

2025 South Haven Pro Am Official Rules

1. DATES & HOURS

- a. Tournament dates are Saturday, May 17th and Sunday, May 18th, 2025
- b. Official Tournament **START hours** begin 6:00 A.M. of Day One
- c. Fishing Period start time is 6:30 A.M. each day unless delayed/postponed by the Tournament Committee
- d. Official Tournament **END hours** will be after fish are weighed in on Day Two
- e. The Tournament schedule will be as follows:
 1. **Friday, May 16th, 2025:**
 - 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** – Registration at The Lodge located at 10336 Blue Star Hwy, South Haven, Michigan - **The captain or a member of your crew MUST be present to pick up and sign for your bag.**
 2. **Saturday, May 17th 2025:**
 - 5:45 a.m.** - Listen for announcements from Tournament Control on Channel 78
 - 6:30 a.m.** - Begin fishing period (**no run-time**). All boats must remain within 500 yards of the breakwater prior to 6:30 a.m.
 - 1:30 p.m.** - End of fishing period; boats must be inside pier heads.
 3. **Sunday, May 18th 2025:**
 - 5:45 a.m.** - Listen for announcements from Tournament Control on Channel 78
 - 6:30 a.m.** - Begin fishing period (**no run-time**). All boats must remain within 500 yards of the breakwater prior to 6:30 a.m.
 - 1:30 p.m.** - End of fishing period; boats must be inside pier heads.
 - 3:00 p.m.** - **Awards Ceremony for Pro/Am Divisions and Big Fish Contest at the Southside City Municipal Marina**
- f. The Tournament will be considered official if a total of three (3) hours are fished either on Saturday or Sunday. Prizes will be awarded based on the point accumulation during the fishing time that was available.
- g. **If a fishing day is canceled before three (3) hours have elapsed, the catch is not weighable for that day.**
- h. No fishing on either day of the Tournament by any boat or any participant in the Tournament except during specified Tournament fishing periods, unless declared otherwise by the Tournament Committee.
- i. **No Tournament boat may leave the harbor except during Tournament hours once the Tournament has officially started on Day 1 unless declared otherwise by Tournament Committee.**
- j. Tournament Control will start and end each Tournament period by radio communication on **VHF Channel 78** and physical location will be at the Southside City Marina.
- k. All boats must be inside the pier heads at 1:30 p.m. and report to Tournament Control upon reaching pier heads to avoid penalties.
- l. **Boats must proceed directly to the weigh-in station. Boats slipping at the South Side Marina may proceed to slip and then immediately proceed to weigh-in.**
- m. Alternate fishing times may be established according to circumstances and Tournament Control will give participants due and timely notice thereof.
- n. **OPEN communication across all divisions for participants only. Observers are to follow CLOSED communication. See Observer section for further details. The vessel's radio must stay tuned to Ch. 78 at all times and used for official tournament business only.**

2. ELIGIBILITY

- a. The Tournament is open to any boat whose captain is a member of the Michigan Salmon and Steelhead Fishermen's Association (MSSFA).
- b. Boats must be 19 feet or longer (length as listed on the boat title).
- c. Boats must be equipped with VHF marine radio and GPS with a tracking capability.
- d. All teams must be registered under the name of the boat.
- e. There will be two separate divisions – Pro and Amateur.
 - i. **Pro Division:** 2-day event; any boat with a captain or crew member who has a license and currently conducts fishing charters OR has a license and has conducted fishing charters within the last two years must fish the Pro Division.
 - ii. **Amateur Division:** 2-day event; all non-Pro boats may fish in this Division. An Amateur can opt to fish the Pro Division (with appropriate entry fee) but is not eligible to participate in both the Amateur and Pro Divisions simultaneously.
- f. There will be additional contests that participants may also choose to enter such as:
 - i. **Big Fish Contest:** Open to all boats fishing in the Pro or Amateur Division. All species contest: Salmon, Lake Trout, Steelhead and Brown Trout. All entries must be received by 6:00 PM on Friday, the day of registration. One fish may be weighed in each day that are either a Salmon, Lake Trout, Steelhead or Brown Trout. Two (2) zip ties will be provided (one (1) for each tournament day) and fish must be marked with a zip tie through the mouth to be entered **NO EXCEPTIONS.** Unmarked fish will not be weighed.
 - ii. **Second Chance Tournaments:** The winner will be determined based on total points for day two. The top three boats after day one are ineligible. You may sign up for the second chance at the time of registration or prior to the start of the fishing period the second day by calling into tournament control on Ch. 78. If you paid the fee at registration and are in the top 3, at the start of the second day then the fee will be refunded to you at the end of the tournament.
- g. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to decline entry or terminate the entry of any person or team due to unsportsmanlike conduct detrimental to the tournament, sponsors, participants and supporting groups.

3. ENTRY FEES

- a. **Pro Division:**
 - i. Entry fee is \$650; on or after May 9th, 2025, the fee is \$700.
- b. **Amateur Division:**
 - i. Entry fee is \$250; on or after May 9th, 2025, the fee is \$300.
- c. **Big Fish Contest:**
 - i. Entry fee is \$50 per boat for each division and includes both days.
- d. **Second Chance:**
 - i. Pro Division \$100 and Am Division \$50
- e. In case of a last minute emergency that prevents an entrant from participating in the Tournament, entrants may apply to the Tournament Committee for a refund of the entry fee. The decision to refund shall be made by the Tournament Committee and its decision shall be final. Requests must be made no later than 3 days after the Official End of the Tournament.
- f. In the event of the cancellation of the Tournament due to weather or other reasons beyond the control of the Tournament Committee, said Committee reserves the right to retain up to 10% of the entry fees paid in order to cover costs incurred. All entry fees not retained will be returned to the entrants. The decision of the Tournament Committee shall be final in this regard.

- g. Prize money will be determined by the number of participating boats in the tournament and will be fully calculated after all entrants have registered.
 - i. **Pro Division:**
 - 1. 1st Place - \$10,000; based on 25 boats
 - ii. **Amateur Division:**
 - 1. 1st Place - \$4,000; based on 30 boats
- h. **Big Fish Contest:**
 - i. Prize money will be awarded to the boat with the biggest fish by weight from each day. Salmon, Lake Trout, Steelhead, and Brown Trout are the eligible species. The award is based on 45 boats entered in the Big Fish Contest and subject to change based on the number of entries. Prize money will be determined based on the number of entrants in the big fish contest.
- i. **Second Chance Contest:**
 - i. The pay-out will be 70% of the pot to 1st place and 30% of the pot to 2nd place for each division. The winner will be determined based on total points for day two. The top three boats after day one are ineligible.
- j. In case of ties, the prize money will be divided equally between the tied contestants.
- k. The SHS Traveling Trophy will be awarded to the winning team with the highest overall points for the tournament. Both Am and Pro divisions are eligible. Trophy will only be used for photographs and returned to the South Haven Steelheaders.
- l. Remaining entry fees will be retained by the Tournament Committee to help defray the costs incurred in running the Tournament.
- m. Completed IRS Form W-9 must be received by the tournament committee prior to the disbursement of any prize equal or greater to \$600 in value. Only one check will be cut to the captain of each winning boat or designated legal entity.

4. **SCORING TWO DAY TOURNAMENT**

- a. All winners will be determined by the Tournament Committee and its decision shall be final.
- b. Winners will be determined on the total accumulation of points based on the following:
 - i. Ten (10) points per legal fish weighed.
 - ii. One (1) point per pound of total weight, rounded to the nearest hundredth.
- c. There will be a maximum of twelve (12) fish weighed per boat each official day of the two day tournament, of the maximum numbers of fish weighed, **no more than six (6) may be Lake Trout.**
- d. The contestant with the highest number of points accumulated over all of the hours of the Tournament shall be the winner of their Division; the contestant with the second highest accumulation of points shall be second; and so on.
- e. The following species shall be eligible for 10 points each: All Salmon, Lake Trout, Brown Trout, Steelhead and any hybrid of such species.

5. **OBSERVERS**

- a. The Tournament Committee will provide and compensate observers. The observers will be assigned on Friday evening prior to the start of the tournament. Assignments will be based on the 2024 tournament top 5 PRO and top 3 Amateur boats. In the event these boats are not participating the observers will go to the next place down. Day two the observers will be reassigned to the top 5 PRO and top 3 Amateur boats from the day one results. The tournament committee reserves the right to assign additional observers as it seems fit.
- b. Observers will meet at The Lodge at **6PM** for boat assignments.
- c. Observers will have closed communication including texts and phone usage unless there is an emergency or if the observer needs to contact the tournament committee.

6. BOAT IDENTIFICATION

- a. The Tournament Committee will furnish to each contestant a flag. **The flag** must be flown from a place in full view from all directions at all times - from the official start until the official end time of the Tournament.

7. FISHING RULES

- a. **Tournament Area:** All boats must leave and return to the port of South Haven.
- b. **Rods:** There will be a maximum of nine (9) lines in the water at any one time, with no more than two (2) lures per line in use. Dodgers, attractors or other similar hookless devices do not count as lures. Sliders or Add-A-Lines shall not exceed 6' length.
- c. **Fair Hooked:** All fish must be fairly caught on hook and line in accordance with the conservation laws. No meat lines or similar devices may be attached to any part of a boat or downrigger. Meat Lines may be defined as any baited line placed in the water that is not affixed to a fishing rod and reel. The use of strip/plug-cut/whole bait is allowed and is not a meat line.
- d. **Handling of Fish - NO CULLING OF FISH.** (The keeping of fish and then the releasing of fish will result in automatic DQ)
 - i. **Releasing is allowed but no culling (when a fish is landed it must be released immediately if it is not counting toward your DNR catch limit).**
 - ii. Teams found in violation of these rules for Handling Fish after thorough investigation by the Tournament Officials will be disqualified.
- e. **Fish Limit: DNR laws apply - releasing is allowed and no culling (when a fish is landed it must be released immediately if it is not counting toward your DNR catch limit).**
 - i. When the DNR catch limit for the boat is reached, the boat **must** cease fishing immediately and proceed to weigh-in.
- f. **Fish Count: Weigh in best 12 no more than 6 lake trout.**
- g. There will be a maximum of twelve (12) fish weighed per boat each official day of the two-day Tournament, of the maximum numbers of fish weighed, **no more than six (6) may be Lake Trout.** The number of fish caught and the number of fish weighed may not exceed the DNR legal limit for the number of licensed fishermen on board.
- h. There will be random boat checks done each day, boats will be chosen at random each day and be announced at the 5:45 am via radio announcement by tournament control. Selected boats should proceed to the headwall at the Southside City Municipal Marina prior to exiting the channel. Failure to comply or any rule infractions observed by the Committee may result in **penalties or disqualification** from the Tournament.
- i. Random cooler checks will be permitted by the Tournament Committee at any time.
- j. You must fish within and not pass beyond the boundary limits set forth in Section 10 at any time during the fishing periods.

8. WEIGH-IN

- a. At the close of each Tournament period or once the DNR catch limit has been reached, each captain must proceed immediately to the weigh-in.
- b. **Weigh-In Procedure**
 - i. Prepare your 12 fish maximum Tournament legal fish box. **(no more than six (6) may be Lake Trout)**
 - ii. Participating boats will announce their boat name once inside pier heads on VHF Ch. 78.
 - iii. Drop - Captain will deposit a minimum of one crew member at the weigh-in station pre-check line with a box of **(12) fish (no more than six (6) may be Lake Trout).**

- iv. Crewmembers must remain with the catch until it has been officially weighed and scored.
 - v. All coolers must arrive at the weigh-in free of loose ice and water. Only block, bagged cubes and frozen plastic containers are allowed.
 - vi. **Any attempt to alter the weight of tournament fish will result in a DQ for the tournament and possible future legal action.**
- c. **Fish Count**
- i. If the number of fish brought for Weigh-in exceeds the twelve (12) fish limit, a 10 point penalty will be deducted for each fish exceeding the 12 fish limit and only their smallest eleven (11) fish that were brought to weigh-in shall be included in their catch for that day.
 - ii. If any boat brings in more than six (6) Lake Trout to the weigh-in, a 10 point penalty will be deducted for each Lake Trout exceeding six (6) and only their smallest five (5) Lake Trout shall be included in their catch for weigh-in that day. (Thus, the team in violation can only weigh in a maximum of (11) fish for that day).
 - iii. If the catch exceeds the DNR species limit for licenses on board, the fish out of species plus the largest fish shall be removed from the catch prior to weighing.
 - iv. If non-legal fish are part of the twelve (12) fish limit brought for weigh-in, that catch will be **disqualified** for the day.
 - v. **All fish weighed on Saturday become the property of the Tournament Committee who may, at their discretion, return fish to the entrant. These fish are used for the South Haven Steelheaders Fish Boil in August which is the primary fundraising event for the chapter.**
- d. After weigh-in, no fishing by tournament boats or tournament participants will be allowed until the start of the next fishing period.
- e. Note: The MDNR and/or other fisheries personnel may also be present at weigh-in conducting inspections, taking samples and gathering other fisheries related data.

9. RADIO PROCEDURE

- a. Every boat must be equipped with an operating VHF Marine Radio. This radio must include Channels 09 and 78.
- b. After the start of the Tournament, all boats must monitor Channel 78.
- c. Be aware, important Tournament announcements can and will be made on Channel 78. Participants who miss these announcements will still be held accountable.

10. BOUNDARIES

- a. The northern boundary will be the latitude 42° 42' 0" line . This latitude line is just north of the Saugatuck pier heads.
- b. The southern boundary will be the 42° 05' 0" latitude line. This latitude line is just south of the Saint Joseph pier heads.
- c. The western boundary will be the Michigan state line with Illinois & Wisconsin.
- d. It is highly recommended that you clear the graph and record a continuous track line on your plotter from the start of the fishing period to the finish for each day of the tournament. If a protest is made for a violation of rule 7(j), this track line will be requested as evidence.

11. DISQUALIFICATION OR PENALTY

- a. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to utilize polygraph technology as it deems appropriate and necessary.
- b. Any participant who violates any of the rules of the Tournament or acts in an **uncooperative, disorderly or unsportsmanlike manner** shall be disqualified or penalized at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. The Committee may also at their discretion deduct any number of earned points from any contestant for a violation of the Tournament rules or improper conduct.
- c. Running gunwale to gunwale with any other boat or passing objects of any kind between a participant in the Tournament and any other person at any time between the start of the fishing period and until the catch is deposited at the weigh-in station.
- d. Automatic **disqualification** shall result from the following:
 - i. Possession of any fish other than fish fairly caught by you and your team until the catch has been officially weighed in for that fishing period.
 - ii. Possession of fish at the start of the fishing period each day.
 - iii. Any altering of fish weight.
 - iv. Any participants who are disqualified will not be invited back to future Tournaments.
- e. All boats must be within the pier heads and checked off by Tournament Control at the end of the fishing period. A PENALTY OF 10 POINTS PER MINUTE will be assessed after that time. **NO EXCEPTIONS**
- f. All Tournament participants shall be duty bound to report any and all violations of the rules they observe on any boat.
- g. In the event a boat is coming into port prior to tournament end the boat must notify tournament control on Ch. 78.

12. CANCELLATIONS/POSTPONEMENTS

- a. The Tournament Committee may cancel the Tournament at any time when, in their opinion, it feels that fishing conditions could be dangerous to persons or property. **EACH CAPTAIN IS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF HIS CREW AND VESSEL.** The Committee will announce by radio before each Tournament period their decision as to whether or not the Tournament shall be run. Announcements will be made on VHF-78.
- b. The Tournament Committee may also decide to delay the start of any fishing period or to shorten any period due to deteriorating weather conditions. A delay in the starting time will be announced on VHF-78. The shortening of a fishing period will be announced by radio and there will be at least a 15-minute warning by Tournament Control before the shortened period is announced.
- c. Weather boats will be used in each division at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. If a fishing period is shortened, all boats at the end of said period must proceed to and be within the pier heads within one (1) hour.
- d. The decision of the Tournament Committee to cancel, delay or shorten the Tournament shall be final.

13. PROTESTS

- a. Any and all protests must be made in writing to the Tournament Committee before 3:30 p.m. on the day of the alleged infraction that is being reported. There is a \$150 fee to register an official protest. The fee is refundable at the discretion of the judges' panel.
- b. A panel of five (5) judges appointed by the Tournament Committee will resolve all disputes. Their decision shall be final and binding.

14. RULE CHANGES

- a. The Committee may change or modify any of these rules, but changes will be made in writing and posted forty-five (45) minutes prior to the start of the Tournament at Tournament Control.

15. LIABILITY

- a. Every reasonable precaution will be taken by the South Haven Steelheaders Fishing Chapter to protect persons and property during the Tournament; however, neither the Tournament Committee, nor sponsors, nor judges, nor any officers, directors or employees of the same are responsible for the safety of persons or property of participants as regards accident, theft, damage by fire, vandalism or any other cause.
- b. All participants further understand and agree to hold harmless the aforementioned groups and individuals from damages incurred as a result of participation in the Tournament in whatever form or manner said liabilities or damages might be incurred.