2026 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP MUSKY OPEN
UPDATED RULES & REGULATIONS

ELIGIBILITY

A. All persons are eligible to enter the National Championship Musky Open on August 21, 22 & 23, 2026. All persons under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Due to safety issues, children under the age of 8 are not eligible for this tournament.

B. Entries for pre-registration must be postmarked no later than August 1, 2026 in order to be received as a pre-registration. Contestants whose entries are received prior to May 15, 2026 will be eligible for an Early Bird Drawing – a two night stay at the Eagle River Inn, Eagle River, WI. All pre-registration entry fees are $75 per person.

C. No entries will be accepted after an August 1, 2026 postmark. After August 1, 2026, entries need to be done at on-site registration at the tournament headquarters – Vilas County Fairgrounds. All on-site entry fees are $80 per person and must be paid in cash.

D. Cancellation. No refund can be given should you need to cancel your entry into the tournament after August 1, 2026. Credit for entry can be transferred to the 2027 tournament.

E. Registration is available on-line at www.muskyopen.com

REQUIREMENTS

A. Each boat and contestant will be required to abide by all of the State of Wisconsin's boating and fishing laws.

B. Each entrant must personally sign their own attached insurance waiver form along with the registration form. A parent/guardian must sign for a minor. No exceptions.

C. All partners must be listed on the registration form.

D. All contestants must register in person at the tournament headquarters and must attend one mandatory tournament rules briefing before fishing.

BOATS & EQUIPMENT

A. All boats must meet U.S. Coast Guard and State of Wisconsin boating rules and safety standards and must be registered in accordance with regulations of the home state of the contestant owning the boat.

B. **All boats must be clean and free of Aquatic Invasive Species prior to leaving and entering another lake.**

C. Cameras are recommended for photos of caught muskies.

D. Forward Facing Sonar-Live Sonar and all other real-time imaging-like technology, will not be allowed to be used during the tournament and will be banned from use 2 hours before the start of the 1st day of the tournament, until the end of the last day of the tournament. These units do not have to be removed from the boat, just the "live" feature on unit cannot be used during the tournament. Other screens such as regular Sonar, Non-Live version of side and down imaging, GPS Mapping and such can still be used on these units. We believe this is a family-fun tournament and want to keep it fair to all.

FISHING

A. Registered participants who immediately release muskies which are 34" and over will be counted and scored on all tournament lakes. Measure to the nearest 1/4".

B. No fishing from bridges, piers, docks or the shore.

C. Only muskies caught legally on a hook and line will qualify for scoring.

D. Each person fishing is allowed only one (1) line in the water at any time. No live bait allowed.

E. Row trolling is permitted. No motor trolling allowed.

F. There shall be no less than two (2) registered contestants per boat at all times while fishing and all people in the boat during fishing hours must be registered tournament anglers.

G. Tournament hats must be worn while fishing.

H. Only muskies caught and released on Friday, Saturday or Sunday during tournament hours will be accepted for scoring. Verification catch slips will be issued to each contestant.

I. The angler who hooks the fish, must be the person who reels-in the fish and registers that fish. There is no handing-off of the rod to another person to catch the fish, and then register it as their fish.

J. All muskies caught must be verified and released immediately. Verification catch slips may be done by fellow contestants from a different boat or the nearest person not in your boat. All slips must be turned in to tournament headquarters as soon as possible. Fish caught and released on Friday and/or Saturday MUST be registered by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday night and fish caught and released on Sunday must be registered by 12:30 p.m. on Sunday. Failure to do so will result in fish being disqualified from scoring.

K. This is a total catch & release tournament. Contestants may resume fishing upon successfully verifying and releasing their musky. If a musky is killed, the contestant must cease fishing for that day, as the legal bag limit is one (1) fish per day.

L. In case of a tie, the winner will be determined by earliest fish registration time on verification slip. Any disputes will be settled by the Official Tournament Committee and their decision is final and binding.

FISHING AWARDS

A. Trophies only, to be determined on a point basis by length in inches.

B. Trophies as follows: 1. Most points accumulated – trophies awarded for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th places; 2. Largest musky registered for each lake family; 3. Husband/Wife trophy; 4. Youth trophy.

C. Contestant with largest musky released in the tournament will receive a graphite replica mount.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

No alcoholic beverages may be consumed while fishing by contestants or tournament officials. Please note: Due to licensing, no carry-ins are allowed at the Vilas County Fairgrounds.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Tournament results and raffle winners will be available online at www.muskyclubsalliance.org.

BOUNDARIES/LAKE FAMILIES

A. There are seven (7) "Lake Families" available to fish. These families can be requested and will be assigned on a first-come-first-serve basis. Each Lake Family is limited to 500 participants. Once filled, you will need to fish your second choice. You must fish your assigned lake family at all times during the tournament. No changes or exceptions.

B. The "Lake Families"are:

LAKE FAMILY 1: The Eagle River Chain Area
– 10 lakes of the Eagle Chain from dam to dam, Lower Ninemile Lake, Sevenmile Lake, Kentuck Lake & Deerskin Lake

LAKE FAMILY 2: The Three Lakes Chain
– All lakes in the Three Lakes Chain from dam up river

LAKE FAMILY 3: The "Big Lakes" Family
– North Twin Lake, South Twin Lake, Long Lake, Big Sand Lake, Lac Vieux Desert Lake and Pioneer Lake

LAKE FAMILY 4: The "Western" Family
– Big St. Germain Lake, Little St. Germain Lake, Star Lake, Found Lake, Lost Lake, Laura Lake, Little John, Big Muskellunge Lake, Irving Lake, Ballard Lake, White Birch Lake, Plum Lake and Razorback Lake

LAKE FAMILY 5: The Sugar Camp Chain Area
– Five Lakes of the Sugar Camp Chain, Gilmore Lake, Pickerel Lake (off Hwy. J), Rainbow Flowage, Little Arbor Vitae Lake and Big Arbor Vitae Lake

LAKE FAMILY 6: The "Eastern" Family
– Pickerel Lake (off Hwy. G), Upper and Lower Buckatabon Lake, Muskellunge Lake (off Hwy. G), Snipe Lake, Boot Lake and Stella Lake

LAKE FAMILY 7: The "Northern Lakes" Family
– Fishtrap Lake, Palmer Lake, White Sand Lake, High Lake, Tenderfoot Lake, Boulder Lake, Wildcat Lake, Little Crooked Lake and Trout Lake.

FISH VERIFICATION SLIPS MUST BE REGISTERED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Register at Tournament Headquarters – Vilas County Fairgrounds. Fish caught and released on Friday and/or Saturday MUST be registered by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday night and fish caught and released on Sunday must be registered by 12:30 p.m. on Sunday. Failure to do so will result in fish being disqualified from scoring.

DOOR PRIZES

To be eligible to win any door prizes, YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN.