



Effective 2022

## **HOOK & PADDLE Competition Rules Standard**

The terms and conditions presented in this document apply between Hook & Paddle (H&P) and those persons registering for and participating in H&P competitive Events (“Competitor”). The pronouns “he,” “him,” “himself,” and “his” herein are used as generic, gender-neutral terms and do not restrict or confirm access on the basis of sex.

Each H&P Event, (referred to herein as “Competition”) is a CPR (Catch-Photo-Release) contest in which each Competitor catches his own fish in places, during times, and by procedures permitted in all pertinent rules and regulations, digitally photographs them according to the standards described herein, and submits the lengths and photographs for verification. These Competitions are conducted according to H&P Competition Rules found in two documents:

- A. *H&P Competition Rules Standard (this document) covers about 90% of the terms, conditions, and standards common to all H&P Events.*
- B. *Event-specific rules are located on the H&P event-specific webpage, which includes details such as dates, locations, times, eligible water boundaries, restrictions, and exceptions to the H&P Rules Standard.*

Together, this document and web page ([www.hookandpaddle.ca](http://www.hookandpaddle.ca)) comprise the *H&P Competition Rules*. As a condition of participation in any H&P Competition, the participating angler (“Competitor”) agrees to read, understand, and comply with all H&P Competition Rules. Failure to comply will result in a penalty, which may range from points deductions to photo submission denial or disqualification from the event.

For each Event, the H&P Event Coordinator and/or Tournament or Series Director (“TD”) will be identified on the H&P event-specific page. The Tournament Director and/or Director of Operations has responsibility for the interpretation and enforcement of the H&P Competition Rules and may amplify or clarify them to make them more relevant or complete. Tournament Director and/or Director of Operations decisions may be disputed, as described in Section 17.A. H&P management will review the decisions and revise the H&P Competition Rules appropriately.

Announcement of any rule changes will also be posted as soon as possible and will be effective immediately upon publishing in the H&P Facebook Page and the H&P Website. H&P will notify all competitors via all available

methods of communication above. Understanding and being aware of the most recent rules prior to engaging in any competition or event is the sole responsibility of the competitor.

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## 1. Participation and Eligibility

**A. Event Registration** – All H&P competitors must register and pay for each event online at the [Hook And Paddle – Canada's Premier Kayak Fishing Series](#) website.

1. Event specific H&P tournament ID will be issued by H&P Tournament Director on the morning of but prior to event start time. This Tournament ID must be included when submitting photos. (see 9. I. Photo Submission)

### B. Entry Fees

1. Entry fee amounts, registration deadlines, late fee exceptions, and refund are specified on the event-specific page for each competition.
2. No Satisfaction Guarantee – Competitor understands and agrees that payment for the event does not secure a guarantee or promise of satisfaction.
3. Competitor's failure or inability, for any reason except as otherwise provided herein, to participate in any or all of the activities of the event does not relieve or suspend the Competitor's obligation to make all payments required by H&P rules on a timely basis, nor entitle the competitor to a refund or credit, except as provided below.

**C. Payment** – Competitor agrees that once an event registration is submitted, the terms and conditions of the H&P Competition Rules constitute an agreement that is a legally binding and an enforceable obligation of the Competitor.

**D. Competitor's Right to Cancel** – Cancellation before an event registration deadline, will be eligible for full refund or credit to be applied towards another H&P event with 48hr prior notice. If a H&P event is canceled, anglers will be fully refunded, or the entry fee can be credited towards another H&P event. H&P is not responsible for any refunds of expenses related to travel or lodging reservations or other payments involving third parties.

## 2. Fish Eligibility

**A. Species** – Only Catfish (Brown Bullhead), Chain Pickerel, Chub/Fallfish, Eel, Trout (any species), Musky, Pumpkinseed Sunfish, Redbreast Sunfish, Gaspereau, Striped Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Sturgeon, Sucker, White Perch, Yellow Perch are accepted species.

**B. Length** – There is no minimum length for any species that can be scored in competition unless otherwise specified in event-specific rules.

**C. Condition** – Fish may not appear to be dead, mutilated, frozen, mangled, or otherwise damaged, or it appears to have been mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered.

**D. Fish Entry** is based on events. Only fish landed within tournament hours for the specific event or day may be submitted. **See Photo Standards (Section 9) and Scoring (Section 10) for additional requirements.**

## 3. Competition Period

Competition start and end dates and times are stated on the event-specific page. Competitors may place their watercraft in the water, occupy them, shove off, and then stage (float, drift, or anchor) in the immediate area until the official “Shotgun Start,” at which time they may proceed underway. Failure to comply may result in disqualification from the event.

## 4. Pre-fishing

Pre-fishing is considered to be any activity that takes place on eligible water defined in the event-specific rules including fishing, scouting, and graphing. At the end of the pre-fishing time specified in the event-specific rules, the angler must be off the water. There are no restrictions regarding areas and types of watercraft used in pre-fishing. **Effective 2022:** *Anglers may not pre-fish eligible waters for any H&P Series event 24 hours prior to the event or series competition date(s) and time. Violation will result in disqualification from the event.*

## 5. Competition Area

**A.** Competitive fishing is allowed only on publicly accessible waters within the geographic area designated on the Event Page as “Eligible Water” or “Tournament Boundaries”. Photos of fish caught outside of eligible water boundaries will be denied.

1. Photos that competitors submit for scoring in every H&P Event or tournament must be of fish caught from Eligible Water. To be “Eligible,” the body of water must be inside the competition area boundary, during public-access hours, be accessible to the public, and be where fishing is permitted by regulations.
2. A competitor must access the water from or across publicly accessible areas or rights-of-way. Additionally, anglers MAY NOT cast into or otherwise obtain access to off-limits areas from eligible water. (Example: Posted spawning areas or other refuges)
3. Clarification of eligible waters is the sole responsibility of the competitor prior to engaging in competition.

**B.** Competitors must launch from the designated launch indicated on the event page for each specific tournament directly onto Eligible Water. Crossing restricted property to reach Eligible Water is not permitted. Tributaries, canals, sloughs or estuaries separated from the rest of eligible water by temporary obstructions (e.g., fallen trees, log jams, beaver dams) that, if removed, could be entered by floating/paddling are considered eligible waters in which competition is permitted, and competitors are permitted to drag or portage watercraft over or around such obstructions. Those separated by obstructions of a permanent nature across or through which one cannot paddle/float (e.g., levees, earthen or concrete dams, berms, elevated roadbeds, spillways, waterfalls) are ineligible water, and competition in such areas is prohibited. **Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

**C.** Competitors are not permitted to relocate to other eligible waters during tournament hours.

**D.** Watercraft must not be anchored in such a position as to prevent or block access for other watercraft or powerboats. Violation will result in disqualification from the event.

**E.** Fish caught in eligible water while wading or walking on the shore are not eligible for submission

F. Competitors' watercraft must be launched before fishing from. "Launched" means placing the watercraft on liquid water, occupying it, and going underway. NOTE: at no time may competitors photograph fish on their vessel while it is on their vehicle or trailer.

1. Competitor must pedal, paddle, or power his watercraft to the fishing location.
2. Competitor watercraft must be visible in every fish photo submitted. Any Competitor who goes out of sight of his watercraft for any reason (e.g., restroom break, seeking or rendering aid, or reporting an emergency) must cease competition fishing and resume it only after re-launching the watercraft.

**Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

## 6. Communication, Cooperation and Assistance

**NOTE:** *Casual verbal conversation with recreational anglers while on the water does not constitute cheating or violation of this rule. Competitors should **not** be using cellphones, or yelling to other competitors to communicate fish location or species caught to other anglers during an event. Competitors may **not** solicit information during these conversations or interactions. If information is solicited, then competitors may submit a complaint through the Disputes process (see Section 15. Disputes)* **Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

Before and during the event, competitors may:

1. share gear, tackle, and equipment
2. assist in photographing a fish for submission
3. communicate with and fish in proximity to other people, including other Competitors

Competitors may **not** receive assistance in catching fish that are photographed and submitted for scoring, including boat positioning, casting, retrieving, hooking, playing, or landing a fish. **Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

## 7. Fishing Tackle, Equipment, Methods and Measuring Boards

**A.** All fish submitted for score must be caught live by the Competitor who submits them for scoring using only equipment and legal methods that comply with all sportfishing statutes and regulations of the province and body of water in which they are taken. Competitors are responsible for research of and compliance with all applicable fishing and boating regulations.

**B.** Snatching or snagging fish is not permitted (foul hooked fish must be released without being photographed and submitted), all species must be hooked inside the mouth to be eligible. Fish must be caught, photographed, and released prior to resuming fishing (unless otherwise stipulated on the webpage for the specific event such as tidal waters where multiple rods are allowed). If you have 2 lines in the water, and catch fish on both lines, competitor must deal with both fish before lines are in the water. **Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

**C.** All fish must be caught by the Competitor on rod, reel, line, and hook, on the tournament day. No traps, snares, set lines, or other methods of fishing other than rod, reel and line are permissible.

1. Live bait is permitted (worms, cut bait).
2. No whole fish species or minnows are permitted.

**Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

**D. Acceptable measuring boards** must be approved by Tournament Director/Administrator prior to all H&P competitions. Preferred boards may include but not limited to: Aluminum Ketch Products Measuring Board, the Ketch Karbonate (plastic), Hawg Trough and FishStik.

1. Measuring boards may be shortened only by removing inches from the upper end (opposite the fence). For example, one may cut off the end of a measuring board at the 26-inch mark in order for it to fit crossways between a watercraft's gunwales. However, it may not be broken, snapped, or cut apart and then reassembled at any point between the two ends. **Violation will result, at minimum, in denial of the photo submission.**
2. A slight flex in a measuring board resulting from a fish's weight is allowed; however, Competitors are prohibited from deliberately flexing or deforming a measuring board by exerting pressure or reshaping it. Any modification of a measuring board that results in a misrepresentation of a fish's

actual length is grounds for a competitor's disqualification from the event and may result in subsequent sanctions and penalties as described in Rule 11.

3. A clean measuring device is expected to ensure we can give you a proper score.
4. Competitors may share measuring boards.
5. If using the FishStik, a hook may remain in the fish's mouth if it can slide in the slot at the head of the bump board, allowing the jaw/mouth to make contact with the board without restriction. Any fish not touching the bump board will result in reduction of points or possible denial of photo submission.

**E. Technology (Cell Phones)** – Each competitor is responsible for having the necessary technology with GPS, location, and capture capability.

1. When a Competitor's technology becomes inoperable or is lost, he may share with other Competitors, provided each Competitor logs into his own account (using the App) in order to submit photos of fish he caught. Unique event identifier must be included in each photo. Competitors under the same circumstances may share technology, provided each Competitor can clearly and positively identify photos of the fish he caught. **Violation will result in denial of photo submission.**

**F.** Only **ONE** casting, spin-casting, spinning, or fly rod and reel may be in use at any one (unless otherwise stipulated on the webpage for the specific event such as tidal waters where a maximum of TWO rods are allowed). A rod and reel are considered to be "in use" when a lure attached to it by a line is in or on the water. A hung lure (one snagged in an overhanging tree) that is not in or on the water is not considered in use and the attached rod and reel may be set aside while another is in use.

**G.** Nets and grippers (e.g., Fish Grip, Boga-Grip) may be used for landing fish during tournament competition, but grippers must not remain attached to the fish in photos. **Violation will result in denial of the photo submission.**

1. Fish may not be retained on stringers or in live wells, other than to momentarily revive the fish. **Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

## **8. Watercraft & Propulsion**

**A.** Watercraft acceptable for use in H&P Competition are those manufactured and marketed as canoes, kayaks, or SUPs for which paddling, pedaling or battery-operated trolling motors are the primary means of propulsion. Any other watercraft must be submitted to the H&P Director of Operations for review and approval prior to use in competition.

**Use of watercraft in competition other than those listed above as acceptable or without prior approval will result in disqualification from the event.**

**B.** Watercraft propulsion is restricted to paddle, pedal, pole, or electric motor.

**C.** Unless specifically prohibited on the event-specific page, use of a single electric propulsion unit per watercraft in H&P competition is approved with the following restrictions: NOTE: No more than one electric motor may be installed on competitor's watercraft at any time during official competition times.

**D.** Competitors must comply with all boating regulations pertaining to motorized kayak/electric propulsion watercraft registration, use, and operating restrictions for the designated fishing area. **Violation will result in disqualification from the event.**

**E.** Towing, transport, or relocation assistance from another watercraft, including "mother shipping," is NOT permitted except in cases of emergency, as when pulling a kayak from a danger zone or restricted area. Once the emergency has ended, the Competitor may resume fishing only if the watercraft was pulled no more than 100 yards from the danger zone. **Violation may result in disqualification from the event.**

**F.** Trolling lure(s) attached to a single rod and towed behind a watercraft while underway is permitted in H&P Competition, anglers can have up to TWO lines in the water trolling, where permitted, or one trolling, one casting. Competitors must demonstrate sportsmanlike conduct and avoid impeding other competitors or recreational anglers while trolling.

**G.** Anchoring of watercraft is permitted during the H&P events as long as the following apply:

1. It is safe to anchor
2. Minimum distance of 10' from another competitor
3. By anchoring you do not impede or block access to a waterway being used by another competitor or other boaters utilizing the same waterway.

**NOTE:** *Multiple fish caught on the same lure, at the same time (topwater, A-Rig, etc.) may both be accepted for scoring provided all fish are caught, photographed, and released prior to resuming fishing. For this allowance to exist, both (or more) fish must be caught legally within the eligible waters and during a single cast and/or retrieve. The additional fish may be retained by lip gripper or landing net while preparing for and taking photos of each fish. Any foul hooked fish must be immediately released.*

## 9. Photo Standards

Digital photographs of each fish submitted to judges for scoring must meet these criteria:

**A. Unique** – Each digital photo submitted in each Event must be of a different fish. The Judge will deny subsequent digital photos of the same fish submitted by the Competitor in an Event. Possession of multiple fish is not permitted. All fish must be caught, photographed, and released prior to resuming fishing for subsequent fish.

**B. Visible/Legible** – Each photo must be in focus and clear enough for a judge to:

1. Verify the event ID code. The inability of the judge to verify will result in the denial of the photo submission.
2. Verify the fish's condition. Fish must be releasable, free of debris and alive. Violation will result in denial of the photo submission.
3. Verify the fish's length. The judge will score fish at the greatest length of which he is certain.
4. Verify whether the fish's jaw or lip is in contact with the measuring board fence. The inability of the judge to verify will result in a minimum penalty of 1 inch and may result in denial of the photo submission at the judge's discretion.
5. The entire fish, from its mouth/jaw to the end of its caudal (tail) fin must be visible in photos (Except where permitted to be covered by hand). In addition, at least one visible one-inch increment of the measuring board must be clearly visible to make an accurate length determination (Example. If the fish is 17.75 and the 17 is covered, the 18' mark must be clearly visible). If either end of the fish is covered or cropped off, the photo may be denied at the judge's discretion.
6. Fish with a lure still in their mouth may be subject to deduction of an inch depending on the submitted photo, as it pertains to position of the mouth touching the fence of the board.

**C. Centered** – Camera lens positioned directly over the center of the fish's body, which contributes to accurate measurement by judges. Photos taken at a low angle to obscure an open mouth may be denied or penalized at the judge's discretion.

**D. First-generation** – Each digital photo must be a first-generation image (not a photo of or screenshot of another photo). Violation will result in denial of the photo submission.

**E. Identifiable** – H&P event ID code above, below, or beside the fish must be visible (or placed on the Competitor's hand or arm).

**NOTE: Only the H&P event ID identifier is acceptable for photo submission.** This is given out in the morning prior to each event, and must be in the picture. Violation will result in denial of the photo submission.

**F. Background** – Competitors' watercraft must be clearly visible in all eligible photographs. Violation will result in denial of the photo submission. Watercraft must have been launched and underway to be eligible for submission. Kayak may not be in or on a competitor's vehicle or trailer while photos are taken. The following exceptions apply

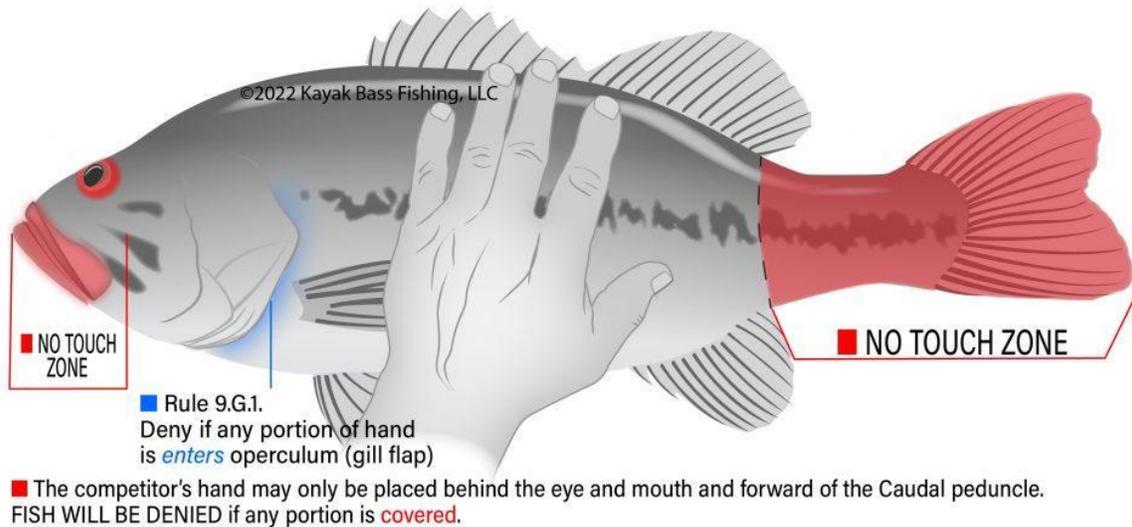
1. Competitors may beach their kayak when attempting to take a photograph of larger species such as Musky or sturgeon.
2. Competitors may beach their kayak during inclement or stormy weather, but all photos must be taken on watercraft.

**G. Hand Position** – It is recommended to take the photo with hand as close to centered on the fish as possible. Hand placement must meet the following guidelines:

1. No portion of the hand may enter the gill plate. Violation will result in denial of the photo submission.
2. The competitor's hand must be placed to provide a clear view of the fish's eye. Obstruction or coverage of any portion of the fish's eye will result in the denial of the photo submission. Hand must be placed forward of the Caudal peduncle (fleshy, scaled part of the bass' body at the base of the caudal fin). Competitor's hand may not contact any portion of the Caudal Peduncle past the back edge of the fish's

dorsal or anal fin. Violation will result in denial of the photo submission. **(See Photo Submission Guidelines).** **NOTE: The photo below is for advisory purposes and indicates areas for competitors to avoid. Official scoring is based on Photo Submission Guidelines.**

3. In place of competitors' hands, Fish can be secured to the measuring device using a strap.
4. Strap can only be used in the location designated for hand placement and must not be on gills or caudal areas.



## H. Mouth

1. Fish's lip or jaw must be in contact with the measuring board fence (bump board, upright), and the fence must be visible in the photo. Violation will result in denial of the photo submission.

**NOTE:** *This determination will be made by the judge and will only be considered for review through submission of a formal dispute.*

**I. Photo submission** – All photos must be submitted to the H&P Tournament Director by the end of tournament hours on the day of the event. (see specific event details on the tournament page).

1. All images should be texted to the H&P Tournament director from which each competitor received their Tournament ID at the start of the specific event. (see 1. A. 1. Event Registration)
2. **Only** the largest of each applicable species should be submitted for review to the H&P Tournament Director.
3. Only photos submitted during tournament hours will be reviewed and tallied for the specific event and leader board.

## 10. Scoring

Tournament Standings are determined by the combined length of eligible species caught on tournament day. Bonus points will be awarded for the following at each tournament:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place – 5 points
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place – 4 points
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place – 3 points
- 4<sup>th</sup> place – 2 points
- 5<sup>th</sup> place – 1 point

- a. **3** points will be awarded for catching the longest Target Species (see individual tournament details for specific target species for each event)

- b. 1 point for catching the Target species (see individual tournament details for specific target species for each event)**

**A.** Fish length is determined by its caudal fin (tail fin) touching or crossing the manufacturer's quarter-inch mark (e.g., ridges, grooves) on the measuring board. If it falls short of a 1/4-inch factory mark, the length is rounded to the next lower 1/4-inch mark that the fish's caudal fin touches or crosses. In reviewing photographs, judges will visualize as accurately as possible where a 1/4-inch factory mark would be if it extended the entire width of a board and use that imaginary line to determine a fish's length. Entire caudal fin lifted away and out of contact with the board will result in denial of the photo submission.

**B.** If any portion of a fish's caudal (tail) fin extends off the edge of a Measuring Board surface, the score will be determined by the highest 1/4-inch measurement reached or crossed by the portion of caudal fin on the measuring board. Any portion of the caudal fin extending off the edge of a Measuring Board is not considered in scoring.

2. For longer species such as Musky, Sturgeon or Striped bass, a measuring device can be placed adjacent to the official measuring board. This additional device must clearly start at the bump board fence and must not be obscured in any way, so a continuous measurement is visible.

3. Bullhead/Catfish and Sturgeon can be measured with their belly face down on the bump board.

**C.** Tournament ranking shall be determined by the aggregate length of each species submitted by Competitor's photos remaining on the leaderboard when judging has concluded and the dispute period has closed. Unless otherwise stipulated on the event-specific page.

**D.** It is up to the Competitor to submit the correct pictures before tournament deadline, forgotten pictures, or wrongly submitted pictures will not be accepted after the end-of-competition time.

**E.** H&P judges apply the following scoring criteria to adjust measurements, approve or deny photos, and penalize photos by deducting points (length) or disqualifying a Competitor.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Photo Scoring Criteria</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
a. Photo	Blurry photo/length unclear: scored at the highest mark of which there is no doubt (Rule 9.B.3)	n/a
b. Photo	Blurry photo; completely unable to judge (Rule 9.B)	Deny
c. Photo	Appears to be second-generation (e.g., screen shot, photo of photo) (Rule 9.D)	Deny
d. Photo	EXIF data does not exist and/or other evidence substantiates photo taken outside of Eligible Water boundaries (Rule 5.A)	Deny
e. Photo	EXIF data, other evidence substantiates photo was taken outside of competition hours (Rule 3.A)	Deny
f. Photo	Multiple digital photos submitted of the same fish; unintentional violation (Rule 9.A)	Deny
g. Photo	Multiple digital photos submitted of the same fish; evidence indicates intentionally (Rule 9.A)	Ban
h. Photo	Competitor's watercraft not visible in photo background (Rule 9.F)	Deny
i. Photo	Entire fish not in picture (Rule 9.B.5)	Deny
j. Orientation	Fish positioned with right side of body toward camera; head pointing right and caudal fin left	Deny

k. Orientation	Fish positioned with dorsal fins at bottom of photo, pelvic and anal fins upward	Deny
l. Identifier	Identifier Card/ID is not visible (Rule 9.E)	Deny
m. Identifier	Identifier Card/ID missing, counterfeit, or incorrect code for the event. (Rule 9.B.1)	Deny
n. Fish	Secured by restraining device (e.g., stringer, tape, elastic or clip attached to fish) (Rule 7.G.1, 9.G.4)	Deny
o. Body	Any portion of a hand or fingers under the fish's operculum (gill flap or cover) (Rule 9.G.1)	Deny
p. Body	Finger(s) or hand covering fish from the lip to the back of the gill plate and forward of the caudal peduncle. (Rule 9.G.2)	Deny
q. Body	Entire caudal (tail) fin entirely lifted away and out of contact with the measuring board (Rule 10.A)	Deny
r. Body	Fish appears to have been snagged, snatched, or hooked in the body rather than mouth (Rule 7.A)	Deny
s. Body	Fish appears to be dead, mutilated, frozen, mangled, or otherwise damaged or appears to have been mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered to increase its length (Rule 2.C)	Deny
t. Mouth	Fish's lip or jaw clearly not touching measuring board fence (upright end plate) (Rule 9.H.1)	Deny
u. Mouth	Unable to ascertain with certainty that fish lip or jaw is touching measuring board fence (Rule 9.B.4)	Deny

## 11. Penalties

**A.** In the event of a rule violation, the H&P Tournament Director may impose such penalties as deemed appropriate, including without limitation, the following:

1. Reduction of score (length) as described above or determined by the Tournament Director
2. Loss of catch for the day or up until the violation has been remedied
3. Disqualification from the tournament in question
4. Any additional penalties determined by the Tournament Director and/or Tournament Panel, including but not limited to reduction of Competitor's points and/or loss of event prizes.

Subject to the dispute and appeal processes set forth below, the Tournament Director's decisions on violations are final.

**B.** Following a review of the evidence, a determination by the H&P Tournament Director and/or Tournament Panel of cheating or fraud may result in disqualification from individual events or permanent suspension from all H&P series events.

**C.** See Section 15 Disputes

## 12. Awarding of Prizes

**A.** Prizes are determined by H&P Tournament Director

**B.** Prizes will be awarded after all photos submitted for scoring have been judged, the results reviewed, and leaderboard updated. Disputes submitted within the set time frame (see 15. Disputes) will be reviewed after the event and if the result of any submitted disputes affects the standings they will be updated and those affected participants will be notified and it will be posted on the H&P Facebook page regarding the change in standings only and not the complaint/dispute.

C. Product prizes (e.g., kayaks, trailers, lithium batteries or power-pole units) may require additional processing or delivery time.

### 13. Safety

**A.** During competition, every Competitor must have all required Canadian approved safety equipment on the watercraft. It is the responsibility of each competitor to fully understand the requirements of their watercraft. The following is a list of examples only but not limited to (e.g., light source, whistle or other audible signal devices, Canadian Coast Guard / Transport Canada or DFO approved chest-type life preserver [PFD]).

**B. PFD Usage** — At all times while actively engaged in competition, except as described below (Rule 13.C. PFD Wear Exceptions), the Competitor must wear a fastened Canadian certified PFD (inherent flotation or inflatable) or float jacket. A belt-style PFD, even one that deploys as a vest, is not permitted during competition. When an infraction, as described above, is verified by the Tournament Director, the competitor is disqualified from participation in the event.

**C. PFD Wear Exceptions** — The competitor assumes responsibility for all consequences of removing his PFD. The competitor may cease competition and remove the PFD while his watercraft is beached, anchored, or adrift only if doing so creates no unsafe condition. The competitor must put on and securely fasten the PFD before going underway or resuming competition.

If all of the following conditions exist, Competitor may briefly remove his PFD while afloat (anchored or adrift) to change, add or remove articles of clothing:

1. No fishing lines are in the water; and
2. The watercraft is not underway; and
3. Weather and water conditions permit one to do so safely; and
4. Competitor is over the age of 12.

When finished changing his attire, the Competitor must immediately put the PFD back on before going underway, fishing, or engaging in any other competition-related activity.

**D.** Tournament Director has the right to postpone or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of adverse weather conditions or other factors that jeopardize the Competitors' safety. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather.

**E.** In the event of weather emergencies that pose an imminent threat to Competitors, the Tournament Director may terminate competition before the scheduled end-of-competition time. An early termination announcement with an adjusted end-of-competition time will be broadcast to Competitors via email or group text messaging. It will also be posted on social media sites. The announcement will also specify an adjusted report-in time and location. If safe to do so, upon receiving the notification, the competitor should make his way to the specified location at that time. The competitor is required to stop fishing as soon as he receives the early termination announcement. No photos of fish caught after the adjusted end-of-competition time may be submitted for scoring. However, to accommodate those seeking shelter immediately, the competitor has up to 15 minutes after the adjusted end time to submit a photo of any fish caught before the adjusted end-of-competition time/photo submission deadline.

**F.** In the event of an emergency, the Competitor should call 911 first and then notify tournament officials as soon as possible.

**G. Use of alcohol or drugs** (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any Competitor during an Event will not be tolerated and cause for automatic disqualification from the H&P competitions. No alcoholic beverages, non-prescription stimulants, or depressants shall be allowed in watercraft during competition days.

### 14. Competitor Conduct

Competitors participating in any H&P event must observe the applicable rules for the Competition and must conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects favorably on the sport of kayak fishing, H&P, its members, or sponsors. Competitors are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, integrity, safety, and conservation in support of the sport of kayak fishing, especially when in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on or beside Eligible Water. Any Competitor who violates these principles, intentionally violates H&P Competition Rules or regulations (attempts to commit fraud), or behaves in ways that

reflect unfavorably upon H&P's efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy, may forfeit competition winnings, face suspension from future H&P competitions, be permanently banned from competition, or any combination thereof deemed appropriate by H&P.

## **15. Disputes**

**A.** If a Competitor wishes to dispute a rules violation penalty, a judge's scoring decision, a Tournament Director's decision or other action that materially affected the Competitor's ranking or prize eligibility, he must submit a dispute within 24 hour (one full day) from the start of the event in question where the dispute originated. The dispute must be emailed or texted to H&P Tournament Director and include the following:

1. Event title, location, and date
2. Description or identification of penalty imposed, or condition being disputed
3. Reference to pertinent rule
4. Reason for dispute and requested action

Except for situations involving fraud or other law violations, any disputes submitted after the 24- hour dispute deadline will be reviewed without affecting the outcome of an event. No change in rank or reward will result from disputes submitted after the deadline. Only Competitors in the Event where the disputed action occurred may submit disputes. Disputes must be handled privately. All parties directly involved will be provided a copy of the dispute. The Tournament Director (for judge's rulings) or Tournament Panel (for Tournament Director rulings) will review the Competitor's claims, thoroughly investigate the disputed decision, and issue a ruling.

**B.** Tournament Director will rule on all disputes unless they directly include the Tournament Director in which case a Tournament Panel will be generated on the day in question or within the dispute timeframe to resolve the issues.

**C.** Tournament Panel will be composed of Competitors of the series. These will be randomized selections and consist of 4 competitors (unless one of the randomized selections happens to be the competitor with the dispute or the competitors for whom the dispute is being laid against).

**D.** Tournament Director and/or Tournament Panel rulings are final.

## **16. Public Comments**

**A.** The favorable public reputation of H&P in the sport of kayak fishing, the integrity of its officials, and the reputation of its media channels are valuable assets and tangible benefits for H&P. Accordingly, it is an obligation of competitors to refrain from comments in public forums and social media or to the news media that unreasonably attack or disparage the integrity of Kayak Fishing competitions, tournament officials, sponsors, fellow members, fellow Competitors, or the H&P organization. Competitors are encouraged to express themselves and have the right to question the rules of officials. Responsible expressions of legitimate disagreement with H&P policies are encouraged, as opposed to attacks upon the integrity of the rules or officials. However, public comments that a Competitor knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of Kayak Fishing, H&P officials, H&P members or sponsors, may result in disciplinary action.

**B.** Sponsor contributions will not be devalued by disputes or disagreements in public forums or social media platforms.

**C.** Publicly disputing a judge's ruling or any dispute decision by a H&P Tournament Director or Tournament Panel will result in the participant receiving a warning for a first offense. A repeat of the offense will result in disciplinary action up to disqualification from the current Event and permanent termination of eligibility for future H&P competitions. This provision is not intended to discourage legitimate disputes but to ensure that a fair and unbiased approach is used, and the approved challenge processes are followed in determining the best possible outcome.

## **17. Unavailability and Force Majeure**

H&P will use reasonable efforts to hold the Event; however, under no circumstances will H&P be held responsible for unavailability caused by circumstances beyond H&P's control, including flood, fire, hurricanes, earthquakes, or other "acts of God," acts of government, civil unrest, acts of terror, strikes or labor problems

nor will any Event Registration be canceled, altered or amended once the Event has commenced on the basis of circumstances beyond H&P's reasonable control.