

FISHING

Meet the Pros Night kicks-off Michigan Walleye Tour

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The Monroe News

April 28, 2022 | Updated may 3, 2022



Correction:

The fishing portion of the Michigan Walleye Tour will take place May 14-15 at the Monroe Boat Club. The public is welcome for weigh-ins and prize awards beginning at 3 p.m. both days.

Some of that information was incorrectly reported in Thursday's paper.

This year's grand prize has been increased to \$11,000, with a total prize amount of \$55,000 awarded May 15.

Earlier news article:

The Monroe Boat Club is preparing for its second Michigan Walleye Tour, which will run May 12-14.

The professional fishing tour stops in several Michigan cities each year and brings more than 200 professional fishermen to each area for a competitive fishing tournament.

The Monroe part of the tour kicks-off May 12 with a Meet the Pros Night for children at the boat club, 7932 N. Harbor Dr.

Starting at 5:30 p.m., attendees can meet and talk to the fishermen and take part in a mini fishing clinic and swag giveaway. Children also will have an opportunity to board the fishing boats. The first 50 kids age 16 and under will receive a free fishing rod.

"We're very youth-oriented and are big on showing the kids stuff. We've love to have a bunch show up at Meet the Pros Night. Last year we had 39 kids. The pros enjoy talking to the kids," Ed Beckley, director of the Michigan Walleye Tour, said. "A lot of kids never get a chance to climb on a \$120,000 boat."

Admission for Meet the Pros Night is free. To register before May 4, text (734) 625-0901 or email jennylynn0624@yahoo.com.

The fishing portion of the Walleye Tour will follow May 13-14.

This is the second year the Monroe Boat Club has hosted the tour. Hosts provide volunteers and offers a place for eating and housing trailers.

"We love it," Beckley said of the Monroe club. "The club contacted us a few years back and wanted us to come down here. We like fishing there."

"Monroe is the only Lake Erie venue on the Michigan Tour," David Ryan, president of the Monroe Boat Club Association (MBC-A), said.

The first leg of the tour took place earlier this month in Detroit. Upcoming stops are Oscoda in June, Au Gres in July and the championship in Lake St. Clair in August.

The tour has taken place for 25 years, and the stops vary.

"We've been all over the state, from Escanaba to Monroe," Beckley said.

The fishermen also come from all over Michigan. This year, numbers are down.

"We were hoping for 100 boats. It looks like 75-80," Beckley said. "That's 200 to 225 fishermen, there are two to three on each boat."

Although they are professional fishermen, most fish as a hobby and have other jobs, Beckley said.

On both May 13 and 14, boats will depart at 7 a.m. from the Bolles Harbor State Boat Ramp, and fishing runs about eight hours. Weigh-ins will take place at 3 p.m. each day.

The public is welcome to view the weigh-ins.

“Last year we had a pretty good group (of spectators),” Beckley said.

Prizes will be awarded at each stop. Fishermen are competing for a first prize of \$10,000. Places two through 20 also receive a varying amount of prize money totaling \$52,000. The fisher in 20th place receives \$800. Prizes are earned by weight.

“The most weight over 20 days with a 10 fish max,” Beckley said. “The championship is the most points. It’s hard to make the championship if you don’t fish all four (stops).”

This year the tour also will be televised by Great Lakes Fisherman’s Digest.

On the Net: www.MichiganWalleyeTour.com.