

Minnesota Tournament Trail — 2026 Rules

2026 MTT Tournament Rules

RULE CHANGES

These rules will be monitored and changed at the discretion of the Tournament Director and the MTT Board of Directors. Interpretation of these rules shall be left exclusively to the tournament director. The decision of the tournament director shall be final in all matters. Failure to comply with any rule may result in disqualification. All rules have “loopholes”; contestants are reminded that the spirit of the rule will prevail in all judgement cases.

TOURNAMENT “OFFICIALS”:

An event official or officially approved media person may approach or board your boat at any time for any reason and at any time during the event, refusal to allow an approved official on board your boat or to impede their work at any time may result in disqualification.

AGE LIMIT

Contestants under 18 years of age must have the signature of his/her parent or legal guardian on the entry form, as well as the contestant's signature.

ELIGIBILITY

All anglers must be a member of the Minnesota Tournament Trail. Tournament officials reserve the right to refund any entry fee, as well as for any reason not to accept the application for membership. All members must provide complete vessel information at the time of membership purchase. All members must provide all personal information requested at the time of membership purchase. Failure to provide complete documentation will result in forfeiting the right to compete.

SAFETY

Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant must wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device at all times when any combustion engine is operating above trolling speed. The flotation device must be fastened securely and the safety – stop switch attached.

BOAT REQUIREMENTS

All boats must meet Coast Guard and State requirements. Motors may not exceed BIA rating established by the manufacturer. All boats are required to carry a minimum of \$100,000 of liability insurance. No boats over 24ft 6in". All boats are required to have a Marine Band Radio (Permanent Mount or Handheld). Insurance carrier Information will be required for membership.

SPORTSMANSHIP

All contestants are expected to follow high standards of safety, conservation, and sportsmanship. No alcoholic beverages or non-prescription drugs are allowed in the boat at any time. Keeping a sportsman like distance at all times is expected. Using leaderboard information to obtain a fishing location of another team is considered un-sportsman like and is prohibited. Complaints of conduct unbecoming of the MTT will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. All complaints of unethical or un-sportsman like actions will be filed under the MTT official protest policy.

Any comments or complaints found to be slander like in nature or causing public defamation of another team will be considered un-sportsman like and subject to disqualification of the complainant.

Information or Equipment Sharing

No boat may come in contact with another boat during tournament hours. Contestants may not pass or receive information, tackle, bait, or other items from any other boat during tournament hours. Contestants may not have another boat hold or reserve fishing locations.

This includes but is not limited to sharing or requesting information via phone calls, text messages and/or social media during tournament hours.

Contestants may not communicate with people who are not fishing in the tournament during tournament hours without permission from the tournament director.

By entering the tournament all contestants agree to having mobile devices inspected if an accusation of information sharing is made.

PARTNER SUBSTITUTION

Each team must declare a Captain and Partner. Substitutions are allowed. A substitute does not receive points unless utilizing an activated Season Pass Partner. Substitutes cannot be a member of another team to accumulate points unless prior approval from the MTT is given or is an activated Season Pass Partner. Any substitute fishing the championship must have fished at a prior event with said team.

SEASON PASS PARTNERS:

*****SEASON PASS PARTNER TEAM REGISTRATION MUST BE MADE BEFORE YOUR FIRST EVENT*****

-Season Pass Partner teams are those teams that faithfully support the circuit by signing up and committing to fish FIVE (5) single day and (1) two-day events.

SEASON PASS PARTNER TEAMS MUST BE DESIGNATED BEFORE May 1, 2026. You CANNOT sign up for Season Pass Partner Team status after that. Season Pass Partner Teams are committed to paying for all events signed up for even if something happens that prohibits their attendance. There are some nice perks for Season Pass Partner Teams such as use of a predesignated substitute if needed and guaranteed spots. Season Pass Partner Teams WILL NOT be given preferential treatment by MTT that might give them a competitive advantage in any single event, to help them place better, start earlier, etc., as we believe strongly that the playing field should be level for all. However, MTT Season Pass Partner Teams do receive the following benefits in exchange for their support of MTT. Season Pass Partner Teams (only) will be allowed to designate a substitute member to be considered for use just in case a team member is UNABLE to attend with the following restrictions; A designated substitute must be identified as your team's substitute in advance by full legal name with MTT officials PRIOR to May 1, 2026, unless otherwise approved by MTT and MUST be a MTT member or join at that time. Your regular team member must be UNABLE to attend. If the substitute is not activated, they may not be in the boat during tournament hours in no case will more than two team members be actively fishing in any boat during tournament hours. Tournament Officials must agree that: a.) the original partner CANNOT attend and b.) The designated substitute is not a "ringer" or local expert and must investigate and approve a substitution on a case-by-case basis.

IF ALL these conditions are met with official approval, an official team substitute can replace a team member who CANNOT attend an event and team points will NOT be lost. Please use this benefit as it is intended which is to help keep you fishing if your partner is UNABLE and CANNOT attend an event, it is NOT intended to give you a substitution to use anytime you wish to gain a competitive advantage and will not be allowed as such. MTT reserves the right to STOP or alter this benefit if attempts to abuse it get out of hand. Do not attempt to abuse this customer service benefit or in MTT's sole judgment it will cease for all anglers and abusers will be identified.

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE, ONSITE REGISTRATION & COMPETITION:

There are no restrictions on how early a team can pre-fish, as long as state law is followed. There are no "official" practice days or off-limits days unless otherwise announced in advance for a specific/special event. All boats must be off the water by 4:00p.m. prior to the rules meeting.

All MTT tournaments will be a continuous flight beginning with a 7:00am take-off with fishing to end at 3:00pm when the Fish Donkey app shuts down. All boats must check in and verify submitted media by 3:30 or media not received will not be considered.

TIES

In the case of a tie, positions shall be determined by the big fish from each team. If the big fish is a tie, it will be determined by the time the big fish was caught. If all previous actions remain tied, the next biggest fish will be counted in the same manner. In the event of a total bag tie, the team leading in points will be awarded the higher placement.

TOURNAMENT ENTRIES/CANCELLATIONS

Tournament entries are based on a first received, first entered basis. A \$50 processing fee for transfers will be assessed.

If at any time a tournament is canceled, all members will be contacted via social media channels as well as via email to the email address provided at the time of membership. BOAT INSPECTION

There will be mandatory boat inspection prior to every tournament start. All teams are subject to inspection anytime during tournament hours.

THERE WILL BE NO GAME FISH OF ANY SPECIES ALLOWED IN ANY LIVWELL DURING TOURNAMENT HOURS.

ANGLERS MAY USE THEIR LIVWELL TO STORE BAIT.

IF COMING VIA WATER TO CHECK IN, A MEMBER OF MTT STAFF WILL CHECK YOUR BOAT AT THE DOCK UPON YOUR ARRIVAL. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET CHECKED. STARTING THE TOURNAMENT WITHOUT BEING CHECKED WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION.

ANY BOAT THAT MUST RETURN TO THE WEIGH IN SITE PRIOR TO THE TOURNAMENT ENDING FOR ANY REASON INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO MECHANICAL ISSUES MUST CONTACT THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR PRIOR TO ARRIVAL AT THE WEIGH IN SITE

ALL BOATS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY INSPECTED UPON ARRIVAL TO THE WEIGH IN SITE, AND WILL BE INSPECTED PRIOR TO RETURNING TO THE WATER. ALL TIME OFF THE WATER IS TIME SPENT AND WILL NOT BE RECOVERED.

A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINNESOTA TOURNAMENT TRAIL MAY CHAPERONE ANY REPAIRS OR MODIFICATIONS TO THE BOAT DURING THIS TIME.

BAG LIMITS

All fish must be caught live and, in a manner, consistent with the rules and regulations governing said body of water. Rules for individual events will be gone over at the rules meeting.

“WEIGH-IN” and Fish Verification Via the Fish Donkey App

All tournaments are Catch Photo Release. Teams must come to the official weigh-in site by water.

One team member must have the Fish Donkey App Downloaded. Both team members may download the App but must share the login to avoid multiple submissions.

EACH FISH WILL HAVE AT MINIMUM, 1 PICTURE OF THE FISH ON THE JUDGE. MOUTH CLOSED, TAIL PINCHED WITH THE HEAD TO THE LEFT TAIL TO THE RIGHT. A HERO SHOT. ALL PICTURES ARE TAKEN “BELLY TO BELLY”

EACH FISH MUST HAVE A VIDEO RELEASE IN ORDER FOR THE FISH TO BE COUNTED.

REGISTRATION AND RULES MEETING

Set times for registration and rules meetings will be determined by the tournament director and posted as such.

*****REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE 120 HOURS (5 days) PRIOR TO TAKE OFF*****

Any team that must register late **MUST** have prior approval to register, or the team will not be allowed to fish for that tournament.

Registration fees for 2026 are \$350.00 for single day tournaments, \$450.00 for 2-day tournaments and \$550.00 for the Championship. A \$25.00 per team, per event fee has been added to offset administrative and software fees for 2026 to protect the value of tournament payouts.

AT LEAST ONE TEAM MEMBER MUST ATTEND THE RULES MEETING. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE IN-PERSON MEETING, YOU MUST CONTACT THE DIRECTOR TO REVIEW AND SIGN THE RULES PRIOR TO FISHING.

*****ORIENTATION TO THE FISH DONKEY APP WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER EACH RULES MEETING. ORIENTATION WILL NOT TAKE PLACE THE MORNING OF THE TOURNAMENT! *****

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Tournament officials will only begin tournaments during acceptable weather conditions. It is solely the responsibility of the contestants to be aware of changing weather conditions. If conditions change during tournament hours to unsafe conditions, the contestants are permitted to seek safe shelter until weather conditions pass. Cellular phones, CBs or marine radios are allowed for emergencies only.

PROTESTS

The protest must be in writing and accompanied by a \$2000.00 CHECK made out to Minnesota Tournament Trail. The protest must be handed to the tournament director in writing prior to weigh in beginning. At any time, a contestant would like to protest the rules or actions of tournament officials, this same process will be followed and will be reviewed by the MTT Board of Directors.

Any complaint not following the protest process may be considered un-sportsman like and be subject to disqualification. Once a complaint or protest is made, the discipline and or actions of the Tournament director will not or may not be made public.

The written complaint will be on an MTT approved protest form. If the protest is found to be legitimate by the presenting party, the presenting party will not be charged. If the protest is found to be false or comes without proper evidence, the MTT will retain the funds submitted with the protest. The check and form submitted will be marked as void and retained by MTT for records. If the check is to be cashed and is returned NSF, the presenting team will be disqualified for all 2026 events, and all accumulated points will be lost.

POLYGRAPH -VOICE STRESS TEST/RANDOM OBSERVER

All contestants by signing the entry form agree to submit to a polygraph-voice stress test and the possibility of having a random observer placed in their boat during competition days.

*****THE MINNESOTA TOURNAMENT TRAIL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DO RANDOM POLYGRAPH SCREENINGS FOR ANR REASON. THE REASON FOR RONDON SCREENING IS AT THE SOLE DISCRESSION OF THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR AND WILL NOT AT ANY TIME BE MADE PUBLIC. ANY ACCUSATIONS AS TO THE REASONS FOR SCREENING MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FOR THAT EVENT AND OR ALL FUTURE MINNESOTA TOURNAMENT TRAIL EVENTS. *****

POINTS STRUCTURE One-day events will be worth a total of 500 points. Finishing positions will be awarded in 5-point decreasing increments. 100 Points will be awarded to any entered team not weighing fish. Two-day events will be worth a total of 1000 points with 10-point decreasing

increments. 200 points will be awarded to any entered team not weighing fish.

PRO AND SPORTSMAN DIVISIONS:

Each division will be awarded their points based on their overall finish. Each division will be a separate race for Team Of The Year. Team of the year and special awards will be based on points received at the top 6 one-day events and one two-day event in each division plus points received during the championship. To qualify for Team Of The Year teams MUST accumulate points on 4 separate bodies of water.

Championship points will be based on 1000 points with 10-point decreasing increments. 200 points will be awarded to any entered team not weighing fish. For special awards and Team of the Year, only points accumulated with the same partner will be used.

PAY OUT STRUCTURE:

All payouts will be based on 80% cash and prizes less the \$25.00 Admin fee per entry.

\$25.00 per entry will be withheld and be put towards the Championship and Team Of The Year payouts.

Open Division and Traditional payout structure

Sportsman division payout is based on 80% of the entries to that class or a maximum of 30% of the total prize purse. The sportsman division is still eligible to win 1st Place overall/Pro and achieve appropriate manufacturer contingency offerings.

Pro/Overall division payout is based on the remaining purse if a 30% payout is not met by the Sportsman division, or 70% of the overall entries if 30% payout is achieved by the Sportsman.

THIS PAYOUT STRUCTURE WILL BE ADJUSTED IF AT ANY TIME THE SPORTSMANS DIVISION ACHIEVES 50% OF THE TOTAL FIELD.

Awards will be as follows

1st Place Overall/Open Plaque and check

2nd Place Open Plaque and check

3rd Place Open Plaque and check

4th Place Open Plaque and check

5th Place Open Plaque and check

6th Place Open Plaque and (check if total field meets or exceeds 60 boats)

7th Place Open Plaque and (check if total field meets or exceeds 60 boats)

8th Place Open Plaque and (check if total field meets or exceeds 60 boats)

9th Place Open Plaque and (check if total field meets or exceeds 60 boats)

10th Place Open Plaque and (check if total field meets or exceeds 60 boats)

1st Place Traditional Plaque and check

2nd Place Traditional Plaque and check

3rd Place Traditional Plaque and check

4th Place Traditional Plaque and (check if total field meets or exceeds 60 boats)

5th Place Traditional Plaque and (check if total field meets or exceeds 60 boats)

Open Division / Traditional Designation

At the time of registration teams will be required to designate a division. The open division will be "open" to utilize all forms of legal sonar and or fishing techniques. The traditional division will be a no forward-facing sonar division.

Once a team has designated OPEN as their division, that team will remain there for the season. In the TRADITIONAL division, a team may escalate to the open division however the team will forfeit all points acquired to that point.

CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION

The top 100 teams by points who have entered and participated in 5 one-day events and one two-day event will be invited to the championship. *** No team shall "PAY THROUGH" to the championship. ***

*** The above rules are not all-inclusive regarding sportsmanship and ethical behavior. The Minnesota Tournament Trail reserves the right to interpret and enforce rule violations not covered above at their discretion. ***