

Knotty Striper Derby 2026

Official Tournament Rules

Presented by Steve's Rope Splicing · 11 Harbor Loop Unit 6, Gloucester MA · 978-879-9737

1. Tournament Overview

The Knotty Striper Derby is a season-long striped bass fishing tournament hosted by Steve's Rope Splicing in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The tournament runs from **May 25, 2026 (Memorial Day)** through **September 7, 2026 at 11:59 PM (Labor Day)**. The Award Ceremony and prize distribution will be held the following weekend, **September 12–13, 2026**.

2. Eligibility & Registration

- Registration is in-person only at Steve's Rope Splicing, 11 Harbor Loop Unit 6, Gloucester, MA.
- Registration is open to all anglers regardless of experience or license type.
- All fish submitted for scoring must be caught within Essex County coastal waters, including Gloucester Harbor, Annisquam River, Rockport, Essex Bay, Ipswich Bay, Plum Island Sound, and the Merrimack River mouth.
- Fish caught outside Essex County waters are not eligible for submission regardless of registration status.
- **48-Hour Waiting Period** A mandatory

applies to all registrants. No catch submissions will be accepted until 48 hours after the angler's registration timestamp. This rule is strictly enforced.

- Entry fee is \$35 per angler, payable at time of registration via PayPal POS or cash.

3. Catch Submission Requirements

Two photographs are required for every submission. Both photos must be submitted together.

Photo 1 — Measurement Photo (Required for Scoring)

- Fish must be laid flat on a solid, level surface.
- The official Knotty Striper Derby measuring tape must be visible with the angler's Registration ID clearly readable.
- The nose (mouth closed) of the fish must be aligned with the zero mark on the tape.
- The fish must be laid straight and flat — curved or arched fish will be disqualified.
- The tail must be pinched closed and laid flat — this is the standard MA DMF measurement method for striped bass. No fanning, spreading, or artificial extension of the tail.
- The measurement marking at the pinched tip of the tail must be clearly readable to the nearest 1/4 inch.
- The entire fish, tape, and Registration ID must be visible in a single frame.

Photo 2 — Angler Verification Photo (Required for Eligibility)

- Angler must be holding the fish clearly in frame.
- This photo is used for identity verification and as the Fish of the Week feature photo if selected.
- Photo must be taken on the same day and at the same location as Photo 1.

IMPORTANT: Submissions missing either photo, or where the Registration ID, tape measurement, or fish are not clearly visible, will be automatically disqualified. No exceptions.

4. Submission Process & Deadlines

- All submissions must be made through the official Knotty Striper Derby tournament website.
- Submissions must include both required photographs, the angler's Registration ID, reported fish length, date, time, and general catch location within Essex County waters.

- **September 7, 2026 at 11:59 PM.** The season submission deadline is

No submissions will be accepted after this time under any circumstances.

- Anglers may submit multiple catches throughout the season. Only the longest valid fish per angler will count toward the leaderboard.

5. Scoring & Leaderboard

- Scoring is based solely on fish length measured in inches to the nearest 1/4 inch as shown in the official measurement photo.
- The leaderboard will be updated regularly throughout the season.
- Only the single longest valid submission per registered angler will appear on the leaderboard.
- The leaderboard is unofficial until the submission deadline has passed and all entries have been reviewed.

6. Tie Breaker Policy

- In the event of equal length measurements between two or more anglers, the submission with the earlier timestamp wins.
- All submission timestamps are recorded automatically by the tournament website at time of upload.
- The Tournament Director's determination of submission timestamp is final.

7. Prize Structure

- Prizes will be awarded to the top 3 finishers at minimum. The number of paid placements may expand based on total registration numbers and will be announced during the season.
- All advertised prize amounts represent minimum values. Prize pools grow as sponsors contribute throughout the season.
- Fish of the Week prizes are awarded weekly at the discretion of the Tournament Director and sponsors.
- Prize winners will be announced at the Award Ceremony on September 12–13, 2026.
- Winners must be present or have made prior arrangements to claim their prize. Unclaimed prizes will be held for 30 days after the Award Ceremony.

8. Fish of the Week

- Each Sunday throughout the season, one catch submission will be selected as Fish of the Week.
- Selection is made at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director.
- Fish of the Week recognition and prizes are separate from and do not affect the season leaderboard standings.
- The angler's Photo 2 (holding fish) will be used for the Fish of the Week feature post on social media and the tournament website.
- Each angler is eligible to win Fish of the Week once per season. In the event the top submission for a given week belongs to a previous Fish of the Week winner, the recognition will be awarded to the next eligible angler.
- By submitting a catch, anglers consent to their Photo 2 being used for Fish of the Week features.

9. Catch & Release Policy & Regulatory Compliance

IMPORTANT: All participants are solely responsible for compliance with all applicable Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) regulations, including but not limited to size limits, possession limits, bag limits, and season restrictions. This responsibility rests entirely with the individual angler.

- Catch and release is required for all fish not covered by applicable MA DMF harvest regulations.
- Commercial anglers must comply with all regulations applicable to their license type and any active reporting requirements.
- Recreational anglers must comply with all regulations applicable to their recreational fishing license.

- Participation in the Knotty Striper Derby does not modify, supersede, or exempt any angler from compliance with any applicable state or federal fishing regulation.
- Steve's Rope Splicing, tournament sponsors, and affiliated parties assume no responsibility or liability for any regulatory violations committed by tournament participants. Any violations are the sole legal responsibility of the individual angler.

10. Disqualification

The following will result in immediate disqualification and forfeiture of any prizes:

- Submission of fraudulent, altered, or manipulated photographs.
- Submission of a fish caught outside Essex County coastal waters.
- Submission made before the 48-hour waiting period has elapsed.
- Use of another angler's Registration ID.
- Fish measurement photo not meeting all requirements outlined in Section 3.
- Any conduct deemed unsportsmanlike or dishonest by the Tournament Director.
- Violation of any applicable fishing regulation that results in an illegal catch.

11. Dispute Resolution

- All disputes must be submitted in writing to Steve's Rope Splicing within 48 hours of the disputed event or leaderboard posting.
- Disputes will be reviewed by the Tournament Director and an advisory panel of invested parties.
- The decision of the Tournament Director and advisory panel is final and binding.
- Disputes submitted after the 48-hour window will not be considered.

12. Photo & Media Release

- By participating in the Knotty Striper Derby, anglers grant Steve's Rope Splicing and tournament sponsors permission to use submitted photographs for tournament leaderboard display, social media posts, website features, marketing materials, and future promotional use.
- Anglers will be identified by name in tournament-related posts and features unless they request otherwise in writing at time of registration.

13. Liability Waiver & Release

READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING THE REGISTRATION FORM

By registering for the Knotty Striper Derby, participants agree to the following terms in full:

Personal Safety: Fishing is an inherently hazardous activity. Participants assume all risk of injury, illness, death, property damage, or loss of equipment arising from participation in the tournament. Steve's Rope Splicing, its employees, sponsors, and affiliated parties bear no responsibility for any injury, accident, or loss occurring during tournament participation.

Regulatory Compliance: Participants are solely responsible for compliance with all applicable Massachusetts and federal fishing regulations. Steve's Rope Splicing and sponsors assume no liability for any regulatory violations committed by participants. Any fines, penalties, or legal consequences arising from regulatory violations are the sole responsibility of the individual angler.

Equipment & Vessel: Participants are solely responsible for the safety, seaworthiness, and legal compliance of any vessel, kayak, or equipment used during tournament participation. Steve's Rope Splicing assumes no liability for equipment failure or vessel-related incidents.

Submission Accuracy: Participants certify that all submitted photographs and measurements are genuine, unaltered, and accurately represent a fish caught legally within Essex County coastal waters during the tournament period. Fraudulent submissions may result in disqualification and will be reported to appropriate authorities.

Indemnification: Participants agree to indemnify and hold harmless Steve's Rope Splicing, its employees, officers, sponsors, and affiliated parties from any and all claims, damages, losses, costs, or expenses (including reasonable legal fees) arising out of or related to the participant's involvement in the tournament.

Rules & Tournament Authority: Participants agree to abide by all tournament rules as stated in this document and any amendments published on the official tournament website. The Tournament Director's decisions on all matters are final.

Governing Law: This agreement is governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Any disputes arising from tournament participation shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of Essex County, Massachusetts.

Steve's Rope Splicing recommends that all participants review current MA DMF regulations prior to fishing and carry appropriate safety equipment at all times.

14. Rules Amendments & Tournament Authority

- Steve's Rope Splicing reserves the right to amend these rules at any time. Amendments will be posted on the official tournament website with reasonable notice.
- The Tournament Director has final authority on all rulings, interpretations, and decisions not expressly covered by these rules.
- Participation in the tournament constitutes full acceptance of all rules, terms, and conditions herein.