



USAngling | USA Kayak Fishing Team Qualifier Official Rules of Competition

1. RULES AND PENALTIES:

The following rules shall apply to USA Kayak Fishing Team Qualifier tournament, with the following exceptions: these rules may be changed by USANGLING immediately upon notice by USANGLING to its members, which notice may be published on the USANGLING internet site. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director or his/her designee at a tournament. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director or a rules committee may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate by them, including without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes, entry fee and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Subject to the appeal process set forth in Section 17 ("Truth Verification Test") below, the decision of the Tournament Director, his/her designee or the rules committee shall be final in all matters.

Except for very serious rules violations, as determined by USANGLING, and any rules that might lead to disqualification of an angler from participation in the USA Kayak Fishing Team Qualifier tournament or other USANGLING tournaments, rules violations must be reported immediately to tournament officials within 24 hours of the final check-in on the day of the alleged violation.

Penalties for rules violations may include the following:

- (a) Reduction of competition hours as determined by the Tournament Director.
- (b) Loss of one or more fish caught in potential violation of rules or regulations.
- (c) Disqualification from the tournament in question.
- (d) Disqualification from future USANGLING events, which may be from a specific number of events, a specific period of time or may be a lifetime disqualification.
- (e) Any different or additional penalties determined by the Tournament Director including, but not limited to, monetary fines and/or reduction of points toward championship qualification.
- (f) All federal, state, and local laws, rules, markings, orders and warnings must be followed. Violation of any laws may be cause for disqualification.
- (g) All violations of laws will be turned over to the proper authorities for investigation and possible prosecution. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, harassment, wildlife violations, illegal drug use and any other illegal activity.

2. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:

- (i) Participation in this tournament is open only to current members of USANGLING who are 16 years of age or older. However, employees, officers and directors of USANGLING or its parent, subsidiary, and affiliated companies and members of their immediate families (spouse, parents, children and siblings, regardless of where they live) are ineligible. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the potential competitor.
- (ii) All competitions are conducted using Fishing Chaos. Each angler who wishes to participate in such an event must create a free, Fishing Chaos user account before the first day of the competition.



(iii) A PROPERLY COMPLETED OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE DATE.

(iv) Entry fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable regardless of the date of the cancellation once you have been confirmed in a tournament. Anglers who are on the waiting list will be refunded the entry fee if they have not been confirmed in the tournament for which they registered.

(v) Each calendar year prior to competing in a USAngling event, all competitors must complete a W-9 and, when required, a FORM 590 or W-8 BEN provided by USANGLING. If tax status or address changes occur, new forms must be submitted prior to participation in the next USANGLING event. Tournament entry fees must be received by the tournament management app on or before the entry deadline date. The Tournament Director reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to the deadline and the right to extend the acceptance date.

(vi) Any person under the age of majority in the state in they reside entering a tournament must also have permission and a signed release from a parent or legal guardian.

3. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE AND COMPETITION:

(i) There will be an Off-Limits period 14 days prior to Official Practice & will be followed by a 4 – 7-day Official Practice Period. Anglers are not allowed on tournament waters during the Off-limits Period.

(ii) The official practice period will begin at safe light the Saturday prior to each event and conclude the following Friday at 4 p.m. All anglers must be off the water by 4 p.m. the Friday prior to each event.

(iii) During the Official Practice Anglers are allowed to be on tournament waters with immediate family members (spouse/significant other, father, mother or children) so long as the competitor does not solicit any waypoints or fishing locations from the family member. Pre-fishing with non-competitors is not allowed & could result in a penalty or disqualification. Camera crew(s) are suggested to be coordinated with the Tournament Director and cannot use fishing gear or scanning electronics during shoots or help anglers gain access to knowledge.

(iv) Competitors are not allowed on tournament waters following the completion of Day 1 until First Cast on Day 2. Scouting in new waters after fishing ends on Day 1 is not allowed. Anglers are expected to immediately proceed back safely to their take-out once fishing ends on Day 1.

(v) All practice during official practice and competition must be done in a vessel in accordance with Section 8 (“Kayak Regulation”). If kayaks are legally licensed, electric motors will be permitted. All state rules for motorized kayaks apply. Failure to comply may result in disqualification or suspension of motor use.

(vi) Testing equipment on tournament waters after the start of the pre-tournament meeting is NOT permitted for any reason, except with permission from the Tournament Director.

(vii) All contestants must have a valid fishing license for the state in which the tournament is taking place.

(viii) Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director immediately any violation or infraction of any tournament rules. Failure to report violations, suggestions to another competitor that they violate these rules without notifying the Tournament Director or false



verification of information may result in a disqualification. Official protests must be filed in accordance with Rule 1. All parties of interest will be provided a copy.

4. SOLICITATION OF INFORMATION:

The purchasing of or bartering for information from anyone for the purpose of locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including, but not limited to, GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted during the OFFICIAL PRACTICE period through the conclusion of the tournament. Solicit “to ask for”.

(i) Any use of or communication with a guide or guide services, directly or indirectly, pertaining to tournament waters within 21 days of the event is prohibited, other than through publicly available sources.

(ii) Quasi-public websites, blogs and/or social media pages set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are NOT publicly available sources.

(iii) For multi-day events, once tournament officials determine daily cuts, competitors not making the cut are no longer considered in the tournament and may not be solicited for information.

(iv) On the water verbal communication between competitors is allowed. Verbal communication after lines out is allowed as well but subject to the restrictions of 4 (iii).

(v) During Official Practice and competition, anglers cannot buy, solicit “ask for”, gather or intentionally receive any information from anyone other than another competitor in the tournament. A phone call with the tournament director can easily clarify this.

(vi) During tournament hours (First Launch through Lines Out) a mobile device may not be used to speak to competitors or non-competitors about tournament waters, fishing strategies, techniques, etc. The device can be used for USANGLING staff communication, social media updates, safety checks, ride coordination and/or work and family urgent situations/emergencies.

(vii) Any questions or concerns about tournament rules or violations need to be communicated with USANGLING staff immediately and initially to be considered.

5. PRE-TOURNAMENT (RULES) MEETING:

It is mandatory that all contestants attend the pre-tournament check-in and briefing. Each contestant must check in prior to the pre-tournament briefing in person and at the designated location. Check-in hours and locations will be announced for each individual tournament per the tournament information document.

6. SAFETY:

(i) Safe boating must be observed at all times. During the official practice and competition, each competitor is required to wear a fastened chest-type U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device while fishing from or maneuvering their kayak during tournament hours. PFD MUST BE VISIBLE and worn on top of your clothing. Inflatable belt-type PFDs are not allowed.



- (ii) All kayaks must be equipped with an emergency whistle and a 360-degree light or installed LEDs that are visible from all angles. Visibility flags are recommended.
- (iii) It is suggested that all competitors perform a safety check prior to each day's competition.
- (iv) At the discretion of the Tournament Director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions.
- (v) Competitors are expected to use sound judgment and are accountable for his/her own actions when faced with a potentially dangerous situation (i.e., lightning, excessive wind, pleasure boaters, hunters, etc.).
- (vi) IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, COMPETITORS SHOULD CALL 911 FIRST AND THEN NOTIFY TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
- (vii) COMPETITORS ARE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE KAYAK AND SEEK SAFE SHELTER IN BAD WEATHER WHERE DANGER MAY BE IMMINENT.

7. ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT AND SPORTSMANSHIP:

- (i) Competitors in USANGLING tournaments are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed a cause for disqualification.
- (ii) Use of alcohol or the use of drugs (other than those drugs purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor, during the official practice or during the tournament, will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future USANGLING tournaments. No alcoholic beverages or prohibited drugs shall be allowed in the boats during the official practice or competition days.
- (iii) Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of a competitor, which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters and courtesy, may lead to disqualification.
All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states in which they fish. Some regulations may differ from these rules resulting in fines, citations or other penalties at the discretion of law enforcement and may or may not result in tournament penalties. Competitors are responsible for research of fishing and boating regulations.
- (iv) Anglers participating in any USANGLING-sanctioned event shall observe this code of conduct and the applicable rules for the specific event in which they are participating. Anglers and family members of anglers shall at all times conduct themselves in a professional manner that demonstrates integrity, honor and respect toward fellow competitors, tournament staff and the general public and does not reflect unfavorably on USANGLING, its members, officers or representatives, tournaments or sponsors.
- (v) Anglers are frequently in the public eye and are considered role models by young people; therefore, it is imperative that tournament competitors demonstrate good sportsmanship in fishing. Sportsmanship is defined as fair play, respect for opponents and polite behavior while competing in the sport.
- (vi) The following are examples of unacceptable behavior by competitors or family members of competitors in USANGLING events that will be cause for penalties as outlined in this document:



- a. Heated public disagreements with USANGLING officials, other competitors, fans and volunteers during an event.
- b. Public attacks through media, including social media, upon the integrity of USANGLING rules or officials.
- c. Public comments that an angler or family member knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of USANGLING, USANGLING officials and its sponsors.
- d. Displays of anger and displeasure for reasons related to fishing competition or the event, where members of the public, including other anglers, spectators and the media, are present.
- e. Publicly questioning or criticizing a tournament official or official decision, ruling or penalty except through the proper channels.
- f. Abuse (physical, verbal, threatening or slanderous) of tournament officials, volunteers, fellow competitors or others connected with a USANGLING event, including comments on social media.
- g. Offensive or slanderous comments with racial, cultural or sexual overtones regarding event officials, event personnel or fellow anglers.
- h. Intentionally interfering with a fellow angler's ability to compete (for example, working with a non-competitor to block other anglers or hold spots before or during tournament hours).
- (vii) Any disqualification, suspension, or other disciplinary action imposed by any tournament or fishing organization may result in disqualification from competition and rejection of an application for participation in a USANGLING tournament.
- (viii) Chemical substance addiction or abuse, the conviction of a felony or crimes involving moral turpitude may be grounds for disqualification from the competition and for rejecting any application for participation. Any angler who violates any of the provisions of the Sportsmanship Rules or the Angler Code of Conduct may be subject to fines, reduction of points, forfeiture of tournament winnings and suspension from competing in individual USANGLING-sanctioned events, permanent ban from competition or any combination thereof deemed appropriate by USANGLING
- (ix) Anglers are allowed to communicate with one another while in proximity as long as there is no intentional sharing to gain a competitive advantage.
- (x) In both official practice and competition, competitors are required to have all licenses and permits required on the tournament waters in which they fish.

8. KAYAK REGULATION:

- (i) Watercraft propulsion is restricted to paddle, pedal, pole or electric motor. (See electric motor restrictions, below in Subsection 8(ii).)
- (ii) Unless specifically prohibited, the use of electric motors in competition is approved with the following restrictions:
 - a. Electric motor must be attached to the kayak in a safe manner for operation.
 - b. An electric motor used to propel a watercraft needs to meet some of these criteria or be approved by a USANGLING official:
 - i. Manufacturer's labeled Maximum HP/Thrust Capacity
 - ii. 3 HP
 - iii. 155 foot-pounds of thrust



- c. Competitors must comply with all boating regulations pertaining to motorized kayak/electric-propulsion watercraft registration, use and operating restrictions for the designated fishing area.
- d. No more than one electric motor may be attached to a kayak regardless of combined horsepower/thrust/power rating.
- e. Motors with dual props operated by a single power source are permissible as long as the unit is manufactured and sold as a single unit.
- (iii) Vessel must be 9 feet minimum and shorter than 18 feet.
- (iv) Vessel that the manufacturer identifies and sells as a kayak, including inflatable kayaks and modular kayaks, stand-up paddle boards (SUP) and canoes.
- (v) Other watercraft must be specifically approved as exceptions in advance of competition by USANGLING Management.
- (vi) Catamaran-style personal fishing vessels complying with all other regulations will be eligible.
- (vii) No “homemade” kayaks, sailboats, johnboats, pirogues, coracles, rowboats, dinghies, skiffs, float tubes, inflatable rafts or rigid inflatable boats (e.g., Zodiac), pontoon boats, pontoon-style pond boats, twin-hull watercraft or similar.
- (viii) The use of a manual or motorized anchor system is permitted.
- (ix) Mother shipping, tethering/holding or any transportation coordination with a non-competitor is strictly prohibited unless approved by USANGLING officials due to an emergency.
- (x) By officially entering contestants agree to submit their kayak to an inspection by USANGLING personnel.

9. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:

- (i) All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner by the angler out of their vessel.
- (ii) All lures must adhere to state regulations.
- (iii) Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits.
- (iv) Alabama rigs and similar umbrella-type rigs are allowed and are only limited by the laws within the state where the competitors are fishing. The “Donkey Rig – Double Fluke” is allowed as well.
- (v) Only ONE fishing rod may be used at a time.
- (vi) Each cast must be completed before another cast is allowed, and there can never be more than one lure from one rod actively fishing in the water at any time.
- (vii) Trolling as a method of fishing is NOT allowed. Long lining and drifting with current/wind are allowed.
- (viii) All bass caught while sight fishing must be hooked inside the mouth.
- (ix) No fish are to be kept on stringers. Fish gripping devices are acceptable to temporarily hold fish in the water.

10. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:

- (i) Restrictions, designated launch points, official tournament waters, and other location mandates may be issued for individual events.



- (ii) Contestants will be provided with official water launches and/or boundaries and restrictions specific to each event. Failure to comply will lead to disqualification.
- (iii) In the event that portaging is allowed, anglers will not be allowed to exit the stream-bed to access the surrounding property to do so. (A stream-bed is the channel bottom of a stream or river, the physical confine of the normal water flow. The lateral confines or channel margins are known as the stream banks or riverbanks during all but flood stage.) Failure to do so will lead to disqualification.
- (iv) Portaging is prohibited unless posted otherwise.
- (v) Unless posted otherwise, competitors must be able to float in and out or through an area during tournament days for it to be considered legal waters. Anglers can use pedal/paddle/push pole to navigate. If an angler's kayak bottoms out and becomes completely or partially immobilized while navigating, they are no longer considered floating and cannot pass over. Kayak can be reoriented to eligible water. Anglers are responsible for verifying their launch is on the designated list as well as paying any launch fee required to utilize the facility.
- (vi) Anglers can launch at more than one (1) legal location during a tournament day.
- (vii) Anglers do not have to take out where they launched as long as the take-out is also a legal launch unless there is an emergency communicated with the USANGLING staff.
- (viii) Ride coordination and shuttling are allowed.
- (ix) Contestants may fish anywhere on tournament waters available to the public except areas posted or otherwise designated as "off-limits," "no boats," "keep out," "restricted," "no trespassing" or "no fishing" (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by USANGLING, commercial property owners and/or local, state or federal officials. Failure to do so will lead to a disqualification or loss of the fishing day.
- (x) All fishing must be conducted from inside the kayak unless otherwise stated by tournament officials. Only an angler's arm or arms can extend into the water to help land a fish they hooked legally.
- (xi) At no time may a contestant leave the kayak to land a fish, photograph/submit a fish or make the kayak more accessible to fishing waters unless allowed in the event and communicated by the Tournament Director. Anglers can beach their kayaks to take safe pictures to be submitted.
- (xii) The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs, or digging access trenches/ditches after the start of the official practice period and/or the removal of official local, state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by kayak is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament. Failure to comply will lead to disqualification.
- (xiii) Boats may never be tethered to buoys or safety signs.
- (xiv) The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a kayak into fishing waters is strictly prohibited. Failure to comply will lead to disqualification.
- (xv) Using any items, including the kayak or fishing line, to block an area off to other competitors or anglers is strictly prohibited. Failure to comply will lead to disqualification.

11. SCORING:

- (i) Scoring is determined by length using 1/4-inch increments of each contestant's catch during each tournament day via the "Catch, Photograph, and Release" (CPR) method.



- (ii) Each competitor will be provided with a unique identifier for the tournament.
- (iii) The five longest verified lengths will be totaled for the angler's score.
- (iv) Officials will round down and to the nearest 1/4 inch.
- (v) Only the Black Bass Species consisting of the following: Largemouth, Spotted, Guadalupe, Shoal and Smallmouth, and any hybrid of the above, are accepted species.
- (vi) The best five (5) fish make up a daily limit.
- (vii) All fish must measure a minimum of 12 inches. Bass submitted that fail to measure 12 inches with mouth completely closed will not be scored.
- (viii) A submitted fish will only count once to an angler's aggregate score for all days of the tournament.

12. MEASURING DEVICE:

- (i) All Ketch Products measuring boards are the official mandatory measuring devices for the USA Kayak Fishing Team Qualifier event.
- (ii) Contestants must bring their own measuring device.
- (iii) Your measuring device may be inspected by USANGLING staff at any time before, during or after the tournament.
- (iv) Anyone found to be using a measuring device that is determined to be not legal will be disqualified from the tournament.

13. PHOTO CRITERIA:

- (i) These items are included in the rules for the Tournament Director/Judge to establish the criteria for fish submissions/catch to be scored accurately. Failure to comply with these criteria may or may not result in disqualification, disqualification of catch, or reduction of length.
- (ii) Anglers must be prepared to manually upload pictures with the cables, cords and software required to download photos via a USB port to the official judge's computer.
- (iii) Each fish photo needs to include the following criteria to avoid possible penalties or disqualification:
 - a) The entire Bass, from the tip of the lip to the end of the tail, on an approved measuring device, while
 - b) Assigned unique identifier code must be visible.
 - c) One overhead photo shot frame (not shot at an angle).
 - d) Fish must be clear of any holding devices including fishing lure or hook.
 - e) Lip, eye and tail end cannot be obstructed in the photo, even by your hand or identifier. Coverage by your body will impact your score. Covered eye can lead to a disqualification of the catch and the angler will need to submit a better legal picture.
 - f) If you have a fish with a damaged eye or the appearance of a dead fish then you'll need to record a video of the catch on your KETCH Board, pick the fish up and identify the area(s) of concern, then of the fish placed back into the water and swimming off alive.
 - g) Hand and fingers must not be in the gill plate.
 - h) Original/Raw photo only. Screenshots, crops, duplicates and edited photos will be disqualified.



- i) If the fish has a visible glossy eye or odd markings it is suggested the angler take video of that fish going from the board and actively swimming away.
 - j) A submitted fish will only count once to an angler's aggregate score for all days of the tournament.
 - k) If a submitted fish on Day 1 is culled and not present in an anglers Top 5 fish, that fish could be caught again and count for a Day 2 total if that catch is in complete accordance with Section 11.
 - l) Any questionable issues with a fish should be immediately brought to the USANGLING official's attention.
 - m) The quality of the photo submitted is the responsibility of the angler
- ** Criteria above must be met to avoid possible penalty or disqualification **

14. SCORING PENALTIES:

- (i) Mouth cracked or slightly open: 0.5 -inch deduction
- (ii) Mouth open or no attempt to close: 1-2 inch deduction
- (iii) Lip or tail not touching board: No score
- (iv) Rounded down to the next 1/4- inch mark. (No score if below minimum.)

15. ADVANCING TO THE PANAMERICAN:

- (i) The Top 6 anglers will be awarded a spot on the USA Kayak Fishing Team to compete in the PanAmerica tournament.

16. TIES:

Ties will be broken by the longest fish, followed by the next-longest fish until all fish that are part of their limit have been accounted for. If a tie still exists, the tiebreaker will be based on the time stamp of when their longest fish was submitted, and so on, until resolved. If the tie still exists, the Tournament Director(s) will divide the cash prizes.

17. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST:

By registering and/or placing his/her signature on the official tournament entry form, each competitor agrees to submit to a truth verification test and abide by its conclusion should he/she be accused of any rule violation. The Tournament Director, rules committee or such person designated by the Tournament Director shall have the discretion to determine the need for a truth verification test. Failure of a truth verification examination is not appealable. The Tournament Director or his/her designee shall be responsible for selecting an independent expert to administer and interpret the results and establishing, in consultation with the expert administrator, the scope of the questions which may be asked during the test. The Tournament Director or his/her designee shall have the sole responsibility of selecting the location, date and time of the test nearest USANGLING headquarters with respect to all concerned parties' schedules and travel costs. The competitor shall make himself/herself available at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such a test. Anglers taking a truth verification test may be responsible for all costs incurred. Random truth verifications tests may be administered on-site during the course of a USAnGLing event.



18. PROTESTS AND REPORTING PROCEDURES:

Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director immediately any violation or infraction of any tournament rules. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. OFFICIAL PROTESTS MUST BE FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 1 (“Rules and Penalties”). ALL PARTIES OF INTEREST WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A COPY. An appeals committee will be established by USANGLING, which shall be comprised of one USANGLING employee not affiliated with the Tournament Department and two anglers who are not competitors in the event in question. Appeals must be presented in writing 48 hours from the time and date of ruling to the Tournament Director. Appeals hearings shall take place within seven (7) business days from the date of receipt of the written appeal, and all parties must make themselves available at the prescribed time of hearing. If competitors admit to a rules violation, they may not file an appeal of either the finding that they have violated the rules or the penalty imposed for the violation. Decisions of the appeals committee shall be final.

19. TAXES:

Where and when state laws require income taxes be paid on cash awards to nonresidents, the taxes will be automatically deducted prior to the awards being presented to the winners. Competitors are responsible for all applicable taxes on both cash and merchandise awards. Various states require withholding tax on merchandise be paid upon the awarding of certificates, and anglers awarded merchandise certificates in these states are responsible for remitting their tax to USANGLING Failure to meet those obligations may result in reduction of points, fines and/or disqualification from all future USANGLING events.

20. WAIVER AND RELEASE:

As a condition of participation in each tournament, each competitor must execute a waiver and release of liability, and a name and likeness release.

Rules were adopted and modified, with permission, from the 2024 Bassmaster Kayak Rules Standard.