



**Official Rules  
B.A.S.S. Nation**

**Effective January 1, 2019**

**Participation Agreement**

**P1. HAVING ACQUAINTED MYSELF WITH THE RULES AND REQUIREMENTS IN THIS BOOKLET, I HAVE SIGNED AND DATED THE PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT. I WILL MAIL OR FAX THE COMPLETED PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT AND COMPLETE THE ENTRY FORM BY THE DEADLINE DATES PROVIDED BY B.A.S.S.**

In signing this agreement, I hereby agree to be bound by and comply with all tournament rules, payment schedules, late fines and regulations. I expressly assume all risks associated with the tournament series and I hereby release B.A.S.S., LLC, its parent, affiliated and subsidiary companies, the hosts, sponsors and tournament series officials from all claims of death, injury and/or property damage incurred by me in connection with my participation in this tournament series. I certify that I now have or will obtain prior to the tournament series, boat owners liability insurance (including coverage for third party property damage and bodily injury) with no "tournament exclusion," having a minimum limit of \$300,000 per occurrence. The insurance must be issued by a reputable insurer rated A or better by A.M. Best and Company. Policy must include international waters, or a separate policy for international waters must be obtained if I choose to fish international waters during applicable B.A.S.S. events. At B.A.S.S.'s request, I will provide satisfactory evidence of that insurance.

I hereby agree to waive my rights of privacy or publicity with regard to the programs of the tournament in which I appear and consent to B.A.S.S., LLC (and its parent, affiliated and subsidiary companies, its owners, directors, employees and agents and those acting under their permission or upon their authority), copyrighting, distributing, televising, publishing and using in any way the audio and visual portions of any television videotape, film and photographs or pictures of me or of interviews, scenes or other sequences in which I may be included, and any reproduction thereof, anywhere at any time through any medium or media for advertising, promotion, trade, television programming or other lawful purpose whatsoever; and I shall not be entitled to receive any royalties or other compensation in connection with such use.

**P2. CONTENT RIGHTS**

B.A.S.S. holds the content rights to the tournaments it owns and operates. However, B.A.S.S. grants certain exceptions, including the following content rights, to tournament participants:

- Anglers may use up to 10 minutes of video, shot by the angler during a tournament, for promotional or marketing purposes, and in social media.
- During tournaments B.A.S.S. may ask to mount a GoPro or similar camera in a competitor's boat (the footage may be used in B.A.S.S.'s web or TV coverage). A competitor is required to comply,

even if he already has a personal camera mounted in his boat. Refusing to comply may result in a penalty.

- Still photos taken by an angler during a tournament may be posted to social media and the angler's website.
- B.A.S.S. also encourages anglers to send photos, videos and updates to fish@bassmaster.com for exposure on Bassmaster.com and our social media pages.
- In social media, you may use our hashtag #bassmaster to amplify and spread your post to our 1 million social fans.

B.A.S.S. reserves the right to revoke these exceptions, and the angler must remove the tournament-related content, if B.A.S.S. in its discretion believes the content is inappropriate or in any way violates other B.A.S.S. rules.

B.A.S.S. wants to help promote both your brand and the sport of professional bass fishing through its multimedia assets. If there are stories written about you or by you appearing on Bassmaster.com, B.A.S.S. grants permission to link to these stories, and any others on our website, from your website or social media pages. Please do credit Bassmaster.com.

### **P3. CONTINGENCY PROGRAMS**

Contingency programs are sponsor-funded programs developed to reward competitors based on a predefined set of criteria. Participation in contingency programs is at the anglers' discretion.

### **P4. ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS**

I further understand and agree that the Tournament Director reserves the right to reject my application for any reason and, upon such rejection, to refund the deposit or entry fee.

I am currently a member in good standing with B.A.S.S.

All anglers who elect to participate in B.A.S.S.-sanctioned tournaments will be required to execute a Participation Agreement containing the rules and regulations, code of conduct and tournament series specific content such as wrapped boat and uniform guidelines.

In addition to adhering to the Rules and Code of Conduct, to ensure effective and timely communication between B.A.S.S. and the anglers, I understand that I am required to provide B.A.S.S. with a current e-mail address. If I do not have my own e-mail address, I must furnish an e-mail address for a primary contact person. I agree that delivery of an e-mail to my designated contact will constitute delivery to me. I also understand I must provide my personal cell number capable of receiving text messages from B.A.S.S.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. RULES AND PENALTIES

The following rules shall apply to all B.A.S.S. Nation events except that (i) rules for special tournaments may differ from those contained herein and (ii) these rules may be changed by B.A.S.S. immediately upon notice by B.A.S.S. to its members, which notice may be published on the B.A.S.S. internet site at [www.bassmaster.com](http://www.bassmaster.com). Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director or his/her designee at a tournament. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director or a rules committee may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate by them, including without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes, entry fee and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Subject to the appeal process set forth in rule 22, below, the decision of the Tournament Director, his/her designee, or the rules committee, shall be final in all matters.

**Except for very serious rules violations, as determined by B.A.S.S., and any rules that might lead to disqualification of an angler from participation in the B.A.S.S. Nation tournaments or other B.A.S.S. circuits, rules violations must be reported to tournament officials within 24 hours of the final flight check-in on the day of the alleged violation.**

Penalties for rules violations may include the following:

- (a) Reduction of competition hours as determined by the Tournament Director
- (b) Loss of one or more fish caught in potential violation of rules or regulations. All bass under question must be marked and verified by your Partner/Marshal/camera operator. If not verified the entire catch may be disqualified.
- (c) Loss of catch for the day of the violation
- (d) Disqualification from the tournament in question
- (e) Disqualification from future B.A.S.S. events, which may be from a specific number of events, a specific period of time, or may be a lifetime disqualification.
- (f) Any different or additional penalties determined by the Tournament Director including but not limited to monetary fines and/or reduction of Angler of Year points.

## 2. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:

- (i) Participation in this tournament is by invitation only. This tournament is open only to current members of B.A.S.S. who are 16 years of age or older, who are active members of the appropriate B.A.S.S. Nation state chapter and who have participated in the appropriate state B.A.S.S. Nation qualifying tournament(s). However, employees, officers and directors of B.A.S.S. or its parent, subsidiary, and affiliated companies and members of their immediate families (spouse, parents, children and sibling, regardless of where they live) are ineligible. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of potential competitor. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, is disabled in such a manner as to unfairly hinder his/her partner or endanger the safety and well-being of his/her partner or themselves may not be eligible.
- (ii) **DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY B.A.S.S. TOURNAMENT, NO BOATER OR NON-BOATER COMPETITOR MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT CONTESTANT HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF A MINIMUM OF \$300,000, PER OCCURRENCE, BOAT OWNERS LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERING THE BOAT BEING USED IN THE TOURNAMENT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER ALL PASSENGERS IN THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED AND ANY COMPETITOR WHO DOES NOT HAVE PROOF OF IN-FORCE INSURANCE**

WITH \$300,000 COVERAGE MAY BE DISQUALIFIED. EACH POLICY MUST SHOW AN EFFECTIVE START AND EXPIRATION DATE. Tournament officials have sole authority to determine if insurance policies meet B.A.S.S., LLC requirements.

**(iii) A PROPERLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE B.A.S.S. NATION DEPARTMENT ON OR BEFORE THE APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE. ENTRY DEADLINE DATE FOR EACH TOURNAMENT SHALL BE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE FIRST COMPETITION DAY OF EACH TOURNAMENT OR 7 DAYS AFTER THE FINAL DAY OF THE QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT IF THE TOURNAMENT FALLS WITHIN THE 30 DAY PERIOD. Each calendar year prior to competing in a B.A.S.S. event, all competitors must complete a W-9 and when required a FORM 590, or W-8 BEN provided by B.A.S.S. If tax status or address changes occur, new forms must be submitted prior to participation in the next B.A.S.S. event. Tournament entry fees must be received by the B.A.S.S. Nation Department on or before the entry deadline date.** The Tournament Director reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to deadline and also the right to extend the acceptance date. As a participant in B.A.S.S. tournaments, you agree, if you qualify and are invited to be a competitor in the B.A.S.S. Nation Championship, or the Bassmaster Classic conducted by B.A.S.S., to use during the B.A.S.S. Nation Championship, or the Bassmaster Classic competition all official products and equipment so specified and provided by B.A.S.S.

### **3. PRACTICE AND COMPETITION:**

(i) There will be no off limits period for any B.A.S.S. Nation tournament unless specified by the Tournament Director. Special off limits and practice periods for the Bassmaster Classic and the B.A.S.S. Nation Championship will be announced by B.A.S.S.

(ii) There will be an official practice period immediately prior to the first day of competition. Two official practice days will begin at 12:01 am the Monday prior to the start of competition. No competitors will be allowed on tournament waters after 2:00pm on registration day until the first day of competition, except under rule 3(iii). Unless otherwise specified, all official times are time zone specific to local host community. The competitor must know and observe these dates. During official practice and competition, anglers cannot solicit, gather or intentionally receive any information from anyone other than another competitor in the tournament. **NO EXCEPTION, Competitors may only fish with other competitors during official practice and competition.** Flying over tournament waters, other than a ticketed commercial airline, is prohibited during official practice and competition unless approved by the tournament director. The use of drones for the purposes of locating or catching fish or to gain a competitive advantage is prohibited in both official practice and competition. **During the official practice, competitors are not allowed to live well or keep any bass unless they have permission from tournament officials.**

**No practicing at night, defined as beginning at 30 minutes after local sunset and ending 30 minutes before local sunrise, to include running to and from a fishing location. In practice and competition, when running in low light conditions, running lights should be in operation.**

(iii) Competitors renting boat slips may launch boats and proceed immediately to slip location. Testing of engines after the weigh-in is only allowed with permission from the Tournament Director. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** During the official practice and during the tournament, a competitor may not snorkel, "skin dive" or "scuba dive" in the tournament waters.

(iv) No competitor may buy or barter a fishing location from any other competitor for use during any competition day. Once tournament officials determine daily cuts, competitors not making the cut are no longer considered in the tournament. Competitors making the cut may not receive information under rule 3 (ii).

(v) During the official competition days of the tournament a competitor may not make cell calls for the purpose of locating or catching fish on tournament waters. Cell phones may be used for emergencies. Competitors are allowed to call lockmasters for locking purposes only. **Competitors are allowed to use smart phones for global maps, weather, power generation, tidal charts, notes, etc., however using**

**smart phones during competition to log into daily tournament blogs or social media is not permitted.**

(vi) A designated tournament official must be granted access to the competitor's boat at any time during the official practice or competition days. Failure to grant such access may result in immediate disqualification.

(vii) **Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director immediately any violation or infraction of any tournament rules. Failure to report violations, or suggestions to another competitor that they violate these rules, or false verification of weigh-in forms, may be cause for disqualification. OFFICIAL PROTESTS MUST BE FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 1. ALL PARTIES OF INTEREST WILL BE PROVIDED A COPY.**

**By his/her signature on the official tournament entry form, each competitor agrees to submit to a truth verification test and abide by its conclusion should he/she be accused of any rule violation.**

The B.A.S.S. Tournament Director, rules committee, or such person designated by the Tournament Director, shall have the discretion to determine the need for a truth verification test. Failure of a truth verification examination is not appealable. The B.A.S.S. Tournament Director or his/her designee shall be responsible for selecting an independent expert to administer and interpret the results and establishing, in consultation with the expert administrator, the scope of the questions which may be asked during the test. The B.A.S.S. Tournament Director or his/her designee shall have sole responsibility selecting the location, date, and time of the test nearest B.A.S.S. headquarters with respect to all concerned parties schedule and travel cost. The competitor shall make himself/herself available at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such test.

Anglers taking a truth verification test may be responsible for all costs incurred. Random truth verifications tests may be administered on site during the course of a B.A.S.S. Nation Event.

#### **4. REGISTRATION:**

Each competitor must register in person with official B.A.S.S. staff at the time and place designated in the schedule of events. Failure to register in person during the prescribed hours may result in a \$50 fine. Any competitor, who has not contacted the B.A.S.S. Nation Tournament Staff 15 minutes after the closing of the posted on-site registration period, may be disqualified from participating in the tournament. **It shall be each competitor's responsibility to either check the schedule of events for registration time and location or obtain times from the B.A.S.S. Nation Department.**

#### **5. SAFETY:**

(i) **Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by competitors. During the official practice and competition, each competitor must wear a Coast Guard approved chest-type life preserver anytime the combustion engine is running.** This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely, and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. Inflatable life vest indicators should be checked daily. Violation of this rule may be reason for disqualification. **Inflatable PFD's are allowed as long as U.S. Coast Guard regulations are met. The Coast Guard requires that inflatable PFD's must be worn at all times unless there is an equal number of non-inflatable Coast Guard approved PFD's on board.**

**It is suggested the Boater competitor have a safety check with the Non-Boater each day prior to launch to familiarize the location of all safety equipment.**

**It is recommended each contestant successfully complete a boating safety course. Boating safety certification, or a "grandfathered" exception, may be required in certain states. Boating safety courses are available online and should carry an endorsement by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators or NASBLA.**

- (ii) When boating in low visibility situations i.e. fog, heavy rain, during both practice and competition, competitors must operate their boats at a safe speed and in a safe manner as determined by tournament officials.
- (iii) Radar units permanently mounted in the boat, subject to approval by B.A.S.S., may be approved for competition.
- (iv) Tournament officials have the right to delay, shorten or cancel any part 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. Weather delays on full field days, resulting in half of the tournament day being lost (first flight take-off and check in), shall result in cancellation. Full fields may be carried over to cut days.
- (v) B.A.S.S. reserves the right to impose boat speed limits during 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.
- (vi) **IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, COMPETITORS SHOULD CALL 911 FIRST AND THEN NOTIFY TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**
- (vii) **COMPETITORS ARE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE BOAT AND SEEK SAFE SHELTER IN BAD WEATHER WHERE DANGER MAY BE IMMINENT.**

#### **6. SPORTSMANSHIP:**

Competitors in B.A.S.S. tournaments are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification.

- (i) Use of alcohol or the use of drugs (other than those drugs purchased over-the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor, during the official practice or during the tournament, will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future B.A.S.S. tournaments. No alcoholic beverages or prohibited drugs shall be allowed in the boats during the official practice or competition days, or when in the weigh-in area.
- (ii) 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 a competitor, which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters and courtesy, may be reason for disqualification.
- (iii) All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states in which they fish. Some regulations may differ from these rules resulting in fines, citations or other penalties at the discretion of law enforcement and may or may not result in tournament penalties. Competitors are responsible for research of fishing and boating regulations.

#### **7. ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT:**

Anglers participating in any B.A.S.S.-sanctioned event shall observe this code of conduct and the applicable rules for the specific event in which they are participating. Anglers and family members of anglers, shall, at all times, conduct themselves in a professional manner that demonstrates integrity, honor and respect toward fellow competitors, tournament staff and the general public and does not reflect unfavorably on B.A.S.S., its members, officers or representatives, tournaments or sponsors.

Anglers are frequently in the public eye and are considered role models by young people; therefore, it is imperative that tournament competitors demonstrate good sportsmanship in fishing. Sportsmanship is defined as fair play, respect for opponents and polite behavior while competing in the sport.

(i.) Following are examples of unacceptable behavior by competitors or family members of competitors in B.A.S.S. events that will be cause for penalties as outlined in this document.

- Heated public disagreements with B.A.S.S. officials, other competitors and fans and volunteers during an event.
- Public attacks through media, including social media, upon the integrity of B.A.S.S. rules or officials.
- Public comments that an angler or family member knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of B.A.S.S., B.A.S.S. officials or its sponsors
- Displays of anger and displeasure for reasons related to fishing competition or the event, where members of the public, including other anglers, spectators and the media, are present.
- Publicly questioning or criticizing a tournament official or official decision, ruling or penalty except through the proper channels.
- Abuse (physical, verbal, threatening or slanderous) of tournament officials, volunteers, fellow competitors or others connected with a B.A.S.S. event, including comments on social media.
- Offensive or slanderous comments with racial, cultural or sexual overtones regarding event officials, event personnel or fellow anglers.
- Intentionally interfering with a fellow angler's ability to compete.

Any disqualification, suspension or other disciplinary action imposed by any tournament or fishing organization may result in disqualification from competition and rejection of an application for participation in a B.A.S.S. tournament.

(ii.) Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or crimes involving moral turpitude, may be grounds for disqualification from competition and for rejecting any application for participation. Any angler who violates any of the provisions of the Sportsmanship Rules or the Angler Code of Conduct may be subject to fines, reduction of points, forfeiture of tournament winnings, and suspension from competing in individual B.A.S.S. sanctioned events, permanent ban from competition or any combination thereof deemed appropriate by B.A.S.S.

## **8. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:**

Use of landing nets and grippers for landing bass is prohibited during tournament competition. During practice and competition, no more than one artificial or biodegradable artificial lure may be attached to a line at one time. One lure is defined as a single manmade device designed to attract and/or catch one fish at a time. Adding trailer hooks, plastic trailers, blades, etc., to a single lure is acceptable. If multiple fish are caught on a single manmade lure, on a single cast, all fish are considered legal and may be added to the daily catch subject to scoring rules (17). No "live bait," "dead bait," or "prepared bait" will be permitted during official practice and competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds. Any umbrella-type rigging, harness, or other device designed to hold more than one lure at a time – with or without hooks – is not allowed. Such rigging, harness, or device cannot be added to a single lure as described above. Twin arm spinnerbaits, underspins and buzzbaits are allowed. Trailer hooks and plastic trailers must be on the main hook of the bait; only spinner blades can be affixed to the arms. The head on the main stem may be hinged. On twin arm spinnerbaits, underspins and buzzbaits, no more than two wires, with a maximum length of 6 inches, may extend off the main arm or body of the lure at the head or line tie point. The bend of the main hook must be even or trail behind where the blades attach to the wires. B.A.S.S. officials have the sole authority to determine whether a lure is considered a single lure as defined above.

Only ONE casting, spin casting or spinning rod (10-foot maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. A hung or snagged lure that is not in or on the water is not considered in use and may be set aside while another is in use. Other rigs as specified above may be in the boat ready for use; however, only ONE is permitted in use at any given time. If a competitor breaks his line while setting the hook or retrieving a fish, he is allowed to make an attempt with the rod being used or with his hands to secure the visible line and land the fish for it to be counted as legal. He may NOT hook the line with another lure, rod and reel, or other device. The use of braid or other line to attach one stinger hook (single or treble) is allowed but cannot be over two inches in length.

**No competitor may intentionally snag or foul hook a bass to be counted in their daily catch.**

Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have his or her catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, to be counted as a legal fish, bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked. With the mouth closed naturally, you must not be able to see where the hook point enters the fish to be considered hooked inside the mouth.

Competitors, including those who have been “cut” from competition in an event, are allowed to share baits and tackle with one another at any time.

**9. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:**

Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in official tournament practice and in tournament competition will be **250 HP**. Horsepower cannot exceed the limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard. When required, each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard horsepower-rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must **NOT** exceed the rating specified on this plate nor the horsepower maximum set by B.A.S.S. Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the official entry form, the boat and outboard motor used in the tournament, to an inspection by factory-trained personnel, if there is reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance of engines is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of a competitor’s engine 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 engine, is also cause for immediate disqualification from B.A.S.S. tournaments. Posted speed limits and those imposed by B.A.S.S. must be observed and all boats must be operated in a safe manner. Violations of speed limits shall result in loss of competition hours and not limited to disqualification.

**10. BOAT AND MOTOR:**

**These restrictions apply during official practice and competition.** For the safety of all competitors, all boats must be equipped with an approved type of operable ignition kill switch and lanyard. Only one manufactured lanyard may be used and it must be attached to the driver’s body any time the combustion engine is operating and in gear. Any time 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 that are 16 feet or more in length may be used. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat. Standing on the outboard or seats while fishing, is not allowed. An electric trolling motor may be used for slow maneuvering. However, trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. **The “LONG LINING” or “STROLLING” technique is NOT allowed in both official practice and competition and defined as intentionally using a trolling motor or outboard to mechanically extend a cast.** No exceptions. **Only gas tanks that are installed by the boat manufacturer are allowed.** No portable gas tanks or containers capable of holding gasoline can be placed anywhere on the tournament waters or shoreline for use by any tournament competitor. No “barges” or similar craft will be permitted. No boat equipped with “stick steering” shall be permitted. “Stick steering” shall be as defined by the Tournament Director. **Jet drive engines and tunnel hull boats are not allowed during both official practice and competition.** Any boat/hull designs other than standard mass produced units are only allowed at the discretion of tournament officials.

**11. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT:**

**During official practice and competition,** every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment and a functional bilge pump. **During official competition,** every boat must have live-well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive, a limit catch of bass by both competitors using the boat. B.A.S.S. recommends live wells be maintained at full level and aerators/re-circulators on manual. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is proper and adequate. Boater competitors must make a back seat available for Non-Boaters each competition day.

**12. BOAT IDENTIFICATION:**

Prior to each day’s start, each boat **must** be given an inspection check by a tournament official. Each day, each boat may be given a number, which **must** remain with the boat. This number must be displayed upon the request of tournament officials, and at each check-in.



### 13. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE:

**During competition**, in Boater-Non Boater type events, Boaters will fish from the front deck, Non-Boaters from the rear deck, NO EXCEPTIONS. **During both official practice and competition**, Non-Boaters are only allowed to drive (outboard engine) the Boater's boat in emergency situations with the exception of loading and unloading from trailers. **During official practice**, Non-Boaters not practicing with a Boater competitor, may practice, drive, and fish from the front deck of the boat. **During official practice**, non-boaters practicing with boaters are allowed to fish from the front deck and operate the trolling motor. Any Boater that, in the judgment of the officials, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap their Non-Boater partner shall be disqualified. At no time may a Boater competitor request that the Non-Boater competitor not fish. **The cost of gas and oil for the competition days must be settled within your own state team.** In B.A.S.S. events where observers replace anglers as the official rider, observers cannot assist the competing angler in any way. Observers are not required to help with gas and oil expenses.

### 14. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:

Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the B.A.S.S. Nation Department. Any water within these boundaries posted "Off-Limits" or "No Fishing" by state or federal agencies as well as the live-bass-release area established by the Tournament Director will be OFF-LIMITS and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Waters deemed off limits by authorities or tournament officials should be treated like a wall. No boats or casting behind that boundary while fishing. All angling must be done from the boat. In states where landowners have the legal authority to claim private property, these areas must be posted or they will be considered tournament waters unless instructed otherwise by tournament officials at any time during the event. If forced to leave, a competitor must report the incident to tournament officials as soon as possible. Any water to which a competitor is barred access becomes off-limits to all competitors. Prior to the tournament registration, any questionable areas must be brought to the attention of tournament officials to be considered tournament waters and may be announced in the briefing for all to hear unless determined otherwise by tournament officials. Tournament officials reserve the right to restrict or enhance tournament waters based on conversations with local authorities. Competitors are not allowed to cut, remove, displace, or engage in any type structure removal from private property (dry land) during off limits, official practice or competition. Moving structure to include sawing of logs or other obstructions in the water is only allowed if laws permit. No competitor may place any object that may impede or cause danger to boaters.

### 15. COMPETITORS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT:

During the competition days, competitors must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. **Competitors may not shift a majority of their weight outside the boat and onto a dock or other object outside the boat for the purpose of landing a bass or accessing a fishing spot.** A bass that cannot be landed without the angler leaving the boat or shifting his weight outside the boat must be released immediately. While keeping the majority of weight in the boat anglers are allowed for boat protection to push or shove off objects while landing a fish to be counted as legal. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat to retrieve a lure. All fishing by that competitor must cease until the competitor is back in the boat. Only then may another cast be made.

Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Competitors must leave from and return to official checkpoints by boat. Both anglers must remain in the boat at all times, except in case of dire emergency, or with permission from the Tournament Director. Exceptions spelled out in rules 5, 15, and 18. In such an emergency, or with permission of the Tournament Director, competitors may be removed from their boat, either to a boat operated by other competitors, or a rescue boat designated by the Tournament Director. 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 scored in the tournament, with the following exception. **In breakdown situations and with a tournament official's permission, Non-Boaters may transfer their boat's (Boater and Non-Boater's) fish to another competitor's boat and**

ride to check in, and they may leave their Boater with the disabled boat. In such cases, the Non-Boater must stay with their catches at all times and the assisting boat's partners should verify the catch. Any angler whose boat is disabled and rides with another competitor or rescue boat to weigh in is not allowed to fish. In the event of a needed restroom break or refueling situation at a marina gas pump, contestants are allowed to leave the boat, at which time all fishing must cease until partners are back together in the boat. If a competitor violates any of the above conditions (to contact a tournament official by phone or other means, or 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 for the competitors to resume fishing, a **restart** will be allowed, the competitors will continue, and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations as determined by the Tournament Director or his/her designee. Towing boats on trailers during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of tournament officials.

## 16. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINTS:

There shall be only one official checkpoint for checkout in the morning, and one official check-in point in the afternoon, which points shall be designated at the tournament briefing. Failure to go through boat check and checkout in the morning or failure to check-in at the check-in point in the afternoon may result in disqualification. At the time of checkout, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformity with all rules set forth by the Tournament Director. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves by means of the numbers described in Rule 12 and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together, through the weigh-in process if both are weighing bass. Once bass are bagged for weigh-in, anglers that are not weighing bass do not need to accompany their partner through the weigh-in process.

## 17. SCORING:

Tournament standings, contingency awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound-and-ounce weight of each competitor's catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Redeye or Shoal bass will be weighed. The Boater limit shall be five (5), Non-Boater limit shall be three (3), of the above species and varieties per day, unless otherwise specified by tournament officials (example – hot weather/fish care concerns/championship events). At no time shall a competitor have in his or her possession more than the tournament limit. If a competitor determines they have over the limit they must immediately reduce his catch to the tournament limit with a live bass of their choice from their catch. Each returned bass will result in a 2-pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. In this case, competitors must attempt to notify tournament officials and if unsuccessful must notify officials at check in. Once a competitor checks in they must present all legal bass to tournament officials at the verification table. If competitors at the verification table have more than the tournament limit, the competitor will reduce with live bass to the tournament limit and each returned bass will result in a 2-pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. If a competitor has his fish verified, weighed and upon returning to the boat discovers additional fish over the tournament limit that were not presented to officials; he then must notify tournament officials within one hour of final flight check in to receive a 2 lb. penalty for each bass discovered will be imposed. Failure to notify officials after one hour of final flight check-in time will result in loss of day's catch. **Anglers who are proven to have fish weighed with fin clips will be assessed a 4-ounce penalty per clip. No manmade or foreign object connected to a bass will be weighed and shall be removed by tournament officials.** The official length for bass shall be determined by the Tournament Director and announced at the Tournament Briefing. In most cases, it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed. Bass presented for weigh-in, which fail to measure the official length, shall result in a penalty of 1 pound for each such bass, which 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 competitors check in at the official checkpoint they **MUST** present all **LEGAL** fish in their possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a competitor's catch is measured, counted and verified by a tournament official, that competitor may not return to the boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. Specially designed bags, which increase survival rate, will be furnished by the Tournament Director and must be used for the weigh-in.

## **18. CATCH AND RELEASE:**

**CULLING OF DEAD BASS IS PROHIBITED.** For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized 4 oz. to be deducted from their daily score. Competitors are allowed to ice a dead fish that is part of their daily catch. The Tournament Director, or his/her designees, shall have sole authority for assessing penalty points. In addition, the Tournament Director, or his/her designees, may reduce tournament hours or tournament limits for fish care purposes. It is suggested in warm weather tournaments anglers keep extra ice for fish care. Contestants are allowed to purchase ice on the water; however, they are not allowed to receive ice from no contestants. Upon mutual consent of both Boater and Non-Boater paired together, for fish care concerns, the verification table will open one hour prior to check in time of the first flight. **SMALL DIP NETS FOR CULLING PURPOSES ARE ENCOURAGED.** It is recommended competitors keep all bass in live wells during the culling process. Placing bass on the boat carpet during culling is not advised. **Only non-penetrating culling clips and culling beams are allowed for use. Any clip or device that penetrates or is designed to penetrate the skin or mouth of a fish is not allowed.** Proper fizzing technique is suggested when needed. For instructions on acceptable fizzing practices, please contact tournament officials.

## **19. LATE PENALTY:**

Competitors who are not at the official check-in point, as described in Rule 16, at the appointed time, shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute late; to be deducted from the total weight of his/her catch that day, including any weight to be counted toward a "big bass award". Any competitor more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness, and in no case, shall 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 cease upon check-in. After the tournament begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. It is each competitor's responsibility to confirm check-in times each day on the daily pairings.

## **20. TIES:**

At any B.A.S.S. Nation Regional, in the Boater or Non-Boater division, in case of a tie for the first place team or first place on a state team, or overall champion at the end of the tournament, that is not resolved by the four (4) tie breakers listed below, there will be a sudden-death fish-off between the tied competitors, under the direction and special rules established by tournament officials.

In case of a tie for first place weight at the end of the B.A.S.S. Nation Championship, there will be a sudden-death fish-off between the tied competitors, under the direction and special rules established by tournament officials.

In case of a tie for first place weight in the Non-Boater division at the end of the Non-Boater portion of the B.A.S.S. Nation Championship, that is not resolved by the four (4) tie breakers listed below, all tied Non-Boaters will advance to the final day of the B.A.S.S. Nation Championship.

All other ties will be resolved in the following order: (1) individual with heaviest single day catch during competition; (2) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual with the second heaviest single day catch during competition; (3) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed during competition; (4) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual with the largest number of legal live fish weighed during competition. If the tie is not broken by applying the foregoing procedures, the tie will remain a tie, and monetary prizes for each competitor will be awarded in an equal amount between the tied competitors. In the instance where

merchandise is involved, it will be awarded as determined by tournament officials. Ties for any cut in the Boater and Non-Boater division will be resolved in the same order explained above and when ties for cut positions are not broken by the foregoing procedures, competitors still tied will compete for the next cut.

## **21. PAIRING OF COMPETITORS:**

Two competitors will be assigned to each boat. Boaters may be paired with Boaters, and share time. Boaters may not fish alone. Announcement of your first-day fishing partner will be made at the Tournament Briefing, which **must be attended, except with permission from the Tournament Director**, by each competitor. It will 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/her sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off. It is suggested that a minimum of 30 minutes is required for preparation to depart to the checkout point. When two competitors check out at the beginning of the day, they must stay together and within sight of each other and each other's catch, throughout the day, until the weigh-in is completed, except in case of dire emergency or exceptions (see Rule 15, 16 & 18). A competitor must not allow any bass caught by them to be counted on the score of another competitor. In such a case, both competitors shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by BASS.

## **22. RULES VIOLATIONS AND APPEALS COMMITTEE:**

An appeals committee will be established by B.A.S.S., which shall be comprised of one B.A.S.S. employee not affiliated with the Tournament Department, and two anglers who are not competitors in the event in question. Appeals for penalties assessed under Rule 1 (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f) must be presented in writing 48 hours from the time and date of ruling to the Tournament Director. Appeals hearings shall take place within seven (7) business days from the date of receipt of the written appeal and all parties must make themselves available at prescribed time of hearing. If competitors admit to a rules violation, they may not file an appeal of either the finding that they have violated the rules or the penalty imposed for the violation. Decisions of the appeals committee shall be final.

Competitors are allowed to compete under appeal. Field sizes after cuts would include any appealing angler making the cut for the next round of competition for that event.

Final standings will not be official until all appeals hearings are final and ruled upon. However, all standings above that of any appealing angler, as well as any adjusted final standings may be declared official. Standings, including points and monetary awards, may be adjusted after appeals final ruling and all affected anglers shall comply with all details of the final ruling.

The three-member ruling committee should remain confidential within the immediate appeals process.

## **23. PATCHES AND/OR SIGNAGE:**

Anglers are encouraged to wear their own clothing, which may bear patches, logos and other signage promoting the angler's sponsors. BASS may, however, restrict the use of patches, logos, signage, etc. that promote or advertise products which are, in B.A.S.S.' sole judgment, in competition with the products or services of official BASS sponsors, or which are, in B.A.S.S.' sole judgment, in poor taste. B.A.S.S. will provide as much advance notice as possible to the competitors in such instances. By signing this document, each Boater and Non-Boater agrees to wear an official B.A.S.S. shield (2 ¼" X 2 ¾") on either left/right chest, with the top of the shield hitting the left/right collarbone **or hat** during competition, including the weigh-in. This B.A.S.S. shield must be printed or embroidered. In addition, if B.A.S.S. provides any ancillary clothing or products (such as life vests) bearing the logos of B.A.S.S. or the official sponsors of B.A.S.S., each competitor shall wear such clothing or utilize such products in a manner requested by B.A.S.S.

## **24. B.A.S.S. SPONSOR BOATS:**

When using B.A.S.S. sponsor boats, anglers are responsible for the physical care of the boat. Damage incurred, determined to be excessive or wanton by the Tournament Director, shall result in the angler being responsible for all costs of repair.

## **25. TAXES:**

Where and when state laws require income taxes be paid on cash awards to nonresidents, the taxes will be automatically deducted prior to the awards being presented to the winners. Competitors are responsible for all applicable taxes on both cash and merchandise awards. Various States require withholding tax on merchandise be paid upon the awarding of certificates and anglers awarded merchandise certificates in these States are responsible for remitting their tax to B.A.S.S. Failure to meet those obligations may result in reduction of Angler of Year Points, fines, and/or disqualification from all future BASS events.

## **26. WAIVER AND RELEASE:**

As a condition of participation in each tournament, each competitor must execute a waiver and release of liability, and a name and likeness release.

## **27. STATE TEAM BOATS:**

Each twenty-person state team will designate 10 Boaters and 10 Non Boaters during the official tournament competition days. B.A.S.S. recommends that each team bring at least one extra boat that meets B.A.S.S. regulations.

## **28. STATE TEAM ALTERNATES:**

Each twenty-person state team will be allowed one alternate team member to replace an official team member if an official team member becomes ill or injured or has to leave the tournament due to personal business or tragedy. The alternates may be placed in the Boater or Non Boater division, if needed. In addition, the B.A.S.S. Nation state president or his/her designated representative will be considered a second alternate. **B.A.S.S. headquarters must receive a completed entry form from the alternate team member and the B.A.S.S. Nation state president or his/her designated representative, on or before the tournament entry deadline date or the state will not be allowed an alternate team member(s).** The Tournament Director must approve the reason for the leaving of the official team member before a replacement of the official team member with the alternate will be allowed. If the official tournament competition has begun, the team score will be determined by using the score of the official team member on the competition days in which he participated and the score of the alternate on the competition days in which he participated as a team member. The scores for the individual competition will be taken from each competitor's own scores.

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### **B.A.S.S.®**

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