

**TBF of Arkansas**

**Official Tournament Rules**

**Effective February 14, 2015**

The following rules of this tournament will remain unchanged, except for special tournaments conducted by The Bass Federation, Inc., and herein after (TBF). Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director. In the event of a rules violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decisions of the Tournament Director and TBF Tournament Officials shall be final in all matters.

**1. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:** This tournament is open only to members of TBF and FLW who are 16 years of age or older and who are active members in good standing of Arkansas State TBF Federation. Proof of age is the responsibility of the potential competitor. All participants must have in their possession a valid fishing license covering the waters to be fished. DURING THE COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY TBF EVENT NO CONTESTANT MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT CONTESTANT HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF AN INSURANCE POLICY IN FORCE, THAT COVER THE EVENT DATES WITH A MINIMUM OF \$300,000 BOATING LIABILITY COVERAGE ON THAT PARTICULAR BOAT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER THE COMPETITOR USING THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED. EACH POLICY MUST SHOW \$300,000.00 LIABILITY AND A VALID EXPIRATION DATE. NOTE: Statements of "No fixed expiration date" are NOT acceptable. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Committee, is handicapped in such a manner as to unfairly hinder their partner or endanger the safety and well-being of their partner or their self shall not be eligible. PROPERLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED OFFICIAL ENTRY DOCUMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY TBF BEFORE THE EVENT. During the

tournament a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, a cellular phone, or any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish. Contestants are permitted to transmit by radio or telephone only in an emergency. If so equipped, contestants may listen to marine band weather information. EACH CONTESTANT AGREES TO REPORT TO THE TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS ANY VIOLATION OR INFRACTION OF THESE TOURNAMENT RULES. THE FAILURE TO REPORT VIOLATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS TO VIOLATE THESE RULES WILL BE CAUSE FOR DISQUALIFICATION. EACH COMPETITOR AGREES, BY THEIR SIGNATURE ON THIS DOCUMENT, TO SUBMIT TO A TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST OR POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO FOR ANY REASON and abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification.

**2. REGISTRATION:** Each competitor must register in person with official TBF staff at the time and place selected for the pretournament meeting.

**3. SAFETY:** Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by tournament competitors. During the official practice and during the tournament, each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved, Type III, chest-type life preserver. This preserver must be worn anytime the combustion engine is operating. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification. Tournament Officials have the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. In the event of a thunderstorm, lightning, severe weather or any unsafe condition, participants should remove themselves from the competition and seek safety or shelter until it is safe to continue fishing. Participants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except in case of emergency. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. TBF will announce emergency contact numbers and instructions at the pretournament briefing.

**4. SPORTSMANSHIP:** Competitors in an TBF tournament are expected to follow the very highest standards of

sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any violation of these basic sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those drugs purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the tournament or during the weigh-in will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future TBF tournaments. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of noncompetitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of any competitor which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. All competitors are bound by prevailing state statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants, prescription or otherwise, shall be allowed in the boats during competition days or during the weigh-in. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification. Any disqualification or suspension from, or other disciplinary action regarding, any tournament or fishing organization, may be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification.

**5. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:** Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of pork rinds, strips, etc. Only ONE (1) fishing rod (8-foot maximum length from butt of the handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional and sporting manner. When fishing for bass you can see, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked to be counted as a legal fish.

**6. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:** Maximum horsepower for all outboard motors used in tournament competition will be 250hp. WHERE REQUIRED, EACH BOAT MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH A U.S. COAST GUARD RATING PLATE, WHICH MUST BE

ATTACHED TO THE BOAT BY THE MANUFACTURER. In no case may the horsepower of your outboard exceed the rating specified on the rating plate or the horsepower limit set by TBF.

**7. BOAT AND MOTOR:** For the safety of all contestants, ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH SOME TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH SAFETY DEVICE. This engine stop device must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operating and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Fishing boats may be used that are 17 feet in length or longer and must have a rear deck. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. Any type of AUXILIARY gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Boats that do not have factory installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to all contenders and/or the public. No "barges" or similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. NO BOAT EQUIPPED WITH "STICK STEERING" SHALL BE PERMITTED TO BE USED DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE OR DURING THE TOURNAMENT BY ANY COMPETITOR.

**8. BASIC BOAT & SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** Every boat must have all the required Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and live well space, properly aerated, to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch by BOTH competitors using the boat.

**9. BOAT IDENTIFICATION:** Each boat MUST be given, prior to each day's start, a livewell and SAFETY INSPECTION check by a tournament official.

**10. BOAT OPERATION:** Boaters will fish from the front deck of the boat. Non-boaters will fish from the back deck. Anglers may move around the boat as needed to land a fish or retrieve a lure but not for casting or fishing purposes. Any contestant who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap his partner shall be disqualified.

**11. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere except water within tournament boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" by state or federal agencies which will be OFF-LIMITS. OFF-LIMITS will be announced at the tournament briefing. Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to tournament contestants. All angling must be done from the boat.

**12. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN TOGETHER IN THE BOAT:** Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Contestants must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, both competitors may be removed from their boat to: A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT. Partners must remain together at all times, in sight of each other and each other's catch under the conditions cited above, in order for their catch of that day to be counted. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for a restroom break is permitted, however ALL FISHING MUST CEASE, until partners are back together. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions (to use a phone to report an emergency or breakdown) both competitors must cease fishing at this point, and their catch must be verified by a Tournament Official in order to be counted in the tournament. If after the emergency situation is resolved by Tournament Officials and enough time is left to resume fishing, a RESTART will be allowed and the competitors will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations. Trailering of boats during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of the Tournament Director.

**13. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:** There shall be an official checkpoint for checkout in the morning and check-in in the afternoon and this point shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of check-out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all safety and tournament rules set forth by

the Tournament Director. At check-in all boats shall identify themselves, and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together, through check-in and weigh-in, until weigh-in slips have been signed. YOU MUST CHECK-IN EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FISH.

**14. SCORING:** Tournament standing, awards and final standings shall be determined by a method of scoring set forth, and announced in the pre-tournament briefing. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Red Eye or Shoal Bass will be weighed. The limit shall be five (5) of the above species and varieties per day, unless the prevailing state limit is less than five (5), or a special limit is established by the Tournament Director, in which case the state limit, or special limit shall be the tournament limit. At no time shall a competitor have in possession more than the tournament limit. In the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, shall cull, starting with the largest bass first, down to the stated limit. The official length for bass shall be decided by Tournament Officials and announced at the tournament briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed-in. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length shall accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each non-legal bass. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. 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. After a competitor checks in at the official checkpoint he MUST present all LEGAL fish in his possession to a Tournament Official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a competitor's catch has been measured, counted or verified by a Tournament Official, that contestant may not return to his boat until his catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. This restriction includes livewell stringer systems used for culling, which are also prohibited. Each contestants catch must be presented in a weigh-in bag,

**15. CATCH AND RELEASE:** For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized eight (8)

ounces of weight, to be deducted from their daily score. Tournament Officials shall have sole authority for accessing penalty points.

**16. LATE PENALTY:** Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in rule 14 at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day, including any "Big Bass Award". Any competitors more than fifteen (15) minutes late shall lose all credit for that days catch. After proper recognition at the check-in point, all fishing must stop upon check-in. After the pre-tournament briefing begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the tournament briefing.

**17. TIES:** In case of a tie during a Qualifier event the following tie breakers will be used in this order: 1.) The individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed-in during the competition; 2.) The individual with the largest number of legal LIVE fish weighed-in during the competition; 3.) The individual with the heaviest big bass. (Providing both anglers weighed a fish for big bass). 4) In the event a tie remains after these three tiebreakers are employed; Points will go to both anglers and the prize money for both places will be combined and split. In the event the tie is for the last place prize money then that place points and prize money will be split.

In case of a tie to determine State Team positions the following tie breakers will be used in this order: 1.) The individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed-in during a qualifier both anglers participated in 2.) The individual with the largest number of legal LIVE fish weighed-in during a qualifier both anglers participated in 3) The individual with the largest single days catch during a qualifying event that both anglers participated in 4.) The individual with the heaviest big bass during a qualifier both anglers participated in (Providing both anglers weighed a fish for big bass) 5.) Coin flip.

**18. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS:** Two contestants will be assigned to each boat. No contestants linked will be paired together. Announcement of your partner shall be made at the pretournament rules and safety briefing which must be

attended by each competitor It shall be the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to check out at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament Officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. The Tournament Director, at his sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off. When two contestants check out in the morning they must stay together and in sight of each other and each other's catch until the weigh-in is completed except in cases of dire emergency. A contestant must not allow any bass caught by them to be counted on the score of another contestant. In such a case, both contestants shall be disqualified from this and all future tournaments conducted by TBF.

**19. STATE TEAM QUALIFICATION:** The State team will consist of six boaters and six non-boaters. The highest finishing boater and non-boater after the three qualifiers will comprise the State Team. A 200 point system will be used. The best two events for each angler will be used to determine the anglers position on the state team.

Under no circumstances shall an individual be allowed to attempt to qualify for a state team in more than one state in the same qualifying year.

