

# Official Rules of TBF Nebraska Bass Federation



## 1. Participants and eligibility

- All participants must have in their possession a valid fishing license covering the waters to be fished.
- DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND 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 14 days prior to date of event. Any withdrawal after this date will result in forfeiture of all monies including entry fee, big bass and Calcutta.**

## 2. Pretournament practice

- There will be no official pre-tournament practice period. Tournament waters are off limits after 6:00 P.M. of the day before the tournament. The competitor must know and observe these dates. Should a competitor need access to tournament waters for an emergency such as mechanical issues, it is the responsibility of the competitor to get approval from the Tournament Director. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.
- There will be no off-limits period for any regular tournament unless specified by the tournament director.
- **DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE, AND DURING THE TOURNAMENT, A COMPETITOR MAY NOT SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OR ADVICE OF ANYONE FOR THE PURPOSES OF LOCATING OR CATCHING BASS, NOR ENTER THE TOURNAMENT WATERS WITH ANYONE WHO ARE DEEMED AN "EXPERT" ON THE TOURNAMENT WATERS BY TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS, UNLESS THEY ARE A CONTESTANT IN THE TOURNAMENT.**
- During the official practice and during the tournament, a competitor may not "SKIN DIVE" or "SCUBA DIVE" on the tournament waters.
- 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 OR FALSE VERIFICATION OF WEIGH-IN SLIPS WILL BE CAUSE FOR DISQUALIFICATION. EACH COMPETITOR AGREES, BY THEIR SIGNATURE ON THIS DOCUMENT, TO SUBMIT TO A POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO FOR ANY REASON and abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be the sole responsibility of the tournament director, and his agent(s), and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of tournament officials. Without limiting anything herein, the tournament director shall have sole discretion to select the place at which such polygraph test shall be administered, the individual who administers such polygraph test, and the scope of the questions which may be asked during such test. The participant shall be available, at their own expense, at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such examination.

### **3. Registration**

- Each competitor must register in person with official TBF staff at the time and place prescribed in the registration materials. Failure to register in person during the prescribed times shall result in a one-pound penalty deducted from the total catch. NO EXCEPTIONS. IT SHALL BE EACH COMPETITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR REGISTRATION TIME AND LOCATION OR OBTAIN TIMES FROM TBF.
- Contestants are expected to compete in all days that they are qualified; failure to do so may result in ineligibility to compete in future TBF events.

### **4. 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 competitor reaches their fishing location and 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. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather.
- TBF further reserves the right to impose boat speed limits on any or all tournaments. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area covered by the speed limit and/or the actual speed limit imposed shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the tournament director.

### **5. Sportsmanship**

- Competitors in a 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 official practice, 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.
  - The "Federation" is the "grassroots ambassadors" of fishing. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors 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 official practice, competition days or when in the weigh-in area. 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.

### **6. 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. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day's catch disqualified. 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.
- No gaffs OR "GRIPPERS" may be used to neither land bass nor be permitted in boats at any time.

## **7. Horsepower regulations**

- MAXIMUM HORSEPOWER FOR ALL OUTBOARD MOTORS USED IN OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND IN TOURNAMENT COMPETITION WILL BE 250 HORSEPOWER.
- 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.
- Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the official entry form, the boat and motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory-trained personal, if there is any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance to increase the performance of your engine is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor to INCREASE THE HORSEPOWER OVER THE FACTORY HORSEPOWER RATING IS FORBIDDEN, and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower rating numbers on the motor or ratings plate also would be cause for immediate disqualification from TBF sanctioned events.

## **8. 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 gunnels of the boat.
- Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited.
- Any types of AUXILIARY gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by an authorized dealer are legal. 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. The definition of "stick steering" shall be made by the tournament director.

## **9. Basic boat and 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. TBF recommends the use of live well additives to promote the healthy release of all fish to their natural habitat. Further, TBF recommends the use of ICE to cool live well water and improve oxygen levels during "summer" months. The tournament director shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate."

## **10. Boat identification**

- Each boat MUST be given, prior to each day's start, a live well and SAFETY INSPECTION check by a tournament official and a boat marker, which MUST remain in the boat and be turned in during check-in at the end of each day.

### **11. Permitted fishing locations**

- Tournament waters shall be established by the tournament director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from TBF.
- Fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere except water within these tournament boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" by state or federal agencies, which will be OFF-LIMITS. Also, the live-bass release area established by the tournament director will be OFF-LIMITS and will be announced at the tournament briefing.
- No contestant may "Buy" or "Barter" a fishing location. Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to these 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 checkout 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 for a particular tournament 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. Tournament officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision, and 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 stringer at any time during the tournament. This restriction includes live well stringer systems used for culling, which are also prohibited.
- Each contestant's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag, specially designed and controlled to increase survival rate, which will be furnished by the tournament officials.

### **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. The tournament officials shall have sole authority for assessing 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 day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case will a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time."
- After proper recognition at the check-in point, competitors will be allowed ample time to proceed to the weigh-in site; however, all fishing must stop upon check-in.
- After the pretournament 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**

- Big bass will break heavy stringer ties. Heavy stringer will break big bass ties. Scoring is based on heavy stringer.