

Lake Ontario Pro/Am Official Rules May 31, June 1 (2), 2024.
All COVID RULES AND REGULATIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED

NOTE: Violation of ANY of these rules MAY result in disqualification for the day or the Tournament

1 – CAPTAINS MEETING:

There will be a **MANDATORY** Captains meeting the Thursday evening before the event for Pro Classic Division teams (**6116 Tachi Drive, Newfane, NY 14108 7:30 p.m.**).

One (1) Team Captain or Team member involved are **required to attend**. Attendance will be limited to one (1) Team Captain or Team member. ALL Team representatives will be required to sign in at the pre-registration table. ANY exceptions to this rule **MUST** be reported to and pre-approved by the Tournament Director. Exact times and locations for Captains meetings can be found at www.lakeontarioproam.net

2 – COMPETITION PARAMETERS:

The Tournament’s intent is to fish two days. Hours of the competition are defined in Table A and shall apply to each day unless altered by the Tournament Director based on inclement weather.

- a) In the event of foul weather, two hours of fishing will constitute a full day. One two-hour day will constitute completion of the Tournament.
- b) Teams should be prepared to adjust their schedules to allow for fishing up to 5 PM Friday and Saturday, 4 PM Sunday (Sunday is the day used if Friday or Saturday are not) if weather conditions are a factor.
- c) If the first day is completed any time fished on the second or third day (even if less than two hours) will count towards the day.
- d) All team members and all Registered Tournament Boats are prohibited from returning to the waters of Lake Ontario from the time they cross the pier head day 1&2 until the designated departure time day 2&3. Any exceptions to this rule **MUST** be pre-approved by the Tournament Director.
- e) **NOTE:** There will be no refunds. In the event that the entire Tournament is cancelled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances all entry fees will be put in escrow and applied to the following year.

TABLE A:
Am Classic Division West Event

Disclaimers	Leave starting point	Start fishing	Stop Fishing	In weigh-in line
None	5:00 AM	-	-	2:30 PM

Amateur Open Division - All Events – Amateur Teams may depart at 5:00 AM and must be at the weigh-in line by 2:30PM. ALL teams must have a working cell and be able to accept text messages for emergency/small craft advisory messages. However, all Amateur Open division boats must keep in contact with tournament control in the event of postponement or cancellation. No fishing (for anyone) will take place under a small craft advisory. Open boats may launch from any Niagara County port; however it is encouraged to utilize the tournament ports for communication purposes. It is your responsibility to maintain contact with tournament control in the event you are outside VHF radio contact range. A headquarters phone number [\(716-628-2361\)](tel:716-628-2361) will be established, available at 4 a.m. on each morning of a contest.

3 – TOURNAMENT LIMITS:

All team members and registered Tournament boats must enter and exit from assigned ports ONLY.

- a) Tournament fishing is limited to U.S. waters ONLY.
- b) Fishing tributaries is prohibited. The Niagara River will be considered a tributary.
- c) It is the responsibility of the team Captain to remain within the Tournament boundaries. Straying outside of Tournament boundaries at any time for any reason is prohibited and will result in disqualification for the day.
- d) Tournament boats are prohibited from all open water boat-to-boat contact of any Pro Team unless it involves law enforcement or an emergency. Any exception must be pre-approved by the tournament director or will result in disqualification for the day.

4 – TEAM STRUCTURE:

There are no rod limits for the Amateur teams other than the NYS per person limit.

5 – TEAM CAPTAINS:

- a) Two team members are required to stay with the team cooler at all times until it has been received by the Tournament Weigh Master. Any exceptions must be approved by a Tournament Official.
- b) Teams are required to remain at the weigh-in site until released by the Tournament Director. Any exceptions must be approved by a Tournament Official.
- c) However, teams cannot contact any Pro teams still out fishing until the other teams have returned to the dock.

Summary: The objective of this rule is to not allow any form of communication between ANY Am to Pro boats during tournament hours. The start of the tournament is considered to be the noted time that Pro teams are allowed to leave the dock each morning.

6 - BOAT RESTRICTION AND IDENTIFICATION:

Boat size will be limited to no less than 17 feet. All boats are required to have a **working VHS radio and GPS** which must be functional at all times as well as USCG regulated safety equipment. Tournament Control will monitor Channel 16 and all boats will be directed to channel 9 for announcements. It is the Captain's responsibility to maintain contact with Tournament Control in the event of foul weather.

7- START AND END TIMES:

AMATEUR OPEN TEAMS: May leave the dock to fish at 5 a.m. from any harbor/port in Niagara County; however, it is the team's responsibility to maintain contact with tournament control ([716-628-2361](tel:716-628-2361)) should problems arise starting at 4 a.m. on the day of the contest. They **MUST** be in line at the Tournament weigh-in (Krull Park North) no later than 2:30 p.m. at all events. In the event of inclement weather, all open teams are required to maintain contact with tournament control. If fishing is canceled or suspended for the main tournament, the same restrictions will be put into effect in the Amateur Teams.

Communication and Radio Use Restriction: All participating boats must be equipped with an operational VHF radio. Tournament control will operate on Channel 9. All boats are required to remain and monitor channel 16 at all times except when directed to Channel 9 for communication by tournament control.

AM CLASSIC DIVISION TEAMS:

- a) Must turn in their filled in forms at the weigh in. IF you don't have your form, kindly obtain one, fill it out and present it in the weigh in line. Please don't wait till you get to the check point and hold up the line.
- b) In the event of inclement weather, a weather announcement will be made prior to the Dismissal time of 5 AM. No fishing will take place during a Small Craft Advisory.
- c) Teams may leave the starting points at 5:00AM.
- d) All teams must be in the weigh-in pre-check line at Krull Park, Olcott no later than 2:30PM.
- e) Failure to abide by these rules will result in disqualification for the day.
- f) All teams must be in the weigh-in pre-check line at Krull Park, Olcott no later than 2:30PM.
- g) Failure to abide by these rules will result in disqualification for the day.

8 - WEIGH-IN:

- a) Upon returning to port the cooler containing the day's catch must be immediately drained of water from the runoff of the required bags, jugs or block ice and transported to the weigh-in site.
- b) Any attempt to alter the weight of a tournament fish (excessive soaking, floating your days catch in water, pumping, injecting, rinsing etc.) will result in a self-inflicted DQ for the day.
- c) The cooler containing the day's catch may not leave the boat until your big fish for the day is tagged with a zip tie (in the mouth and out the gills) provided by the Tournament. Failure to do so will result in you and your teammate being "held" in the pre-check area until a Tournament official is available to oversee the proper "tagging" of your fish.
- d) As soon as the cooler leaves the boat it will be considered "sealed." The handling of your fish by anyone other than a Tournament Official is prohibited.
- e) At least two team members must remain with the day's catch until surrendered to the Weigh-in Official. Any exception to this rule must be pre-approved by a tournament official.
- f) Failure to abide by these rules will result in disqualification for the day.

9 - COOLERS:

- a) To qualify for scoring, all coolers must return to your designated harbor in your designated boat.
- b) All coolers must be marked with the team's name and number.
- c) All coolers must arrive at the weigh-in free of loose ice and water. ONLY block, bagged cubes, and frozen plastic containers are approved. Failure to abide by these rules will result in self-induced removal to the back of the pre-check line for correction.
- d) Absolutely no water in coolers (Soaking Fish) other than run off from approved block, bagged cubes or frozen plastic containers. Failure to abide by this rule will result in disqualification.

10 - SCORE SHEETS:

Team Score sheets will be reviewed and must be in compliance with Tournament rules. You will not be allowed to correct this information after the fact. Failure to abide by these rules will result in **disqualification** for the day. Failure to record all other required information in the appropriate spaces will result in your cooler being held at the pre-check area until such a time as a tournament official can review the sheet. Any sheets coming to weigh in and the information is not complete at the top of the sheet will result in a possible 10-point reduction. All score sheets must accompany you at the pre-check line. If you don't have your sheet at pre-check and pre-check has closed, you will not be able to weigh in for the day.

11- SCORING:

Amateur Open Teams Limits:

- a) May not arrive at the Weigh-in with more than 5 fish in their cooler.
- b) Scoring will be based on up to 5 "Tournament Legal" fish (refer to section 12) of which only one (1) can be a Lake Trout.

Points:

- a) Each Tournament legal fish will score 10 points.
- b) One (1) point will be scored per pound of fish weighed.
- c) All AM Teams are qualified to enter fish and build points in the AM Classic competition. Recognition and reward will be based on where you place overall in the Classic. Daily awards will also be handed out for the largest fish for the Am's.
- d) All Classic Division teams will be accumulating scores from both days to determine the overall winner.

12 - NYS AND TOURNAMENT LEGAL FISH DEFINITIONS:

FOR ALL TEAMS:

Steelhead - NYS legal length is 21 inches. Minimum Tournament length is 21 ½ inches. Captains are allowed the discretion to release Steelhead up to but not exceeding 22 inches. Attempting to weigh-in a Steelhead between 21 and 21 ½ inches will result in the loss of the fish and 25 points from your box score that day. **Attempting to weigh-in a Steelhead less than 21 inches will result in disqualification for the day.** **Atlantic Salmon** –NYS legal length is 25 inches. Minimum Tournament length is 25 ½ inches. Captains are allowed the discretion to release Atlantic's up to but not exceeding 26 inches. Attempting to weigh-in an Atlantic between 25 and 25 ½ inches will result in the loss of the fish and 25 points from your box score that day. **Attempting to weigh-in Atlantic less than 25 inches will result in disqualification for the day.**

All Other Trout and Salmon –Minimum length is 18 inches. Captains are allowed the discretion to release fish up to but not exceeding 18 ½ inches. Attempting to weigh-in a fish less than 18 inches will result in the loss of the fish and 25 points from your box score that day.

HANDLING FISH:

- Teams must make every reasonable effort to immediately land every fish that is "hooked-up".
- All fish brought to the boat must be immediately landed by netting. Landing fish by lifting them into the boat by hand, line, rod and reel or gaff is prohibited.
- Team Captains must verify the exact length and species of all "potential" undersized fish prior to releasing them.
- Any attempt to alter the length of a fish by breaking the spine or other form of mutilation is prohibited.
- Teams found in violation of these rules after a thorough investigation (to include a lie detector test) by Tournament officials will be disqualified.

HANDLING YOUR LIMIT FISH:

You can obtain 5 legal fish to bring to weigh in.

Certified measuring boards will be used at the weigh-in site. These boards will be present at the Captain's meeting for teams to compare their own measuring devices to. This board will be the "OFFICIAL" measuring boards of the Tournament and will be used to determine whether or not a fish is "tournament legal."

In no case will a team's score be made less than zero.

13 - PROTESTS, RULINGS AND LITIGATIONS:

- a) Any contestant witnessing a violation of the rules is **required to IMMEDIATELY** report the alleged violation to Tournament Control.
- b) Any suspected violations will be turned over to the Competition Committee for review. This committee will report all information to the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director will attempt to facilitate a resolution of the issue, before an Official Protest is filed.
- c) Any Team member has the right to file an Official Protest by completing and signing the Official Protest Form provided by the Tournament Director. This form must be presented to the Tournament Director within 30 minutes of receiving the form. Upon receiving the Official Protest form the Tournament Director will present the protested team with 15-minute opportunity to resolve the protest. Any unresolved protests will be forwarded to the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency for investigation.
- d) A \$100.00 (one hundred dollar) non-refundable protest fee (cash only) must accompany any filed protest form.
- e) The Tournament scores of protested teams will not be considered official, and any awards won by a protested team will be withheld until a complete investigation is finalized.
- f) Failure of any team to cooperate with the Competition Committee or the Tournament Director will result in immediate self-induced disqualification from the event.
- g) THE "SPIRIT" OF THE RULES – ALL RULES HAVE "LOOPHOLES". IT IS THE INTENTION OF THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR TO PROVIDE A FAIR AND SPORTSMAN LIKE TOURNAMENT. ALL QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS ARE TO BE REFERRED TO THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR. THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR HAS THE SOLE JURISDICTION IN DETERMING THE APPLICATION OF THE RULES. ALL DECISIONS OF THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR WILL BE FINAL.

14 - INSPECTIONS:

All teams must at any time, allow Tournament Officials to board their boat for inspection. All Tournament boats must be available for inspection for the duration of the event. Inspections shall include, but not be limited to, GPS units, fishing tackle and coolers. Failure to comply with an Official's request for inspection will result in immediate disqualification.

15 - MISCONDUCT:

Any inappropriate, improper or abusive conduct by any participant towards any Tournament Official, volunteer, or fellow participant shall be deemed a violation of the rules and may subject the violator to penalties or disqualification as determined by the Tournament Committee. Any person or team that has been disqualified by any other Tournament or Derby for an overt act to deceive or defraud may be barred from entry into any future events. Any bribery of any tournament official will lead to automatic disqualification to all future events of the Niagara County Pro-Am.

The tournament committee reserves the right to decline entry or participation by any person, team, or boat, as deemed necessary to ensure such things as integrity, image, reputation and relationships with sponsors, participants and supporting groups.

16 - LIABILITY:

Every reasonable precaution will be taken by the Tournament Committee to protect persons and property during the event. However, the Committee, its judges, sponsors, officers, directors, volunteers, or employees of the same will not be held responsible for the safety of persons or property participating in the tournament. All participants further understand and agree to hold harmless members of the Aforementioned groups from any liability or claim of damages.

- a) All Tournament boats should carry liability insurance.
- b) Each Contestant will be required to sign a liability disclaimer each morning before the Tournament begins.

17 - GENERAL:

- a) All fish will remain the property of the Tournament until released to the teams.
- b) All fish may be tested for legality.
- c) Disposition of all fish is the team's responsibility and must be in compliance with state and local laws. There will be no illegal dumping/wasting of harvested fish.

18 – LIE DETECTOR TEST:

Lie detector test may be given to any participant upon request by the Tournament Director. Failing a test or refusing to take one will result in disqualification.

19 – Integrity:

To protect the integrity of the event, anyone accused of cheating in any organized fishing tournament or derby, prior to this event, and after vetting such claim, will be requested to take a lie detector test. Failure to pass a lie detector test will disqualify said person from competing in any future Niagara County Pro-Am events.

20 – ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING;

All entrants agree that their purchase of a registration or participation in any of these events shall constitute an acknowledgement of the rules and they further acknowledge that they understand their obligations and responsibilities outlined within and they agree by these rules and the decisions of the Tournament Officials.

NOTE: Violations of ANY of these rules MAY result in disqualification for the day or the event. See specific rules for exact penalties.

Amateur Open Division Bullet Points:

All participants will be truly Amateurs, no US Coast Guard Licensed Captains will be allowed on any teams.

All NYS waters on Lake Ontario are open to fishing.

You can leave the dock or launch at 5 a.m. or later, wherever you want (Niagara County ports only), but you must be in line by 2:30 p.m. each day to weigh in at Krull Park in Olcott (Lions Club Pavilion, North). To help level the playing field, you must launch out of any of four Niagara County ports – from Fort Niagara to Golden Hill.

No fishing will take place under a Small Craft Advisory!

Any combination of your top five (5) Salmon or Trout (only 1 may be a Lake Trout) will be your “box” to be weighed. However, tournament size limits must be followed. See the aforementioned rules of the tournament. You do not have to follow the rod limits set in place by the tournament. You must only follow state regulations.

Entry fees are very reasonable with payouts more than 100 percent of the entry fees plus merchandise prizes. Big fish prizes, too, each day. The intent is to pay back the top four teams (or more) based on participation of the Am Division.

This is a cumulative two-day tournament.

Should one of the days be cancelled due to weather, Sunday will be used as a bad weather day. You must make yourself available. There are no refunds.