



## 2026 Minnesota High School Muskie State Championship

Tournament Director: Dave Schueck, 612-770-0495, [highschoolmuskie@gmail.com](mailto:highschoolmuskie@gmail.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/MNHighSchoolMuskie>

### Event Details

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Minnesota High School Muskie State Championship, in cooperation with the Hugh Becker Foundation and Minnesota Muskies Inc. chapters, will be held as follows:

- Date/Time: **Friday, August 7, 2026 from 6:30 AM – 2:30 PM**
- Location: **Lake Vermilion**
- Host: **Vermilion Dam Lodge (VDL), 3276 Randa Road, Orr, Minnesota 55771**
- Max Boats: 20
- Schedule: **5:00-6:00 AM** at VDL: boat launching and AIS inspection
- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Rules Compliance Form: <https://bit.ly/4jCl9wj>
- 6:00-6:30 AM** at VDL: mandatory rules meeting and boat number assignments
- 6:30 AM - 2:30 PM:** tournament fishing
- Awards: **2:30-3:30 PM** at Vermilion Dam Lodge
- Awards, free prizes, and lunches will be distributed at the end of the tournament at the hosting location. Students must be present in order to receive their free prizes.
- AIS: All boat captains must complete a Lake Vermilion Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Rules Compliance Form prior to tournament participation. Form link: <https://bit.ly/4jCl9wj>
- Boat inspection locations and times will be emailed to all participants and boat captains
- FishDonkey: "2026 Minnesota High School Muskie State Championship"

## Tournament Rules

Effective: January 1, 2026

Last Updated:

New or updated rules are highlighted in red text.

All student anglers and boat captains are expected to read the rules prior to tournament participation.

All rules potentially have "loopholes." It is our intention to conduct a fair and responsible tournament. Tournament officials will apply the "spirit of the rule" at all times regarding rule interpretation and enforcement. Questions about the rules must be resolved with tournament officials before the start of any event.

### 1. EVENT BOUNDARIES AND BOAT LAUNCHING

- A. All portions of Lake Vermilion are permitted for this event.
- B. Boat captains can launch their boats at any private, resort, or public boat access on Lake Vermilion.
  - i. Boat captains are expected to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) by following safe practices of removing weeds from trailers, draining water from live wells, etc.
  - ii. Boat captains will be required to complete an AIS Compliance Form prior to participating in the tournament.

### 2. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Students in grades 6-12 during the most recently concluded school year are eligible to participate.
- B. Seniors who graduated in the most recently concluded school year are eligible to participate.
- C. Student anglers have the proper fishing license for the State of Minnesota.

### 3. TEAM

- A. A team consists of two student anglers.
- B. In the event of family emergency, sickness, unable to find a fishing partner, etc., a student angler may fish solo without his/her partner if one of the scenarios below is followed.
  - i. Boat captain is the student angler's parent, guardian, or relative. (i.e., student and his/her parent are present in the boat)
  - ii. Boat captain is not the student angler's parent or guardian, and another adult is present in the boat. (i.e., 3 people are present in the boat)

### 4. BOAT CAPTAIN

- A. Student anglers must be accompanied by an adult boat captain who is at least 19 years old.
- B. Boat captain cannot do the following:
  - i. Fish

- ii. Tie knots
  - iii. Touch rods/reels while a line is in the water
  - iv. Choose fishing locations for student anglers
  - v. Choose fishing techniques for student anglers
  - vi. Act as a fishing guide
  - vii. Run the boat electronics when the students are fishing (i.e., students must be the ones interpreting the sonar output)
- C. Boat captain can do the following:
- i. Run the outboard motor
  - ii. Run the electric motor if the boat captain fears for the safety of the vessel
  - iii. Net fish
  - iv. Assist student anglers once a fish is in the net (i.e., to ensure fish safety and proper release of the fish)
    - 1) This includes removing hooks from a fish, cutting hooks, holding the net, assisting to remove the fish from the net, assisting with photos, and assisting with fish release

## 5. BOATS, SAFETY, LIABILITY

Safe boating and safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by student anglers and boat captains.

- A. Teams must provide their own boat.
- B. Boat must be a minimum of 14 feet in length.
- C. Boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment.
- D. Boat must have an outboard motor kill/shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body when the outboard motor is running.
- E. Student anglers and boat captain must wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) while the outboard motor is running.
- F. Boat must contain appropriate equipment to safely release fish caught, including good hook cutters, Muskie-size landing net that can be used as a live well while removing hooks, long nose pliers, gloves for handling fish, jaw spreaders, mobile device with camera, and measuring board.
- G. Student anglers and boat captain must comply with all Minnesota fishing and boating laws, rules, regulations, and licenses.
  - i. Boat and trailer are properly licensed with the State of Minnesota.
- H. All boats are subject to inspection by the Tournament Director.
- I. Student anglers and boat captain must behave appropriately, safely, and respectfully.
- J. Student anglers, parents/guardians of student anglers, and boat captain assume all liability and legal and financial responsibilities for tournament participation to the fullest extent permitted by law.**
  - i. Teams must provide their own watercraft and liability insurance.

- 1) Teams must have proof of the insurance, either available electronically on a phone or in written format.
  - ii. Event officials will not be providing insurance for the event.
- K. Tournament Director may disqualify a team for poor sportsmanship, rules/safety violations, or other issues at his/her discretion.

**6. BOAT ELECTRONICS**

- A. At this time, any of the following types of boat electronics are allowed.
  - i. Standard 2D sonar (CHIRP)
  - ii. Down Imaging or Side Imaging sonar
  - iii. Live Imaging, forward facing sonar, or 3D sonar
- B. When using any of the boat's electronics for fishing, the student anglers must choose the sonar settings, interpret the sonar output, etc.

**7. SPECIES**

- A. Muskie, Hybrid (Tiger) Muskie, and Northern Pike are the allowable species for the event.

**8. FISHING METHODS**

- A. Fishing methods must adhere to Minnesota laws.
- B. Fishing is only allowed with artificial lures or artificial bait. No live bait is permitted.
- C. Trolling is permitted per the restrictions noted below.
  - i. Boat captain must operate the outboard motor.
  - ii. Boat captain must maintain a minimum distance of one hundred (100) feet from all other boats.
  - iii. Student anglers and boat captain must wear PFD while trolling.
  - iv. Student anglers must choose trolling locations and speed.
  - v. Student anglers must choose artificial lures or artificial baits.
  - vi. Student anglers must choose whether or not to use planer boards.
  - vii. Student anglers must rig the rods, rig planer boards, and handle the rods.
  - viii. Boat captain cannot handle the rods or planer boards while they are in the water.

**9. PRE-TOURNAMENT MEETING**

- A. A mandatory rules meeting will be held at 6:00 AM at the event hosting location. At least one of the students and the boat captain must be present at the rules meeting.
- B. All student anglers and boat captains are expected to read the rules prior to the tournament.

**10. FORMAT – MEASURE, PHOTO, RELEASE, RECORD**

- A. All fish must be measured, photographed, and released safely and unharmed.
  - i. Any fish not safely released will be disqualified.

- B. To measure fish, teams must use a hard-style, flat measuring board (i.e., bump board) that has a fixed 90-degree angle for nose touching and which marks 0 and at least ¼” lines.
- i. Example: Muskie Bumper
    - 1) <https://www.muskiebumper.com/>
  - ii. Example: Rapala 60" Magnum Ruler
    - 1) <https://www.rapala.com/rapala/fishing-tools/rulers/60-magnum-folding-ruler-/RMFR.html>
  - iii. Example: "The Judge" Tournament Ruler 60
    - 1) <https://www.thornebros.com/products/lakebourne-the-judge-tournament-ruler>
  - iv. All measuring devices must be commercially made.
  - v. Flexible tape measures are not permitted.
  - vi. **Built-in, permanently affixed, rulers on a boat are not permitted. This includes those that are painted, embossed, affixed to carpets or foam decking, etc.**
  - vii. Measurements should be done with fish mouth closed, nose touching the zero inch end of the board, and pinching the tail.
  - viii. If your measurement is not clearly readable in the submission photo, it may not be accepted by the Tournament Director.
- C. Teams must photograph fish as follows.
- i. One photo of fish on the measuring board with nose touching 90-degree angle and with tail pinched. The entire fish laying on the measuring board must be present in the photograph.
  - ii. One photo of fish held by student angler (and optionally assisted by other student angler or by boat captain).
- D. Record the fish using the designated tournament mobile application, which requires a mobile device.
- i. All fish must be submitted through the **FishDonkey** app which can be installed on any smartphone.
    - 1) <https://www.fishdonkey.com/>
  - ii. The app must be installed when your phone has a good connection (i.e., at home prior to the tournament).
  - iii. The app will only allow entries during the designated fishing times for the tournament.
  - iv. The app can capture fish log/picture details without needing a good cell phone connection.
  - v. Once your phone has a good connection anywhere on the lake, the fish log/picture will be uploaded to the leaderboard and tournament officials will be able to see the results.
  - vi. **All fish must be submitted along with the requisite photos by the conclusion of the tournament fishing period.**

- E. Release the fish as soon as possible after catch.
  - i. Minimize the amount of time that a fish is out of the water.
  - ii. Ensure the fish is released under its own power. If a fish is struggling to survive, it is the student anglers’ and boat captain’s responsibility to remain with the fish until it safely swims away (no matter how long that takes).

**11. SCORING**

- A. All Muskie and Northern Pike should be measured regardless of length.
- B. Muskies always trump Northern Pike for scoring and placements.
- C. Teams earn points per the scoring system noted below.
  - i. Less than 30 inches = 0 points
  - ii. All fish will be measured to the nearest ¼ inch
    - 1) Example: 40 ½ inches will be worth 11.5 points
  - iii. Any measurement falling between ¼ inch marks will be rounded down
  - iv. Bonus points will be earned for any fish 48 inches or more in length
    - 1) 48/49" = 1 bonus point
    - 2) 50/51" = 2 bonus points
    - 3) 52/53" = 3 bonus points
    - 4) 54"+ = 4 bonus points
  - v. Scoring values are as follows (includes bonus points):

Length	Points	Length	Points	Length	Points	Length	Points
30"	1	31"	2	32"	3	33"	4
34"	5	35"	6	36"	7	37"	8
38"	9	39"	10	40"	11	41"	12
42"	13	43"	14	44"	15	45"	16
46"	17	47"	18	48"	20	49"	21
50"	23	51"	24	52"	26	53"	27
54"	29	55"	30	56"	31	57"	32
58"	33	59"	34	60"	35		

- D. Tournament places will be determined as follows.
  - i. Placements are determined by cumulative points earned for Muskie catches.
  - ii. If no Muskies are caught, then Northern Pike will be used to determine placements.
  - iii. If all Muskies or Northern Pike caught are less than 30 inches, then actual length will be used to determine placements.
- E. If there is a tie in points, then the tie breaker is based as follows.
  - i. Longest Muskie caught by each team (i.e., actual length of fish)
  - ii. Earliest time of the first Muskie caught by each team
  - iii. Earliest time of the last Muskie caught by each team
  - iv. Longest Northern Pike caught by each team (i.e., actual length of fish)

- v. **Earliest time of the first Northern Pike caught by each team**
  - vi. If at this point there is still a tie, it will then be determined with a coin toss
- F. Tournament Director has the final say in determining winner and placements.