



May 11, 2023

## Jacob Runyan and Chase Cominsky Sentenced to 10 Days Local Incarceration, Maximum Fishing License Suspension, and Were Required to Forfeit the Fishing Boat Used in the Tournament with an Estimated Value of \$130,000

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that Jacob Runyan, 43, and Chase Cominsky, 36, were sentenced to 10 days local incarceration and one and a half years' community control, the maximum fishing license suspension, and were required to forfeit Cominsky's boat used during the tournament (with an estimated worth of \$130,000) for Cheating and the Unlawful Ownership of Wild Animals during the Lake Erie Walleye Trail tournament in September 2022. Additionally, they were sentenced to \$2,500 fine part of which may be paid to a reputable charity that works with children and fishing.

"I have no doubt that these two crooks cheated in multiple tournaments over the last several years. Unfortunately, we can only hold them accountable for what they did on September 30, 2022," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "Although these two deserve to have their fishing license suspended for life, the law only allows a maximum of three years. These two should be banned from every fishing tournament for life. They are thieves and now they are convicted felons. This sends a message to the fishing community that cheaters will be held accountable in Cuyahoga County."

According to an investigation conducted by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), on September 30, 2022, Jacob Runyan and Chase Cominsky competed at the Lake Erie Walleye Trail tournament near North Marginal Road and Lakeshore Boulevard in Cleveland. The tournament hosted fishermen from several surrounding states that competed to see which team could catch five of the heaviest walleye fish in Lake Erie. If Runyan and Cominsky had won this tournament, they would have received a total prize of \$28,760.

The director of the tournament noticed Runyan and Cominsky's walleyes weighed more than they looked and sliced open the fish. Ten weights were located inside the walleyes, eight weighing 12 ounces and two weighing eight ounces along with several walleye filets. The two were immediately disqualified and instructed to leave the tournament. The Cleveland Metroparks Police Department responded to the scene.

On March 27, 2023, Jacob Runyan and Chase Cominsky pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- **One count of Cheating** (felony of the fifth degree with forfeiture of the boat used in the fishing tournament that was seized on October 11, 2022)
- **One count of Unlawful Ownership of Wild Animals** (misdemeanor of the fourth degree)