

East Coast Watercross Racers

2026 CHAMPIONSHIP COMMUNICATION

I owe our East Coast Watercross racers an apology and a clear explanation regarding the communication surrounding the 2026 championship.

On May 27, While I was travelling home from national tour stop we publicly announced that because our 2026 season consisted of five race weekends, racers would be allowed to drop their lowest round, making the championship their best four out of five rounds. We quickly realized that was not the correct move to help build the series and would not reward those who followed the entire tour.

On June 4, the friday before round 1, we continued developing the 8 Ball Cup and looking at the season as a whole, we modified the format to require racers competing for the 8 Ball Cup to attend all five rounds. The goal was to encourage full-season participation and strengthen attendance at every event, while rewarding racers who made the effort to hit all five rounds.

At that time, we also made the decision that the East Coast Watercross championship would be based on all five rounds - **5 out of 5**.

The intention at that point was to clearly communicate the updated championship format as well as the 8 ball cup rules and remove the May 27 post referencing the original 4-of-5 format so that outdated information was no longer circulating.

Neither of those things were handled the way it should have been.

The May 27 post was never taken down, and more importantly, we never made a clear standalone announcement telling racers that the ECW championship itself had changed from 4-of-5 to 5-of-5. Nor did I publicly go on social media and speak to the changes.

That was our mistake, and ultimately it was my mistake.

I want to give some context as to how we got here, but I do not want any of it to be taken as an excuse.

This has been an incredibly busy year. Along with running East Coast Watercross, I have been juggling the Pro Watercross National Tour, the 8 Ball Cup, race operations, scheduling, social media, website updates, sponsorships and the countless other things that happen behind the scenes to keep all of this moving, as well as a small injury.

With that workload, the championship communication and the removal of the outdated May post both slipped through the cracks.

That is an explanation, not an excuse.

Regardless of what we decided internally or what we intended to update online, racers can only operate based on the rules and information we actually put in front of them in print not just word of mouth. You plan time off from work, travel, hotels, fuel, entry fees, equipment and family schedules around the championship structure we publish.

We understand why seeing that May 27 post still online - without a clear announcement replacing it - created confusion. We also understand why racers could look at that information and believe the original 4-of-5 format was still in effect.

For that, I sincerely apologize.

As ECW, Pro Watercross and the programs surrounding them continue to grow, I need to bring someone in specifically to help manage communications so that rule changes, championship updates, website information and social media all say the same thing at the same time.

This situation made it clear that communications needs the same attention and investment we have already put into scoring.

Growth is a good problem to have, but it also means recognizing when the way you have always done things is not enough anymore. For a long time, I could personally keep track of nearly every moving part. Between East Coast Watercross, the Pro Watercross National Tour, the 8 Ball Cup and everything else we are building, we have reached a point where that simply is not realistic.

That means continuing to build a stronger team, better technology and better systems around these series.

For 2026, the East Coast Watercross championship is being scored using **all five rounds - 5-of-5** - as was decided when the format was changed in June. We are not trying to pretend the May 27 announcement did not happen or minimize the fact that it remained publicly available. The failure was that we changed the format internally and did not do our job communicating that change clearly enough externally.

This situation has also made something else very clear to me: East Coast Watercross and Pro Watercross have grown to the point where I cannot personally have my hands in every single part of these organizations and expect nothing to fall through the cracks. This is not my first mistake, nor will it be my last.

We have already recognized that in other areas and taken significant steps to improve.

We invested heavily in our GPS transponder system and Live Race Services to help with modernizing the scoring system and reduce our reliance on outdated hand scoring methods, and eliminate as many opportunities for human error as possible.

We have also brought experienced and respected people in the industry, including **Dawn Carey**, into the scoring and registration side of our operation. These were deliberate investments in better technology, experienced people, additional checks and balances, and a more professional system capable of handling the amount of racing we now manage.

The goal has been to identify areas where relying on one person, one process or an outdated system creates opportunities for mistakes - and then invest in making those areas stronger.

Communications is now the next area where I need to do the same thing. [A Statement to Our](#)

I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished with East Coast Watercross, but that does not mean we are going to get everything right.

When we make a mistake, we own it.

On this one, the decision was made, but the communication did not happen effectively, That falls on me. I am sorry, and we will do better.

For clarity the 8 Ball Cup rules were as follows, you needed to hit all 5 rounds to be in contention for payout and podium position and you could drop your lowest score in the event of boat break downs which effected points in these older classes in years past. For the ECW series the 2026 championship was standard total of all races you hit, there was no dropped round factored into 2026 championship.

Thank you all for the support this season, we will be on the road soon to our Road To Havasu National Tour Finale! hope to see you in the Jet Ski Capital of the World!!

Shawn Dudek

East Coast Watercross