

Nebraska Walleye Association Tournament Rules

Updated January 2025

Entry Requirements

1. Teams must consist of two NWA members fishing together in the same boat. Any person under the age of 17 must be paired with their parent or guardian.
2. High standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, and safety are expected.
3. All State fishing and boating regulations will apply.
4. All boats must meet US Coast Guard regulations.
5. The NWA has the right to refuse entry applications.

Tournament Process

1. NWA teams wishing to enter an NWA tournament can do so by filling out a tournament entry form and paying the entry fee. No refund of entry fee for cancellation will be issued within one week prior to the tournament. There will be a \$25.00 service charge per team retained on all refunds of entry fees regardless of cancellation date.
2. A rules meeting will be held at a date, time, and location published prior to the tournament. All pertinent information concerning the tournament will be provided at this meeting. At least one team member must attend the rules meeting unless arrangements have been made in advance with the tournament director.
3. Tournament practice is allowed up to two hours prior to the Rules Meeting.
4. The morning of the tournament, all boats will be allowed to use any ramp, on the lake, but they must navigate directly to the designated starting point. Any boats dropping buoy markers or searching possible fishing areas will be disqualified.
5. During the morning boat check, we will check that your live wells are empty and that life jackets, float cushion, kill switch and fire extinguisher are available. When complete, you will be given a fob with your assigned boat number. The fob is proof your boat was inspected, and must be presented at the weigh in before your catch is weighed. You must check in with the fob whether you weigh fish or not. Not checking in is an automatic 50-point deduction from a team's Top Gun total.
6. Boats will be launched using a continuous launch with each boat following the one before it in numbered order. Each boat will proceed at idle speed to the release boat and will remain at idle speed until signaled that it can proceed. Any boat not complying with this rule and risking the safety of other teams may result in a warning being issued or immediate disqualification based on the level of negligence witnessed.
7. At the conclusion of the tournament, anglers will return to the weigh-in no later than their assigned flight times. Flight times will be provided at the rules meeting. Teams who are not at the official weigh in zone at their appointed return time shall be penalized at a rate of one pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day, including any Big Fish Award. Any team more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that days catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness,

and in no case will a team be allowed to make up “lost time”. It is the responsibility of the angler to check in with the NWA Time Keeper, who will be positioned in the weigh in zone. Teams who fail to check in with the time keeper will forfeit their weight for the day.

8. During tournament hours both contestants must stay on the boat, unless weighing in fish early or at the weigh in marina.
9. In the event of a mechanical failure that would prevent a team from returning to the weigh in site on time, the Tournament Director must be contacted. With prior approval from the tournament director, one team member may accompany their catch to the weigh in, in another boat.
10. In the event of a storm or lightning, teams may pull into shore for safety.
11. In the event that a tournament day is canceled because of weather, anglers who venture out onto the water will do so at their own risk and liability.
12. Any communication of any kind between tournament anglers that is an attempt to gain an unfair advantage is grounds for disqualification. The NWA may inspect phones or other devices for use during tournament hours.
13. All contestants must wear a US Coast Guard approved life jacket, with a kill switch attached to the boat operator any time during tournament hours while the boat is on plane.
14. Catch and release is optional, teams may keep their legal limit within the state rules and regulations.
15. ***The teams shall comply with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Fisheries Regulations, section 008.05.**

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, fisheries Regulations, section 008.05

Care along with caution must be practiced to limit the mortality of fish caught during catch, weigh-in, and release walleye tournaments. This process begins prior to the first fish being caught and continues until after fish are released. It is the responsibility of both the tournament directors and tournament anglers for this to happen.

The following rules will be required for all catch, weigh-in, and release walleye tournaments, as authorized under Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Fisheries Regulations, Section 008.05. These rules were developed cooperatively with the Nebraska Walleye Association, the Harlan Anglers Walleye Club, and the Nebraska Walleye Trail.

1. Scales must be open during and throughout tournament hours to weigh fish.
2. Each tournament angler team is responsible for the safe handling of their fish.
3. All live wells will be functioning and when surface water temperatures at the tournament site exceed 70 degrees F, water in live wells should be cooled by 5-10 degrees F. Maintaining an un-iodized salt solution of 0.5 percent (1/3 cup per 5 gallons of water) in live wells is recommended but not required.
4. All fish brought to the scales for the weigh-in will be in a container or bag holding water not to exceed a temperature of 70 degrees F.
5. Handling of the fish out of water should be kept to a minimum; bags offish should be transferred as quickly as possible from boats to a staging tank with aerated water not to exceed a temperature of 70 degrees F. The staging tank will be used to cool and refresh water in the bags.

6. After the weigh-in, tournament angler teams have the option of keeping or releasing their fish.
7. Fish that are to be released shall first be placed in a holding tank containing aerated water not to exceed a temperature of 70 degrees F for initial observation by the tournament angler teams.
8. Fish that are struggling or show no signs of life will not be released and must either be kept (harvested) by the tournament angler team that caught the fish or transferred to another person. Fish that are transferred must be accompanied by a label that includes the tournament angler's name, address, phone number, date of birth, signature, date the fish were taken, species, number, and the name of the recipient. Note: No individual can possess more than eight (8) walleyes.
9. Fish that are released will be done so individually and gently by tournament angler teams into the deepest water readily available.
10. It will also be the responsibility of tournament angler teams to remove any fish that has been released and then begins to show signs of struggling and for the tournament angler teams to keep (harvest) those struggling fish that they caught or transfer them to another person as described above.

Tournament Prizes

1. The NWA will pay awards based on a 1 in 6 format.
2. The NWA official means of measurement will be the Lakeborne Tackle Co. "The Judge Tournament Ruler". It is the sole responsibility of the tournament anglers to assure their means of measurement coincide with the NWA.
3. Fish will be measured by a tournament official with the fish's mouth closed and the longest straight line. The anglers catch must comply with all state length and slot limits. Any bag that does not comply with these regulations will not be weighed and no team points will be awarded.
4. Once a competitor's catch has been presented to tournament officials, that team may not alter or add to their catch or return to their boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded.
5. The Bump Master has the final say as to whether a fish is alive or dead, each dead fish will be omitted from the total weight.
6. All prizes will be awarded by a team's total weight, except for Big Fish prize, which will be awarded individually. At least one team member must accompany the catch to the scale.
7. In the event of a tie, the winner will be determined by the heaviest single fish.
8. In the event of a Big Fish tie, the winner will be determined by heaviest total weight.

Protest and Waiver

The tournament committee may, at their discretion, disqualify teams for cause. Any contestant, has the right to protest another team or contestant. The protest must be filed in writing with the tournament committee no later than 1/2 hour after the close of tournament fishing hours. The tournament committee will convene to hear both sides of the protest. A polygraph may be utilized if so decided by the tournament committee. The decision of the tournament committee shall be final in all cases. A \$250.00 protest fee must accompany each written protest. The fee will be returned if the protest is found valid. If the protest is valid, the disqualified party must pay all investigative cost, including the polygraph. If the protest is invalid, the fee will not be returned.

Miscellaneous

1. Tournaments that resulted in a disqualification will be treated as if not fished, therefor they cannot be used as toss out tournaments for end of the season in Top Gun point calculations.
2. The Tournament Director has the right and final say to disqualify any team for rules violations. Disqualification from the tournament will result in forfeiture of entry fee. Promoters, Tournament Directors, Sponsors, Tournament Committee, Organizations and Individuals assisting in the tournament operation, their agencies, agents, etc., are not responsible for deaths, injuries, damages, liability, theft, fire, or any loss of any kind to entrants. Each entrant upon signing an entry form will be signing a waiver form.
3. All rules have “loopholes”. In the interest of good sportsmanship, contestants are reminded that the “spirit of the rule” will prevail in all judgment cases. Any teams, that try, to gain an unfair advantage in any way not mentioned, may be subject to disqualification.
4. Each contestant agrees to submit to and pay for a truth verification test. Refusal to submit to and pay for such a test will be viewed as an admission of guilt and will result in disqualification.
5. The tournament committee has the right to delay, reschedule, or cancel any tournament due to unforeseen or unsafe conditions.
6. The tournament committee has the right to change tournament lake location 10 days prior to the scheduled tournament date. In this situation, entry fees will not be refunded, and teams are required to fish the new location.
7. Contestants are responsible for all applicable taxes.
8. The tournament committee has the right to review any requests that are exceptions to the above rules and regulations.

NWA State Championship Tournament

There are two ways to qualify for the NWA State Championship Tournament

1. The team must have fished at least two qualifying tournament events
2. Finish in first place at any of the 4 qualifying tournament events.

Top Gun 2024 Rules and Payout

1. Teams fishing for Top Gun Points, will be assigned a team number when they enter the first tournament of the year. It will be used to credit team for each tournament fished. This is not to be confused with a teams boat number at an individual event.
2. Top Gun teams must clearly list their team number on all subsequent entries. Top Gun points will be credited only to that team number. If two Top Gun members from different teams fish together, only the one team number listed will receive top gun points.
3. An unlimited number of substitutions may be used during the tournament season. Teams may consist of the permanent team members or a combination of one permanent team member and a substitute. The substitute must be an NWA Tournament member.
4. Including the State Championship there are 5 Top Gun point qualifying tournaments. From those 5 tournaments, Top Gun Awards will be based on points from the team's best 4 of 5 finishes.
5. Ties will be decided amongst the higher scoring team from all 5 tournaments. If a ties still exists, the total pounds of fish weighed in all tournaments fished, will be used to break the tie.
6. Qualifying tournaments equals any NWA tournament fished by the Top Gun Team, where a minimum of 15 points were awarded.
7. Top Gun points will apply towards NTC slot allocations, as well as payout awards to the top 3 teams of the year.
8. Payouts for Top Gun are as follows: 1st = \$1,500.00 / 2nd = \$750.00 / 3rd = \$500.00
9. Points are awarded to each team based on their finish in reference to the tournament field. Points are accumulated at each qualifying tournament, 1st 110 points / 2nd 105 / 3rd 103 / 4th 101 / 5th 100 / 6th 99 / 7th 98 / 8th 97, etc. In the event a team fails to weigh a fish, the team will be awarded 15 points for participating in the tournament.

10. Any team competing in their 4th qualifying tournament prior to the NWA State Championship Tournament, will automatically receive an additional 15 Top Gun bonus points, these points will be calculated into the team's Top Gun point total.
11. All point standings will be posted on the NWA website within 10 days of the conclusion of the tournament. Any protest or question concerning the point standings must be brought to the attention of the tournament director no later than one week before the start of the next tournament.
12. NTC Invitations are chosen in the following manner:
At the end of the tournament year, NWA Top Gun points are calculated and ranked highest to lowest.

If 4 NTC invitations are available to the NWA, teams with the highest 4 Top Gun scores are selected. If any of those 4 teams earned an NTC invitation through another organization or through Fishing-is-Fun participation, it allows the NWA to offer teams that finished lower on the list, NTC invitations. We work down the Top Gun list until all invitations have been awarded.