

2024 SCHU'S SUMMER CHALLENGE

OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES – OPEN DIVISION

1. Dates and Times

- a. The Open Division is a two-day event on Friday, May 10 and Saturday, May 11.
- b. Registration will be held on Thursday, May 9 from 5:00 – 6:30 PM at Schu's Grill & Bar.
- c. Captain's Meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on Thursday, May 9 at Schu's Grill & Bar (downstairs). Live stream access at www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders or on YouTube Channel SWMI STEELHEADERS. All captains are required to attend in person.
- d. Awards Ceremony will follow the weigh-in (3:30 PM estimated) on Saturday, May 11 at West Basin Marina. Live stream access at www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders or on YouTube Channel SWMI STEELHEADERS.
- e. Fishing periods are as follows:
 - i. Friday, May 10 – Shotgun start 6:45:00 AM / Stop 1:30:00 PM
 - ii. Saturday, May 11 – Shotgun start 6:45:00 AM / Stop 1:30:00 PMAll times are GPS Eastern Daylight Time. NO RUN TIME ALLOWED.
- f. The contest is considered official if a minimum of three (3) hours are fished on Friday or Saturday. Three (3) hours of fishing will constitute a completed day and the points will count toward the final score. Prizes will be awarded based on points accumulated during the official fishing periods.

2. Eligibility

- a. Teams designated as "pro" must fish in the Open Division. If one crew member is designated as "pro" then the entire team shall be designated as "pro." "Pro" shall be defined as follows: All licensed charter fishing captains or anyone who has worked as a charter fishing captain in the two (2) years prior to the event.

It is your responsibility to comply with the eligibility rules. The tournament committee reserves the right to review the eligibility of all entries at any time. Failure to disclose all pertinent information may result in disqualification with no refund and no prizes awarded. If you have a question regarding your eligibility, please contact the tournament director prior to registration.

- b. If you are an Amateur team and you register for the Open Division, then you cannot enter the Amateur Division.
- c. All Open Division captains must be a member of a Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fisherman's Association affiliated club. Proof of membership is required at registration. All non-members may join the Southwest Michigan Steelheaders club for \$45 annual dues.
- d. All boats must be equipped with a VHF marine radio in working order with channel FM-78.
- e. The Tournament Committee has 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. Entry fee is \$650 per boat in the Open Division. Entries received after Monday, May 6 will be assessed an additional \$50. All entries must be received NO LATER than 7:00 PM on Thursday, May 9. Payment of entry fee constitutes agreement of all tournament rules and waiver of liability on entry form.

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- b. There are no provisions for the return of entry fees unless a written request is received by the Tournament Director at least 7 days prior to the kickoff of the tournament. If the tournament is cancelled due to weather conditions all entries minus 10% maximum will be refunded.

4. Scoring

- a. Winners will be determined by a total accumulation of points based on:
 - i. Ten (10) points per legal fish weighed, plus
 - ii. One (1) point per pound (nearest hundredth pound) total weight
- b. The team accumulating the highest number of points will be the winner, followed by the team with the next highest accumulation, and so on. All ties will be split evenly.
- c. The following species shall be eligible: Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, Atlantic Salmon, Pink Salmon, Lake Trout, Brown Trout and Steelhead Trout.

5. Prizes

- a. The Tournament Committee will finalize and announce the payout schedule prior to start of the tournament. At least 100% of the entry fees will be paid out. Any proceeds will go to the Southwest Michigan Steelheaders Club.
- b. All checks will be mailed to the address on the entry form within one week of the end of the event.
- c. A 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.

6. Calcutta Rules

- a. This is an OPTIONAL tournament that runs parallel to the Open Division. Your team must be registered in the Open Division to participate.
- b. Entry fee is \$450 for the overall two-day payout and \$100 each for the two daily payouts (one on Friday and one of Saturday). You may enter any combination of the Calcutta payouts. Entries for the two-day payout and day one of the daily payout must be received by 7:00 PM on May 9. Entry for day two of the daily payout must be received by 7:00 PM on May 10. At least 100% of the entry fees will be paid out.
- c. The winners will be determined by the points awarded in the scoring of the main tournament.
- d. All rules and regulations of the Open Division apply.

7. Big Fish Contest Rules

- a. Participation is optional. Entry fee is \$50. One fish may be weighed in each day. Two zip ties will be provided (one for each day) and fish must be marked with a zip tie through the mouth to be entered with NO EXCEPTION. Unmarked fish will not be weighed. First place will receive 70% of the pot and 2nd place 30% of the pot for each division.

8. Fishing Rules

- a. All boats must depart and return to the Port of St. Joseph, MI. No fishing inside the pier heads designated by a line between the North and South pier heads.

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- b. You must fish within and not pass beyond the boundary limits set forth in Section 10 at any time during the fishing periods.
- c. There shall be no fishing by tournament contestants except during tournament hours. Nor shall a boat registered in the Open Division leave the harbor for any reason on Friday and/or Saturday except during the official fishing periods. Designated weather boats are the only exception.
- d. All DNR state laws and regulations apply while fishing within that state's jurisdiction.
- e. The maximum number of rods fishing at any time is nine (9). Fishing means "line in the water". One slider per rod will be allowed; however, sliders may not exceed 72 inches. Maximum 2 baits per rod.
- f. Weigh your best 12 of 20 fish in possession. No more than six (6) Lake Trout may be weighed each day. You may not possess more than 20 fish each day.
- g. Fish may be released in accordance with DNR rules. This means that you can release a fish when it is first caught, and you cannot exchange a fish from your cooler for a larger fish. In addition to DNR rules, you may not release a fish once it is brought over the gunnel unless it is determined to be undersized.
- h. The minimum size for Lake Trout is 15 inches and all other species is 10 inches. Michigan DNR rules apply.

9. Start and Finish

- a. The tournament committee will use FM-78 to start and end each fishing period. No lines may enter the water until the start is announced. You must stay inside a ½ mile radius from the pier heads until the announcement of the start of the fishing period.
- b. Your boat must pass between the Committee Boat and the pier heads by the end of the fishing period, or you will be disqualified for that particular day ... NO EXCEPTIONS! The committee boat shall be stationed approximately ½ mile due west of the pier head.
- c. Once a fishing period is declared closed by the Tournament Committee no more fish may be boated.

10. Boundaries

- a. The northern boundary will be the latitude line 42° 25' 0" or 42.4166667 in decimal format. This latitude line is just north of the South Haven pier heads.
- b. The southern boundary will be the latitude line 41° 46' 0" or 41.7666667 in decimal format. This latitude line is just south of the New Buffalo pier heads and just north of the Michigan state line with Indiana.
- c. The western boundary will be the Michigan state line with Illinois.
- d. It is highly recommended that you 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 8(b), this track line will be requested as evidence.

11. Weigh-in

- a. At the close of each fishing period or once the fish limit has been attained, the boat must go directly to West Basin Marina for weigh-in. No stops may be made prior to dropping off at the weigh-in unless you slip at West Basin in which case you may dock and then proceed directly to weigh-in. Failure to comply will result in disqualification from the tournament.

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- b. You can only weigh 12 fish and your cooler must only have 12 fish inside at the weigh-in station. If you have more than 12 fish in your cooler at the weigh-in station, you will be disqualified for the days catch ... NO EXCEPTIONS! You may participate in day two if you are disqualified on day one.
- c. No water or loose ice will be allowed in the coolers at weigh-in.
- d. All fish may be tested for time in possession. The tournament committee may retain any fish for any reason.
- e. Fish donation is optional if there are agencies or individuals available at weigh-in to receive your fish. Fish may not be left at the weigh-in station if no one is available to receive them. Disposition of fish must follow state and local laws. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

12. Communications

- a. Open communication is allowed.
- b. All participants should monitor FM-78 at all times. Important tournament information will be broadcast on FM-78. Please restrict communication on FM-78 to vital tournament communication only, no idle chatter will be allowed on FM-78. Participants who miss these announcements for any reason will still be held accountable.

13. Observer System

- a. The tournament committee will provide and compensate trained observers. On day one, observers will be assigned to the top 5 boats participating from the 2023 tournament. On day two, observers will be assigned to the top 5 boats based on the day one scoring. The tournament committee reserve the right to assign additional observers as it sees fit to maintain the integrity of the event.
- b. The entry fee has been increased \$50.00 to cover the cost of this observer program.

14. Boat Identification

- a. The tournament committee will furnish a colored flag and boat identification number at registration. The flag shall be flown on the tournament boat's radio antenna in full view from all directions and the ID number shall be prominently displayed on the PORT side from the start of the fishing period Friday and through the conclusion of weigh-in on Saturday.

15. Boat / Cooler Inspections

- a. The Tournament Committee may board any vessel at any time to inspect and enforce tournament possession rules.

16. Protests

- a. A five (5) person Rules Committee appointed by the Tournament Committee prior to the start of the tournament will resolve disputes. Their decision will be final and binding. A sixth member will be appointed as an alternate in the case of a conflict of interest by another member.
- b. Protests must be presented to the Tournament Committee by the protesting captain in writing within one (1) hour of the end of the official fishing period with \$100. If the protest is upheld, you will get \$100 back, otherwise the tournament will retain the \$100.

17. Cancellations

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- a. The Tournament Committee may cancel the tournament, when in their opinion conditions could be dangerous to persons or property. The Committee will announce their determination of a delayed start or cancellation 45 minutes before each fishing period.
- b. After a fishing period has begun, an announcement will be made on FM-78 if cancellation or postponement is imminent. A minimum of 15 minutes notice will be given prior to the early termination of a fishing period. Once the fishing period is terminated, you will have 1 hour to enter the pier heads or your catch for that day will be disqualified.
- c. If a fishing period is shortened, all boats must proceed as described in Sections 9 and 10.
- d. Cancellations for the Open Division can be made independently from the Amateur Division.

18. Polygraph Testing

- a. By entering this tournament, all captains, crew, and observers agree to subject themselves to a polygraph examination performed by an examiner provided by the tournament committee. All participants may be tested for any reason at any time (up to 30 days after the tournament is completed) at the sole discretion of the tournament committee. In addition, all participants agree to abide by the results of the polygraph examination. Any participant that fails or refuses to take this examination, by so doing, may disqualify his/her team from winning any division or event in this tournament and forfeiture of any and all cash prizes. The official results, including the distribution of all prize money, may be delayed up to 30 days after the tournament pending the results of a polygraph examination.

19. Disqualification and Penalties

- a. Disqualification for any reason will result in the forfeiture of all entry fees for the tournament and official side pots.
- b. Failure to comply with any of the rules listed in Section 8 will result in disqualification from the tournament.
- c. Failure to pass between the committee boat and the pier heads by the end of the fishing period will result in disqualification for that day.
- d. Failure to proceed directly to weigh-in will result in disqualification for that day.
- e. If you arrive at the weigh-in point with more than 12 fish open in your cooler you will be disqualified for that day.
- f. Any fish taken in violation of DNR regulations will result in disqualification for that day.
- g. Running gunnel to gunnel or passing any item from boat to boat will result in disqualification for that day. However, a tournament boat may stop and assist a vessel in distress if the tournament committee gives prior authorization via marine radio on FM-78.
- h. If a tournament boat breaks down after the start of the fishing period and requires assistance from another vessel, that boat will be disqualified for that day.
- i. Failure to submit to a polygraph examination will result in disqualification from the tournament.

20. Liability

- a. All reasonable precautions will be taken by the Tournament Committee to protect persons and property during the tournament. Neither the Tournament Committee, Rules Committee, officers and

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directors of the Southwest Michigan Steelheaders, or sponsors can or will be responsible for the safety of persons, for accident, theft, damage by fire, vandalism, or any other cause for loss to a contestant's property.

- b. Participants understand and agree to hold harmless the aforementioned groups and individuals from liability or damage that may be incurred from participation in the Tournament.

21. Rule Changes

- a. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to change any of these rules and post changes up to 45 minutes prior to the start of the tournament.

22. Discrepancies

- a. These rules shall supersede any prior rules for this event.