9%. If 100% - 10% not to exceed 40 teams per division. All percentages are rounded down. If a tie occurs for the final points position all tied teams will all be invited to fish in the Championship. Teams can only qualify for the championship once, and the order they will be taken will be MWC West, MWC East, MWC Central, then MWC Challenge, Winner of 2009 NTC and winner of 2009 World Walleye Championship. MWC Challenge refers to completing a division plus adding at least one more tournament outside the division. The top 20% of the eligible MWC Challenge teams, rounded down, skipping over any teams that qualified previously. Please see handout on MWC website and distributed at rules meeting regarding point calculations. The formula used for calculating MWC Challenge points will be finishing position divided by number of boats, times 100 taken to the 100th decimal place (rounded down).

E. The MWC tournament payout will be based on the number of total teams entered in each tournament with a minimum payback of 80% of the entry fee distributed to 20% of the field (all fractions will be rounded down and payout will not exceed 35 teams).

F. Each Division Team of the Year title will be awarded to the team with the most total points taken from all three MWC division tournaments. Points cannot cross divisions. The Division Team of the Year will receive 65% of \$30 per unique team in the division. If a tie occurs for the Team of Year title, the team earning the highest points at any one tournament that year will determine the tiebreaker. The remaining 35% will be distributed equally to 2nd through 5th place teams. The overall MWC Team of the Year shall come from the MWC Challenge. The team with the least amount of points in this case (see D. above) will receive 65% of \$20,000, the remaining 35% will be distributed equally to 2nd through 5th place.

VI. WALLEYE CONSERVATION

A. As part of our commitment to the preservation of habitat and management of fish and wildlife, all MWC contestants will donate money for walleye fishery projects throughout the states where tournaments are held. Entry fees include a walleye conservation donation of \$15 per team. Local communities/areas/clubs can use the funds for fisheries enhancement projects. The conservation portion of each registration fee is tax deductible.

VII. ANGLER'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 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 Official(s) 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 understand there are **never refunds** for tournament entry fees.

B. Release of Liability: I acknowledge that I am participating voluntarily in the Masters Walleye Circuit. I agree to assume all risk of injury, death, damages, theft and loss to personal property, which may result from my participation in the MWC 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.