



SALMON UNLIMITED 2026 BOAT TOURNAMENT RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. Eligibility:

All active members of Salmon Unlimited and their immediate family, as determined by the membership committee, are eligible to compete. All participants must possess a valid state fishing license and stamp and adhere to respective fishing and boating regulations. Members of other S.U. chapters, such as S.U. - Wisconsin, in good standing, are also invited to participate in up to two (2) contests per season. If they wish to participate in more than two (2) contests, then they must become full members of S.U. - Illinois.

Who may Operate a Vessel

Persons operating a vessel in the tournament must comply with all state and federal laws. **Additionally, the operator of the vessel must be at least 18 years of age.**

2. Teams:

A team will consist of one (1) or more fishermen and each team will weigh their best five (5) fish, regardless of the number of contestants aboard the boat. All crew members must meet the eligibility requirements as defined above. Teams may use different boats for each contest but must use only one team/boat name for the season. Teams cannot use a different boat from any other harbor than the one your boat is docked at unless you move it and start and end from your home port. Example of what is not acceptable: Your boat is docked in Waukegan, but the fishing is better north, so you jump on a boat docked in North Point.

3. Registration:

Each boat captain and all crew members must sign a liability waiver before fishing any tournament. The waiver is valid for the entire season. If your team members are family members, write "Spouse" or "Child" instead of card number (children under 21). Blank waiver forms can be printed from the S.U. website. Registration for each tournament is via radio check-in. Boats may begin checking in one half (1/2) hour before the scheduled start time. To check-in, hail the tournament host boat on VHF channel 68 and give them your boat/team's name.

- Tournament participants \$50.00 entry fee is due at the weigh-in
- Captain's meeting 5/9/26 7:00 p.m. Salmon Unlimited pavilion North Point Marina or Salmon Unlimited Inc. Facebook Live
- If you call in that you are fishing and leave early, you are still responsible for paying the entry fee.

4. Tournament Hours & Rules:

Tournament hours are 5:00 am to 12:00 pm for all tournament dates. Please check the schedule. Three (3) hours of fishing constitutes an official tournament. If a tournament is called due to deteriorating weather conditions after becoming official, all lines must be pulled at the time the tournament is called. The time limit for returning to the check-in is ninety (90) minutes, unless cleared by a tournament official. Failure to pull lines when the tournament is called will result in disqualification. Failure to return within the time limit will result in disqualification.

- A. All registered boats must have a working VHF radio and check in on VHF channel 68 before the tournament start time.
- B. **If there is a small craft advisory in effect, the tournament will be cancelled and rescheduled for the designated make-up date.**
- C. A tournament may be called by the tournament committee because of bad weather and will be announced on VHF channel 68.
- D. All tournaments called before three (3) hours are up will be unofficial and will be re-run on the designated make-up date.
- E. If the weather conditions necessitate canceling a tournament, the committee will make every effort to make the decision as early as possible.
- F. It is the responsibility of each captain to decide if their boat is going to fish any tournament.

5. Fishing Rules:

- A. Points and prizes will be awarded for salmon and trout only.
- B. Fishing will be by rod and reel only.
- C. All fish entered in the contest must be whole and freshly caught. All fish will be checked for freshness and any unethical abrasions at the time of weigh-in. Any fish failing to meet the above criteria will be cause for immediate disqualification of the team that entered the fish.
- D. The best five (5) fish will be your contest fish, no matter how many crew members you have. No more than two (2) lake trout can be included in your best five (5) fish. All possession limits are subject to local DNR rules for the state you are fishing. Example, in Illinois, 4 licensed fishermen can keep 20 salmon and trout of which no more than 8 can be Lake Trout. The best 5 fish of their 20 fish limit would be weighed in for the tournament.
- E. There is no limit to the distance a boat may travel, as long as they remain on the lake.
- F. Fishing inside of harbor entrances and/or pier-heads/break-walls is not allowed.
- G. All boats must return to the port of registration by the scheduled end of the contest. Exception: If your boat needs assistance or tow, it must be cleared by a tournament official. Once cleared, the boat doing assistance will be allowed to weigh-in fish. No extra time for fishing will be allowed due to time being lost.
- H. You must leave and return to 3 harbors. Waukegan, North Point or Prairie Harbor Yacht Club.
- I. All fish entered must be a minimum of 10 inches in length. Fish under the 10-inch minimum must be released immediately. Any boat that attempts to weigh in a salmon or trout that is under the 10-inch minimum will be disqualified. All fish must be laid flat and measured from end of tail to tip of nose.
- J. Each team must comply with the fishing regulations of the state they are fishing in, with a maximum of 9 rods per boat. Remember, in Wisconsin, it is 9 *bait*s, not 9 rods.
- K. It is suggested that you check the fishing regulations for the state(s) that you intend to fish.
- L. All slipped boats must start out from their home port and return to their home port.
- M. All boats that are trailered must launch and leave from Winthrop harbor.
- N. Lunch will be served after weigh in.

6. Start:

Check-in will be one half (1/2) hour prior to the designated start time. All tournaments start at 5:00 am with no run time. The start of the fishing period will be announced by the tournament host boat on VHF channel 68. All slipped boats may start out from their home port. All boats that are trailered must launch and leave from Winthrop harbor. Any boat taken out of the water to fish in another port will be disqualified. The tournament committee reserves the right to conduct

periodic, random "cooler" inspections prior to the start of the tournament. Any team refusing such inspections will be disqualified. After registration has begun, any boat found to have salmon or trout on board, either whole or cleaned, will be disqualified.

7. Weigh-in:

Weigh-in will commence forty-five (45) minutes after the official tournament end time. All teams must check-in, fish or no fish, at the conclusion of the tournament. In addition:

- A. Your boat must pass the tournament harbor mouth or the slipped boat's harbor of origin by the scheduled end of the tournament in order to be eligible for the weigh-in. A committee boat may be stationed at the harbor mouth. Slipped boats may drive their catch to the tournament harbor from their harbor of origin, but their catch must be at the weigh-in location within forty-five (45) minutes of the end of the tournament.
- B. All coolers and a team member must be in line within forty-five (45) minutes of the end of the tournament.
- C. The weigh-in is completed only when the weigh-in form is turned over to the person at the scale, the team's fish are weighed, and the entry fee is paid.
- D. All teams must check-in, even if they are late or have no fish to weigh-in. Failure to do so will result in a \$50.00 fine. The boat and all crew members will not be eligible to fish future tournaments until the fine is paid. In addition, if the team does not check-in, it will be assumed that it is in distress and the U.S. Coast Guard will be notified and a rescue mission will be initiated. All costs for a search and/or rescue mission will be attributed to the distressed vessel.

8. Scoring:

Boat of the Year Series

- A. Each catch weighed will be scored at 10 points per fish, plus 1 point per pound. Weight will be recorded to the nearest 1/10th of a pound (one decimal place).
- B. Point system: The team with the highest score will win 1st place and be awarded 100 points, 2nd place will be awarded 99 points, 3rd place earns 98 points, etc. Example: 10th place would get 91 points & 20th place would get 81 points. Boats that have fished, completed the tournament, paid and filled out the weight-in form but did not weigh any fish will be awarded last place points. If there is a tie between multiple boats and have no tie breaker fish on record, points will be split equally between them.
- C. Cumulative total of the best 4 out of 5 tournaments for each team will determine the Boat of the Year.
- D. Tie breaker will be biggest fish caught during the season.

Individual Tournaments

- A. Each catch weighed will be scored at 10 points per fish, plus 1 point per pound. Weight will be recorded to the nearest 1/10th of a pound (one decimal point).
- B. Highest total score will be tournament winner.
- C. Tie breaker: 1st Biggest fish caught day of tournament, 2nd Big 3 weight (not points) day of tournament.

Rookie of the Year & Small boat

- A. Cumulative total of the best 4 out of 5 tournaments.
- B. Based on individual tournament point system.

9. Prizes:

Boat of the Year Series

- A. \$1,000.00 Boat of the Year, \$750.00 2nd place & \$500.00 3rd place.

Individual Tournaments

- A. \$500.00 1st place, \$400.00 2nd place, \$300.00 3rd place, \$200.00 4th place & \$100.00 5th place.
- B. \$150.00 LMA gift card Big 3 contest will be based on 20 points per species plus weight. Must be part of your 5 fish total.
- C. \$100.00 Small boat under 22'.
- D. \$100.00 Fish of the day. Does not have to be part of your five (5) fish total.
- F. \$500.00 Biggest fish caught for the year.

Prizes will only be awarded upon the receipt of a properly completed IRS form W-9. Appropriate tax documents will be mailed to the winners within IRS prescribed due dates.

Prizes will be awarded at the next general meeting after the contest. The top three boats will be required to give a presentation at the weigh-in on how they achieved their results.

10. End of the Year Awards:

There will be a special award for Boat of the Year, 2nd place boat and 3rd place boat at the conclusion of the season. Awards will be given for up to four (4) registered team members. Extra awards will be available by request and assumption of the cost by the fishing team. There will be a special end of the year award for the biggest fish caught during the season, Rookie Boat and Small Boat with the most tournament points at season's end. Rookie boats are those that are fishing in their first season of S.U. tournaments and small boats are any boats under 22'.

11. Conduct:

Sportsmanship, proper VHF marine radio etiquette, boat courtesy and safety are expected from all participants. The honor system will be in effect, and everyone is expected to comply. No unsportsmanlike or unruly behavior will be tolerated. Any violation may subject the member and/or boat to disqualification from this and/or future tournaments.

12. Policing:

Any boat observing another boat breaking any of the aforementioned rules should contact a tournament official and report the violation.

13. Final Authority:

Any questions concerning rules should be brought to the attention of the tournament committee. The committee comprises of the weigh-in boat Captain and the tournament committee. In all matters pertaining to the tournaments, the decision of the tournament committee is final. Participants agree to abide by all decisions of the tournament committee.

For additional tournament information, please contact an SU tournament committee member.