

OHIO BASS FEDERATION TOURNAMENT RULES

Revised January 2019

1. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Section 1: First Year Club/Member Eligibility

A club/member must have been affiliated for at least 21 days preceding their Regional Tournament and then qualify for the Ohio Bass Federation Championship.

Section 2: Individuals, General

To participate in Federation Tournaments, you must be a member of an affiliated club, The Ohio Bass Federation, The Bass Federation (TBF), and FLW. You may be a member of a maximum of three clubs and may participate in a maximum of three Regional Tournaments if you a member of a club in those Regions.

Section 3: Clubs, Regional Tournaments

To participate in the Federation Regional Tournament a club must meet the following requirements:

- (A) Clubs must have been affiliated at least 21 days preceding the Tournament. Regional Directors must do a roster check using the TBF online roster system immediately after this date and only members listed with current dues paid are eligible to compete..
- (B) Clubs may send as many entries as they wish. EACH entry MUST include a boater and non boater. At Regionals using the Angler/CoAngler format, the competitor will advance in that status.
- (C) The completed entry form with required entry fee and insurance verification for boaters must be submitted no later than 21 days prior to Tournament date, this is the competitor's responsibility not the club.
- (D) At Regional competition, a contest weighing in a legal fish is invited to advance to the OBF Championship. Entry Forms for the Championship will be distributed by the Directors at the Regional Tournaments. Completed entry forms with insurance verification for Boaters and required fee MUST BE RECEIVED by the date posted on the Entry Form. This is the Competitor's responsibility. Entries received after that date MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED. Contestants competing for "Ranger Cup" MUST COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE SPACE ON THEIR FORM. This will not be accepted the day of the Tournament. Regional Directors must advance an equal number of Anglers and Co Anglers to the Championship.
- (E) State Championship forms will state "Angler" "CoAngler" according to how the contestants were entered at the Regional An even number of Anglers/CoAnglers must be submitted for each Regional. For Regions not using this format, the Regional Director will determine who fills each category.

- (F) Big Bass side pot will be included with entry fee and WILL NOT be collected the day of the Tournament.

Section 4: OHIO BASS FEDERATION CHAMPIONSHIP

Participation is by qualification through the Regional Tournaments. All contestants must meet requirements in Sections 1, 2, &3. Completed entries with required entry fee paid in full and insurance verification must be received by posted date. The Ohio Bass Federation Championship will be held at a site and date determined by the Tournament Director. The winner of this event shall be the Ohio Bass Federation State Champion.

Section 5: OHIO BASS FEDERATION TEAM OPEN TOURNAMENT

- (A) Entries are limited to CURRENT members of OBF affiliated clubs. Two person Teams. Entrants do not have to be members of the same club.
- (B) Team members will specify on the entry form who is the Boater/NonBoater.
- (C) Five fish limit per team. Each team may have only five fish in their possession at check-in. May not cull dead fish.
- (D) All other general Ohio Bass Federation rules will apply. For advancement to the National Semi Final a winning team member may only be replaced for a verifiable emergency to be determined by OBF Tournament or OBF President.

Section 6: National Semi Final Qualifiers

- (A) The top Team at Team Open Tournaments will advance to the Semi Final as Angler/CoAngler.
- (B) The Top Five Anglers at the State Championship will advance as Anglers The Top Five CoAnglers will advance as CoAnglers.
- (C) The Bass Federation (TBF) allows 10% of State participation to fill the qualifying field. TBF gives the State President authority to determine how those spots are filled. Any spots not filled by the above qualifiers will be chosen in descending order from non-qualifying finishers in the OBF Championship (I.e. higher qualifiers-Anglers, lower qualifiers-CoAnglers.)
- (D) In addition, ALL Clubs may qualify two members directly to the National Semi Final. Clubs may determine how to select those members. If a Club has 20+ members they may advance an additional two members. Clubs advancing four members MUST have participants at their Regional Tournament.

2. GENERAL RULES – APPLICATION, INTERPRETATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Section 1: Application

The following rules apply to all State and Regional Tournaments conducted by the Ohio Bass Federation.

- (A) Rules Changes – The following rules will remain unchanged except for Special Tournaments conducted by OBF. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director (or Officer acting in that capacity). IN the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate including, without

limitations; disqualifications, forfeiture of prizes, and participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the Tournament Director and Tournament Officials shall be final in all matters except where an appeal to the Board of Directors is provided.

Section 2: Participants and Eligibility

Participation in all State and Regional tournaments is by qualification/invitation only in accordance with Rule 1. All participants must hold a valid fishing license. Tournaments are open only to members who are 16 years of age by April 1st of the following calendar year. Proof of license or age to the satisfaction of Tournament Officials is the responsibility of the participant. During any OBF Tournament, no competitor may operate a boat without submitted documented proof of a minimum of \$300,000.00 boating liability insurance with entry. This documentation MUST show and effective date and an expiration date.

Persons born on or after January 1, 1982 must be able to provide documentation of successfully passing the Ohio Division of Watercraft NASBLA approved boating education course before operating a boat in an OBF Tournament.

Section 3: Special Rules/Violations

During the Tournament a competitor may not "skin dive" or SCUBA dive" on Tournament waters. During the Tournament a competitor may not use a CB radio, VHF marine band radio, a cellular phone, or any other telecommunication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish. If so equipped, contestants may listen to the marine band weather information. Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director any violation or infraction of the rules. The failure to report violations or suggestions to violate these rules; or false verification of weigh-in forms will be cause sanctions up to, and including disqualification.

Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the entry form, to a polygraph test should they be accused of any rule violation. The person(s) making the accusation may also be subjected to a polygraph. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the Tournament Director and his agent, and shall be used (or not used) at his discretion. Without limiting the foregoing, the Tournament Director shall have sole discretion to select the location at which such polygraph test shall be administered, the individual who administers the test, and the scope of the questions asked during the test. The participant shall be available at his expense, at the location selected and shall cooperate in all aspects of such examination.

- (A) Registration. Each competitor MUST register with Tournament Officials no later than 60 minutes prior to the designated start time EACH TOURNAMENT DAY. Competitors registering later than 60 minutes before the designated start time MAY be penalized one pound and may be disqualified if not registered 30 minutes prior to that time. The penalty shall be subtracted from the competitor's total catch. On Tournament day, any boats not launched and prepared to start the Tournament at least 30 minutes prior to the start time MAY be disqualified. At Regional Tournaments this may require the other member on that competitor's entry to be withdrawn from the Tournament. A competitor who, without

notifying a Tournament Official, fails to register prior to the start of each Tournament day will be disqualified from that Tournament and all remaining OBF Tournaments for that Tournament season and the following TBF season. The competitor will be notified in writing and may appeal the disqualification to the Ohio Bass Federation Board of Directors. The appeal shall be made in writing to the OBF President within 30 days of the disqualification. The appeal shall state the reason for the competitor's failure to abide by the rule. The Board shall hear the appeal and their decision will be final.

A competitor withdrawing from any State Tournament after the entry deadline for that event will forfeit his entry fee. Withdrawing within the final two weeks prior to, or during, any event may also result in disqualification from all remaining Tournaments for that Tournament season and the following Tournament season. The Tournament Director shall have full authority to rule on the validity of cancellations and withdrawals and the imposition of disqualifications. Appeals may be made to the Ohio Bass Federation Board of Directors. The app appeal shall be made within 30 days of pre-Tournament disqualification. The Board shall hear the appeal and their decision will be final.

- (B) Protests. A competitor may file a protest for a rule or procedural violation. The Tournament Director must be notified of the protest before the scales close. The Tournament Director will notify the person being protested.

The competitor filing the protest will be given a copy of the rules and a form/paper to write the protest. The written protest must clearly state the alleged violation or act and cite the applicable rule. Any witnesses will be identified and statements received from them. The individual being protested will file a statement along with any relevant witness statements. The Tournament Director will rule on the on the protest and may, at his discretion confer with other members of the Executive Board who may be present. If imposition of a penalty is the decision of the Tournament Director, he may impose a penalty he deems appropriate as called for in the rules; up to and including disqualification.

- (C) Appeal Process. An angler must state that he/she wishes to file an appeal when told that they will be assessed a penalty or disqualification at an event. Forms will be provided with a copy of the Tournament Rules at that time and they shall have 30 minutes to file the appeal. At the Regionals and Team Open all appeals will be ruled upon by a five person panel, to include as many Board members as are present. If no Board members are present, the Director will appoint five persons to a panel.

At the OBF Championship the appeal will be made to the Ohio Bass Federation Board of Directors at the next Board meeting. Because of time constraints, a special Board Meeting may be called. The angler must state that he/she wishes to file an appeal when told that they will be assessed a penalty or disqualification. Forms will be provided with a copy of the Tournament Rules at that time and they will have 30 minutes to file the appeal. The appeal

must be turned in to the OBF President; or in his absence the Tournament Director at the event.

Section 4. Safety

Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times. Each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver any time the combustion engine is operating. It must be strapped, snapped, or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. Suspender type inflatables are not counted as a life preserver unless worn; as per state law.

Section 5. Sportsmanship

Competitors are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship such as, but not limited to, no passing in a no wake zone to better your position, courtesy, use of profanity or verbal abuse, safety, and consideration. Any violation of these sporting principals may be deemed cause for disqualification.

Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those prescribed by a physician or purchased legally over the counter) by any competitor will not be tolerated and will be cause for disqualification from that and all future Ohio Bass Federation Tournaments. Common Courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially in the vicinity of non-competitors, and areas near gas pumps. Any act of a competitor which reflects unfavorably on the OBF efforts to promote fisheries, conservation, clean waters, and courtesy may be reason for disqualification.

No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants, prescription or otherwise shall be allowed in the boats during competition, or when in the weigh-in area. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other rimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon OBF's efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition, and compliance with Tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting an entry and disqualification.

Section 6. Tackle and Equipment

All angling equipment must meet state, and if applicable, local regulations.

- (A) Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted with the exception of pork rinds, chunks, or strips, etc.
- (B) Only one casting, spinning, or spincast rod; eight feet in length from butt to tip; and reel may be used at one time. All other types are prohibited.
- (C) All bass must be caught alive in a conventional, sporting manner.
- (D) When fishing for visible, bedded bass, the partner must confirm that the fish is hooked inside the mouth before it is unhooked in order to count. Anyone guilty of snagging or foul hooking a fish will have that day's catch disallowed.
- (E) The use of gaffs or grippers is prohibited. The use of landing nets is permissible.

Section 7. Horsepower Regulations

Maximum for all boats under 21 feet 6 inches will be 250 horsepower. Boats 21 feet 6 inches or longer will be allowed 300 horsepower. Minimum horsepower shall be 35 horsepower. In no case shall it

exceed the limitations set by the Coast Guard or lake specific regulations. The minimum horsepower requirement may be reduced for a Regional Tournament by the Director, provided each competitor is notified a minimum of two weeks prior to the Tournament. All boats and motors must meet legal requirements of Division of Watercraft rules and regulations and State law

- (A) Altering a Coast Guard rating plate or the horsepower rating numbers on the motor would be cause for, but not limited to, immediate disqualification.

Section 8. Boat and Motor

By signature on the entry form, a competitor agrees to submit his boat and motor to inspection by Tournament Officials.

- (A) All boats must be equipped with an operable ignition kill switch. This kill switch must be attached to operator at all times combustion motor is operating and when in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat.
- (B) Boats must be 15 feet or longer and have a minimum of 35 horsepower motor.
- (C) Any raised platform or deck cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat.
- (D) An electric trolling motor may be used for maneuvering or positioning, however, trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited.
- (E) Any additional fuel tanks that are not options and installed by authorized factory dealer are prohibited. Boats that do not have factory installed fuel tanks are restricted to 18 gallons of fuel in Coast Guard approved tanks. These tanks must be properly strapped or secured in the boat.
- (F) All boats must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment on board.
- (G) All boats must be equipped with a bilge pump and properly aerated livewell to maintain a limit catch for both competitors.
- (H) No boat equipped with "stick steering" shall be permitted to be used by any competitor. No "barges" or other cumbersome vessels will be permitted. Tournament Director shall make determination of "stick steering" and "barges". Any boat deemed unsafe will not be allowed in competition.

Section 9. Boat Check and Identification

Prior to Tournament day start, each boat may be inspected by Tournament Officials and will receive a boat number that must remain with the boat throughout the Tournament and be displayed at the request of Tournament Officials and shown at check in.

Section 10. Boat Operation and Expense

At the Regional Tournaments that do not use the Angler/CoAngler format a \$25 fee will be paid directly by the Non Boater to the Boater listed on his entry form. This does not apply to Regionals using the Angler/CoAngler format.

- (A) At Tournaments not using the Angler/CoAngler format, a full discussion of the schedule of boat operations must be held by the two competitors prior to morning departure. This schedule must permit each angler equal time to fish from the front of the boat and operate the trolling motor so as to afford the opportunity to fish their selected waters an equal number of hours. Distance travelled to fishing locations must be considered in order not to deprive either angler of fishing time while travelling. If a competitor waives the above rights they may still retain the right to select fishing waters for one half the Tournament day.
- (B) Any competitor who, in the judgement of Tournament Officials, operates the boat in such a manner as to handicap their partner, may be disqualified.
- (C) At any Tournament where a ramp fee is charged, a Tournament Official will collect from each competitor their share of this fee.

Section 11. Permitted Fishing Locations

All waters within Tournament boundaries are open to fish with the following provisions/exceptions:

- (A) Any waters posted as "Off Limits" or "No Fishing" by Federal, State, or other agencies with jurisdiction will be deemed off limits to all competitors. Any boat anchored or otherwise secured with trolling motor stowed, will have a 50 yard circle that shall be off limits to other competitors. No such boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within this area to the exclusion of other competitors. The Tournament Director may establish a "Live Release" area as off limits.
- (B) Anglers wishing to change fish habitat by placing any object in Tournament waters may do so if such action does not violate any State, Local, or Federal regulations or laws.
- (C) All angling MUST be done from the boat. No competitor may depart the boat to land a fish, or make the boat more accessible to fishing waters.
- (D) All boats must remain on Tournament waters during Tournament hours. Trailering of boats during Tournament hours is prohibited except by direction of Tournament Officials. In case of breakdown or emergency, competitors must notify the Tournament Director or other Officials by cell phone or other means. All competitors will be provided contact numbers at check-in and/or at morning meeting. In case of breakdown, one competitor may remain with the boat while the other competitor returns in another boat with the catch of both anglers. Fish MUST be tagged in a manner that identifies each anglers catch. If an emergency results in one competitor not being able to fish, both anglers must cease fishing and a Tournament Official will verify catch. If the emergency is resolved and there is time left for competitors to resume fishing, a restart will be allowed. However, no time will be added to their Tournament hours.
- (E) All competitors must have in their possession all required fishing licenses for Tournament waters being fished.
- (F) After Tournament begins, fishing Tournament waters is prohibited except during Tournament hours.

Section 12. Official Checkpoint

There will be only one official point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon. All competitors must leave and return by boat to the official check point. At the time of check-out, all competitors and their boats shall be in compliance with all rules. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves and proceed to designated weigh-in area as quickly as possible. Partners must remain together through check-in and weigh-in.

Section 13. Scoring

- (A) Tournament standings shall be determined by total weight of angler's catch, less any penalty.
- (B) Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, and Spotted Bass will be weighed. All Tournaments will have a 5 fish limit unless the prevailing legal limit is less, or a special limit is established by the Tournament Director. In no case will a fish be scored that is less than 12 inches.
- (C) Anglers MAY NOT cull any legal dead fish. At no time shall an angler possess more than the limits described above. Tournament Officials may check for violation of this provision and in the event an angler has more than the Tournament limit, Tournament Officials will cull, largest bass first and then in descending order by size until the legal limit is reached.
- (D) The official length for legal Bass will be the longest State limit covering Tournament waters on the Tournament date. Only Bass described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line shall be weighed. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of Tournament Officials.
- (E) Once an angler has their fish measured, counted, and verified by a Tournament Official they may not return to their boat until their catch is weighed and recorded.
- (F) Bass may not be stringered at any time, and no culling system may be used that joins multiple fish together in the livewell.
- (G) Specially marked bags will be furnished by the Tournament Officials and only fish in these bags will be accepted for weigh-in.

Section 14. Penalty Points

All weight penalties included in these rules shall be assessed against the individual angler and not exceed a daily total of ZERO weight (0.00) except for short fish penalty. This penalty will accumulate to negative weight (-x.xx).

- (A) For each short fish a 1 pound penalty will be assessed.
- (B) For each dead fish a .25 pound penalty will be assessed. This penalty shall count against weight for Big Bass Award.
- (C) Anglers who are not in the official check-in area by the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of 1 pound per minute they are late. This shall be deducted from the total weight of that day's catch. Any angler checking in 15 minutes late will have that day's catch disqualified.
- (D) Any angler who receives a citation from any law enforcement officials during Tournament hours MAY have imposed up to, and including, disqualification.

- (E) No angler may allow any fish caught by him to be used in another angler's catch. Both anglers shall be disqualified and may, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, face further sanctions.

Section 15. Ties

1. Largest number of LIVE fish weighed in for the Tournament.
2. Largest number of fish weighed in for the Tournament.
3. Largest weight for a single day's catch, minus any penalty assessed.
4. Largest number of LIVE fish weighed for a single day's catch.
5. Largest number of fish weighed for a single day's catch.
6. Flip of coin by a Tournament Official.

Section 16. Pairing of Competitors

Pairings and starting positions will be drawn randomly by the Tournament Director. Competitors will keep the same partner for both days of the State Championship. It shall be each angler's responsibility to check-in at the Tournament check point and arrange to meet their partner. Tournament officials have no responsibility to locate missing partners.

- (A) The Tournament may, at his discretion, reassign partners prior to official start of Tournament.
- (B) If a change is made that pairs two Boaters together and they cannot agree on whose boat to use a coin toss by a Tournament Official will be used to determine the Boater. Only 1 observer will be used at the State Championship.

Section 17. Official Boarding

None of the previous rules shall prohibit a Tournament Official from approaching, or boarding for purposes of a check of a competitor's boat at any time.

Section 18. Club Boater Responsibility

At Regional Tournaments one half of each club's competitors shall be responsible for furnishing boats on Tournament day. Should a club not be able to do so, it is their responsibility to contact another participating club and arrange for someone to fill any vacant boating positions. The two clubs will work out details to their satisfaction and notify Regional Director of revised Boater/NonBoater status.

Section 19. Rules Compliance

It is the responsibility of each competitor to know and comply with Tournament Rules.

Where the term "Tournament Director" is used, in the absence of the Ohio Bass Federation Tournament Director it shall be used to designate the Official who is managing the Tournament.

In the case of Regional Tournaments it shall be used to designate the Regional Director.

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