



2025

Sunset Bay Walleye Shoot Out

Tournament Rules & Regulations



Official 2025 Tournament Rules & Regulations

Our rules are designed to provide an even playing field for all tournament teams. They are presented to be straight forward and easy to follow.

We continuously monitor the state of the lake with regards to fish populations & fish year (classes), catch ability & opportunity, longevity/life spans, harvest impacts, future conversation participation and overall best strategy for the success of the tournament and enjoyment of the anglers. Our fishery is truly in an amazing position, and we are excited about the future for many years to come. This rule book contains several new rules and adjustments to not only protect the fishery but provide an efficient weigh-in show for Big Fish Friday and Main Event Saturday; as well as provide the fleet with an effective and enjoyable timeline through all phases of the tournament.

New Rules, additions, changes for 2025 are highlighted in **RED**.

Please read and understand each of the tournament rules in their entirety and share with your team. Please ensure that all rules, regulations, processes, and payouts are clearly understood prior to registering for the tournament.



**Great Lakes Fishery
Commission**

Captains Meeting – Thursday, July 17th @ 7:00 PM
Registration opens at 5 PM

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2025 Rules & Regulations:

- 1.) Tournament hours will be:
Big Fish Friday: 6:00 am to 3:30 pm, Friday, July 18th 2025 (Reference rules to Big Fish Friday)
Main Event: 7:00 am to 3:30 pm, Saturday July 19th 2025. (Foul weather date will be Sunday, July 20th)
- 2.) Main Event - There will be a shotgun-start from Sunset Bay, off the pier heads. There will be a fleet send-off boat (to be announced at the captain's meeting). The shotgun will start at 7:00 am sharp. Departure prior to will result in disqualification.
- 3.) The official fishing boundary waters for the tournament are New York State waters of Lake Erie and Upper Niagara River only.
- 4.) A maximum of up to nine (9) rods/reels per boat, in the water at any one time per team.
- 5.) Boats must have a minimum of two (2) to a maximum (6) anglers per boat. Anglers must be at least 12 years of age to participate. All anglers must have a valid NYS license.
- 6.) All walleye entered must be caught by hook, line, rod and reel on legal angling tackle.
- 7.) The Team "Puck" and "Zip-Tie" will be issued at the captain's meeting.
- 8.) There are no boat checks the morning of the main event. Simply proceed to the pier heads for a 7:00 shot gun start.
- 9.) The puck must be returned to tournament officials when you drop your fish cooler at our drop off station (for Saturday's main event). Coolers will not be accepted without the team puck.
- 10.) Two (2) team numbers will be provided (port and starboard); it is the team Captains responsibility to clearly post them in a visible position for Big Fish Friday and Main Event Saturday.
- 11.) Tournament boats cannot contact each other at any point or time once your boat departs from its dock/launch to start the day. No boat is allowed to float or pass equipment, fish, bait, ice, coolers, food or drink between them, at any point of day.
- 12.) There is a NO-stop fishing time, however, your boat must return past the pier head check point NO LATER than 3:30 PM Sharp! Tournament officials will be documenting each team/boat time of return at the pier heads.
- 13.) Team coolers must be dropped off at the Official Tournament Cooler Drop Off Station by 4:30 pm. This is for both Big Fish Friday and Main Event Saturday. All culling must be completed prior to fish being dropped off to the cooler drop of station. Please place the walleye flat, heads in the same direction with largest walleye on top with zip tie in its mouth.

- 14.) Once fish coolers are dropped off and in the possession of tournament officials, they will be sealed and labeled. Tournament coolers cannot be re-opened by the team from this point on. Coolers will be opened by fish handlers at the weigh-in stage only. If a team attempts to access any cooler at any time they will be immediately disqualified.
- 15.) **Cooler Condition - Your coolers must be in presentable/working condition. Clean, no broken lids, leaking bottoms, broken handles, cracked sides. Be professional**
- 16.) **Cooler Functionality - Fish must fit in your cooler in a horizontal position (flat), no mini coolers or buckets with head or tail of fish sticking upward.**
- 17.) **No fish bags are allowed**
- 18.) All fees (example: slip fees, launch fees, lodging fees etc.) are the responsibility of each team.
- 19.) All boats must depart and return with their days catch under their own power with full team. Jumping boats or transferring coolers is not allowed.
- 20.) The tournament is considered a NO-COMMUNICATION event for the MAIN EVENT only. This means no communication can be conducted with anyone to enhance your fishing opportunity. The no communication rule begins at 5:30 am and concludes at 3:30 pm for the main event.
- 21.) Each team presenting a cooler on stage for weigh-in (either Big Fish Friday or Main Event Saturday) must be in matching team T-shirts or team jerseys for the team to present together. If not, only one person from the team will be allowed on stage to present the box.
- 22.) No ripped, bloody t-shirts, tank-tops or cut off sweatpants etc. are allowed. No smoking is allowed on stage. Present yourself & team in a professional manner.
- 23.) Any abuse, verbal or otherwise, directed towards the tournament committee members, its volunteers or supporting staff will result in immediate disqualification. NO Exceptions.
- 24.) Any verbal or physical abuse between two teams will result in immediate disqualification of both teams. Zero confrontation amongst teams will be tolerated. Both teams will be removed with NO refunds.
- 25.) Posted payouts are based on a full fleet of 200 boats/teams registered in the tournament.
- 26.) Any angler or team that is found confirmed of any rule infraction on either Big Fish Friday or Main event, will disqualify that team from any winnings for either day.
- 27.) Competitors cannot go ashore once they have departed dock or launch ramp. All boats must leave the Cattaraugus creek by water and return by water for the main event. To touch land anywhere else will result in disqualification.

- 28.) Any disqualification, no shows, being late or any means of non-participation from the tournament will not result in a refund.
- 29.) Any abuse or misuse of the facilities/property of the Sunset Bay Marina, Cabana Sam's, Sunset Bay Beach Club, Cottage Rentals, Hanover Launch Ramp, Snow Marina, Hidden Harbor Marina, Private docks etc. and/or its staff will result in immediate disqualification.
- 30.) The Lake is considered closed after 3:30pm on Big Fish Friday until the shotgun start main event.
- 31.) Any/All, New York State & Federal income taxes forthcoming from payouts and prizes received from the Sunset Bay Walleye Shoot Out are the sole responsibility of the recipient team. Sunset Bay tournament staff, sponsors, committees, volunteers etc. are not liable for any taxes due to any groups or people receiving income from our event.
- 32.) Each team presents their box at weigh in for the main event; the box must contain six (6) walleyes. Boxes with 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 fish (walleyes) will NOT be accepted. Team boxes with any more than six (6) fish, or any less than six (6) fish will not be weighed and scored.
- 33.) Each walleye within the legal six (6) fish box must be at least 24" in length to qualify as a legal walleye to weigh. The requirement is a quantity of six (6) walleyes, 24" each or larger.
- 34.) One (1) Exception: Largest Walleye – should you not have a legal box of six (6) fish, all over 24", but have a true trophy fish, it will be permissible to weigh that one fish. That one (1) and only one fish can be presented to maintain competitive for Largest Walleye of the main event as well as Big Eye Calcutta. However, this fish must be a minimum of 28" in length to qualify. If presenting this fish, this will be the only fish and only species in the box for the weigh-in.
- 35.) The largest walleye within the legal six (6) fish box will be identified with the zip-tie provided at the tournament captains' meeting. This fish, within the six (6) fish legal box does not have to be 28". That rule (above) is only for teams with non-six fish boxes to provide them an opportunity to weigh a trophy. Please place the largest fish on top of your catch in the cooler.
- 36.) In the highly unlikely event, should we not get twenty (20) legal 6-fish coolers presented for the main event. The open payout spots will be combined and added to the first-place team.
- 37.) In the highly unlikely event should we not get three (3) legal 6-fish coolers presented for the Big Wave Calcutta for their division, the entry fee of \$1,000.00 will be returned to those teams.
- 38.) NO water baths are allowed, for either Big Fish Friday or Main Event Saturday. This means NO water in your coolers or live wells. NO water inside either at any point on the water or in cooler in line. NO loose Ice or Ice lodging

- 39.) Additionally, but not limited to; NO 'stuffing' of fish with other fish of any species; the injection of any materials (ground bait, whole bait, water, lead, sand or other foreign materials) is allowed. This is to also include no external modifications, such as rubber banding of the fish's mouth, plugging of the anus, weight clipping of the gills, fizzing (releasing air) or injecting air, towel wrapping, vacuum sealing of the fish, clubbing or orgy-dorfining of the fish. Nothing is to impede the natural digression of the fish. Any fish found being altered in any manner to increase the fish's weight is unacceptable and will result in immediate disqualification.
- 40.) Simply place your fish in your cooler or live well and cover with contained ice. Contained ice is defined as bagged ice, block ice, frozen water jugs or containers, etc. No loose ice or water is to be present in your coolers or live wells.
- 41.) All fish presented to tournament weigh in officials become property of the tournament until released back to the tournament team. All fish, either landing in the payout structure or not, will be inspected and reviewed as each team exits the tournament stage. This includes, but not limited to, visual inspection, metal detection, rod probing, external stomach inspection and opening of the fish if required.
- 42.) **Technological Advancements – There are no limitations to the use of any technological advancements relating to electronics, specifically forward-facing sonar applications. This technology is permissible and allowed to be used within the tournament.**
- 43.) **The 2025 Sunset Bay Walleye Shoot Out is considered a trolling tournament format and all fish caught must be accomplished in this manner.**
- 44.) Ties & Tie Breakers: In the event we have a tie for either Big Fish Friday or Main Event Saturday, the following payouts will be -
- Big Fish Friday: Should there be an exact tie for the individual fish weight, within the payout structure (1st through 5th) the payout amounts will be combined and equally split.
- Main Event Saturday: Should there be an exact tie for the big box overall weight; the tie breaker will go to the team with the largest individual fish (zip tied) in their box. Should that fish be an identical tie, the final place will be determined by the largest fish of Big Fish Friday.
- Should there be an exact tie for the largest walleye portion of the main event, within the payout structure (1st through 5th) the total box weight will determine the winner.
- 45.) We have and will continue to use Polygraph Testing. This immediately constitutes the Captains of Big Fish Friday, Main Event and Largest Walleye of the Main Event **WILL** be polygraphed. Seven (7) additional polygraphs will be conducted through a random selection of the fleet, throughout any phase of the tournament payout structure. Tournament officials reserve the right to the selection of these.

- 46.) The captain of each team **MUST** be able to take the polygraph test the evening the main event is concluded. Failure to do so will result in immediate disqualification. No rescheduling will be allowed.
- 47.) Protest Submissions: In the event a team wishes to enter a protest to formally challenge a competitor, an official document will be available for submittal. This form, plus a fee of \$200.00 will be presented to Tournament Officials. Should the challenge be decided in favor of the protest submitting team, the \$200.00 fee will be refunded to the challenging team. Should the challenge be invalid, the \$200.00 fee will be forfeited. A protest must be submitted in writing no later than 30 minutes after the final box has been weighed; for both Big Fish Friday and Main Event.
- 48.) The tournament is deemed OFFICIALLY Closed at noon (12 pm) the following day of main event. Upon closing the tournament, any evidence, accusations, protests or arguments made from one team against other will be considered invalid and WILL NOT be used in altering or changing the tournament standings, scores, placement or winnings.
- 49.) To be eligible for the IN-Tournament Series of the Sunset Bay Walleye Shoot Out, your team must be paid for both Big Fish Friday and Main Event portions of the venue.
- 45.) **Weather Call:** In the event we have unfavorable weather conditions for the tournament, the following procedures will be used for both Big Fish Friday, Main Event Saturday and Sunday Blow Day.

Big Fish Friday

- a.) If there is a *Small-Craft Warning* posted prior to opening fishing hours (6:00 am) for Big Fish Friday, the Big Fish portion of the event will be cancelled. The monies/prizes will be carried over to Saturday utilizing the largest walleye of the day for the weight of Big Fish Friday. This will be only for teams entered into this portion of the event.
- b.) If the weather is rough or unfavorable conditions are present, but no *Small-Craft Warning* has been posted, Big Fish Friday will be considered OPEN and fishable. It is the team Captains responsibility to make the judgment/decision if he feels his team/vessel can safely fish the conditions.
- c.) In the event, a *Small-Craft Warning* is posted once fishing hours have started (past 6:00am), fishing will be considered OPEN and fishable. It is the team Captains responsibility to make the judgment/decision if he feels his team/vessel can safely fish the conditions.

Saturday Main Event

- a.) If there is a *Small-Craft Warning* posted prior to opening fishing hours (7:00am) for the Main Event Saturday, the day will be considered officially cancelled and the fleet will prepare for Sunday as the make-up blow day.

- b.) If the weather is rough or unfavorable conditions are present, but no *Small-Craft Warning* has been posted, the Main Event will be considered OPEN and fishable. It is the team Captains responsibility to make the judgment/decision if he feels his team/vessel can safely fish the conditions.
- c.) In the event, a *Small-Craft Warning* is posted once fishing hours have started (past 7:00am), fishing will be considered OPEN and fishable. It is the team Captains responsibility to make the judgment/decision if he feels his team/vessel can safely fish the conditions.

Sunday (Make Up - Blow Day)

Should Sunday be utilized as the tournament main event, the tournament times will move to 6:00 am shot gun start to 2:30 pm return time; this is to help expedite Sunday's weigh-in and polygraph process. Should Sunday be utilized, the 'Breakfast of Champions' would be cancelled. Payout would take place immediately after polygraphs are completed.

Should the entire weekend be considered a total weather loss deemed unfishable, the payouts will be:

- **Big Fish Friday** – Places 5th through 1st will be done by a lottery draw; first 5 team poker chips drawn will be the winners. They will be drawn from 5th place to 2nd place. 1st Place Winner will be drawn 1st and held aside unannounced till the end.
- **Largest Walleye Main Event** - Places 5th through 1st will be done by a lottery draw; first 5 team chips drawn will be the winners. They will be drawn from 5th place to 2nd place. 1st Place Winner will be drawn 1st and held aside unannounced till the end.
- **Calcutta's** – Places 3rd through 1st will be drawn by lottery draw; first 3 team poker chips drawn will be the winners. They will be drawn from 3rd place to 1st place.
- **Main Event** – Places 15th through 1st will be done by a lottery draw. They will be drawn from 15th to 2nd place. 1st Place Winner will be drawn 1st and held aside unannounced till the end.
- **The \$1,000 Big Wave Calcutta** entrants will be refunded. You must be entered into the main event to participate in any of the Calcutta options.

(If required, all drawings will be done at 10:30 am on that Sunday, at the Sunset Bay Beach Club)

The fishing territories, angling hours, weigh in format, payouts structures, and all rules of the tournament are presented to be clear and understood by ALL team Captains and all team members; and provide an even playing field for each team. By signing the tournament waiver, you and your entire team understand and agree with all tournament rules and processes.

The tournament officials have the final decision in any/all matters