

Guide for World Competition of the Nihon Unagi (Japanese eel) Cup:

The 6th Kasumigaura Ashibune (Reed Boat) Tournament



Dates: February 28 (Saturday) and March 1 (Sunday), 2026

Hosts: Kasumigaura Academy and Namegata Canoe Club

## 1. Purpose

To maintain the reed fields that are needed for worthy environment and to increase the number of people who will become involved in the care and maintenance of Lake Kasumigaura, in which they grow from year to year, we are holding this competition. Qualified participants will follow certain guidelines to cut the reeds on the shore of the lake, bundle the reeds to make a reed boat, row the reed boats. These functions will be carried out by the athletes (who will row the boats themselves). Each step of the process will be judged by referees. Prizes will be awarded for the boats and athletes who carry out the best performances.

## 2. Hosts: Kasumigaura Academy and Namegata Canoe Club

## 3. Support by Namegata City, Ibaraki prefecture, Fisheries Cooperative Association of Kasumigaura, Kasumigaura Fureai Land Co., Ltd., Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Namegata City Society of Commerce and Industry, Rotary International District 2820, Namegata Pride, The Foundation for the Preservation of Eel Culture and Resources

## 4. Dates: February 28 (Saturday) and March 1 (Sunday), 2026, Game rescheduled only in case of heavy rain. (Rain dates: March 7 (Saturday) and March 8 (Sunday), 2026.)

## 5. Schedule:

Day 1

9:00– Registration

Around until 15:00 Cutting Reeds

12:00– Luncheon party (arranged by hosts)

Around until 17:00 Assembling of the hull

Day 2

9:00 Opening ceremony

10:00 Competition starts

11:30 Awards ceremony

12:00 Closing

## 6. Place

Cutting reeds: The shore of a lake at Takasuzaki (see map)

Assembling of the hull: The west parking place of Takasuzaki park (see map)

Competition: The south side of Kasumigaura Ohashi Bridge. Course to start from the Namegata

city side, and to turn down with half of bridge center (see map). In stormy weather, course will be changed to inside of offshore breakwater at south of Haginegawa port (see map)

#### 7. Hull (body of ship) and steering

The hull will consist only of reeds or grass grown on the shores of Lake Kasumigaura and jute rope prepared by the competition secretariat. There are no restrictions on size, shape, and number of crews. Innovative designs are encouraged.

Steering will be with paddles, oars or poles. Commercially available products are acceptable.

#### 8. Competition rules

Compete for ranking by going around the course three times.

Crew members may change at the start-finish point. Therefore, a maximum of 3 groups/persons from team members can board.

At the start-finish point, the boat must touch the shore.

In strong winds, there may be changes to three races on a straight course.

#### 9. Entry qualifications

A team of 3 or more people. Must be at least 10 years old. Participants aged 10 to 12 must ride with someone aged 18 or older. Participants under the age of 18 require parental consent.

#### 10. Entry fee

One person 10,000 yen (This includes luncheon party on first day and accident insurance.)

If you bring your own life jacket, paddle, and sickle, the fee is 7,000 yen.

Under the age of 15, the fee is 3,000 yen. (This includes luncheon party on first day and accident insurance.)

#### 11. Awards

- Team with the best time
- Team that produced the most technically superior reed boat

Presentation of Nihon Unagi Cup

#### 12. Application method

Please enter the URL below or read the QR code and pay the application / participation fee.

No refund will be given after application. (This includes cancellation due to inclement weather, natural disasters, etc.)

<https://k-acad.com/6th-ashibune-tournament/>

### 13. Application deadline

February 14, 2026 (Saturday). Please adhere to the deadline.

\* There is a limit on the number of applications that can be processed. The applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. We apologize for this limitation.

### 14. Contact

KIKUCHI Akio, Kasumigaura Academy secretariat  
kasumigaura.academy@gmail.com

### 15. Supplementary Provision

The hosts will not be held responsible for any accidents, theft or loss during the competition, except for first aid and accident insurance coverage.

The hosts are not responsible for any accidents or thefts in the parking lot or accommodation. The right to publish videos, photos, articles, records, etc. during the tournament on TV, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, etc. belongs to the hosts.

### 16. Notes

For your safety, you must wear a life jacket and pay attention to protection against cold weather. The secretariat will prepare life jackets and paddles. However, we would appreciate it if you could bring your own.

The secretariat will also prepare sickles and work gloves for cutting reeds. Again, we would appreciate it if you could bring your own sickles and gloves.

When cutting reeds, you may get into the water, so boots are recommended.

It is advisable to be trained in self-rescue in water sports.

The members of the competition secretariat will give you advice when cutting reeds and creating reed boats, so please feel free to ask.

### Reference information

#### Amount of reeds needed

It is estimated that 30 bundles of reeds (about 20 cm in diameter) will be enough for one boat.

In order to make the boat bigger, you need to increase the amount of reeds. Four adults can mow 30 bundles in 1 to 2 hours.

The secretariat will prepare some extra reeds in case a team needs the reeds.

### How to make a reed boat

<https://k-acad.com/ashifune-boat/> : There is an explanation of how to make it in the guide.  
Regardless of this, we welcome your own design.

Information will be posted on the website from time to time.

<https://k-acad.com/6th-ashibune-tournament/>

Venue access

Address: 1969 Tamatsukuri Ko, Namegata City, Ibaraki Prefecture Takasuzaki Park

Automobile

About 30 minutes from the Tsuchiura Kita IC on the Joban Expressway.

From Narita to Tsuchiura: About 90 minutes by bus, 2400 Yen

[https://www.kantetsu.co.jp/bus/highway\\_tsuchiura\\_narita.html](https://www.kantetsu.co.jp/bus/highway_tsuchiura_narita.html)

From Tokyo to Tsuchiura: About 90 minutes by train (JR Joban Line)

From Tsuchiura to Roadside station (Michino Eki) Tamatsukuri: About 55 minutes by bus  
(Kasumigaura wide area bus (Kouiki bus)), 740 Yen

<https://www.city.namegata.ibaraki.jp/page/page002287.html>

<https://www.city.kasumigaura.lg.jp/page/page005294.html>

From Roadside station (Michino Eki) Tamatsukuri to Competition venue: About 5 minute walk

Accommodation / camping

A tent can be set up in the west parking place of Takasuzaki Park. (Because we have permission to use it, not a campsite, please use it modestly. Bonfires are prohibited.)

The following facilities are located nearby. Please apply by yourself.

• Guest house Fukuro (96-1 Fujii, Namegata City)

4,200 yen / person Telephone 080-6607-1309 (Kikuchi)

• Bettei Suifuso Keizan (2796-1 Hama, Namegata City)

HP: <http://www.suifusou.jp/> Phone 0299-57-3838

• Kitaura Park Hotel Uofuku (2856-1 Yamada, Namegata City)

HP: <https://uofuku.com/hotel>

The Namegata City Tourism Association has information on other accommodations.

HP: <http://namekan.jp/>

There are many other accommodations in Tsuchiura City, Ishioka City, Hokota City, etc., so please consider them.



Map: Competition Location. (West parking place)



Map: Competition course in stormy weather

Message from hosts:

The vegetation zone on the shore of the lake is in crisis

Since 96% of the lakeshore line is artificial concrete embankment, the vegetation zone of aquatic plants such as reeds has decreased significantly. Offshore breakwater was constructed to produce a vegetation zone. Reeds fields have recovered at a few places and the vegetation zone has not been fully revived due to poor maintenance. The reed bed is a spawning site, has a water purification function, and is a habitat for aquatic organisms such as insects and fish. Mowing the reeds removes the nutrients absorbed by the reeds from the lake, preventing the reed beds from landing and maintaining vegetation. However, in our current life, we do not use reeds, and in order to reap them, we need to create new demand for them.

There is less bonding between people and the lake

Some people are walking and fishing, but no children are playing or fishing by the water. In the past, it was common practice to catch crucian carps that gather for spawning in reed beds and loaches hidden in the sand. Also, the number of people visiting for sightseeing is not large. Through this competition, we aim to revive the vegetation zone and create and spread a culture that incorporate the reeds. We are aiming to restore a natural lakeshore without an offshore breakwater in the long run.



NPO Kasumigaura Academy

<https://k-acad.com/>

kasumigaura.academy@gmail.com