



Official Rules Bassmaster Opens Effective January 1, 2016

1. RULES AND PENALTIES:

The following rules shall apply to all Bassmaster Open 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. 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 rules committee may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate by them, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and entry fees and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Subject to the appeal process set forth in rule 23, 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., such as the no-information and off-limits rules and any rules that might lead to disqualification of an angler from participation in the Bassmaster Opens Series 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 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 or for a specific period of time up to or including 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 points.

2. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:

(i) This tournament is open only to current members of B.A.S.S. who are 16 years of age or older. However, employees, officers and director 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 the potential competitor. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, is disabled in such a manner as to unfairly hinder their partner or endanger the safety and well-being of their partner or themselves may not be eligible.

(ii) DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY B.A.S.S. TOURNAMENT, NO PRO OR CO-ANGLER 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 pre-printed and signed official entry form (attached to these rules) must be provided to the B.A.S.S. tournament administrative team prior to the first day of competition. **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. Tournament Department on or before the balance due date. **BALANCE DUE DATE WILL BE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE FIRST COMPETITION DAY.** Any balances or new entries received after the balance due date will be subject to a \$50 late fee. The Tournament Director reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to deadline and also the right to extend the acceptance date. **DEPOSITS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE REGARDLESS OF DATE OF CANCELLATION. ANY BALANCE OF THE ENTRY FEE PAID IN EXCESS OF THE DEPOSIT WILL ONLY BE REFUNDED IF PROPER NOTIFICATION IS MADE TO THE B.A.S.S. TOURNAMENT DEPARTMENT PRIOR TO THE BALANCE DUE DATE.** While a sponsor may pay the entry fee, competitors agree to use any and all official products provided by B.A.S.S. in Open Series events and the Bassmaster Classic.

(iv) The preferred method for tournament registration is on-line at www.bassmaster.com.

3. PRACTICE AND COMPETITION:

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

(ii) There will be an official practice period immediately prior to the first day of competition. Three 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 registration 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 practice and competition a competitor can only have the assistance or advice of another competitor for the purposes of locating or catching bass on tournament waters. **Competitors may only fish with other competitors during 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 daily cuts are determined by tournament officials, competitors not making the cut are no longer considered in the tournament. Competitors making 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 emergency situations. 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, 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. 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 any and all costs incurred. Random truth verifications tests may be administered on site during the course of a Bassmaster Open Series 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. 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. Tournament 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 in operation. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely, and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is out of gear or 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 Pro competitor have a safety check with the Co-angler 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 drugs (other than those 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 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 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 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 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.
- 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, 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. Traditional twin arm spinnerbaits or 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 these twin arm spinnerbaits or 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 line tie point. The "head and hook" portion of the lure 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 (8-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. **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 their catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, to be counted as a legal fish, all 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 horsepower**. 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 manufacturer's lanyard may be used and 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 engine 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 "STROLLING" or "LONG LINING" technique is NOT allowed in both practice and competition. No exceptions.** All bladder tanks and any other type of auxiliary gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by a manufacturer's authorized dealer are permitted. 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. 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 are not allowed during both official practice and competition.

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.

Pro competitors must make a back seat available for co-anglers 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 pro-am type events, pros will fish from the front deck, co-anglers from the rear deck, NO EXCEPTIONS. **During both practice and competition**, Co-anglers are **only** allowed to drive (outboard engine) the pro's boat in emergency situations with the exception of loading and unloading from trailers. **During official practice**, co-anglers not practicing with a pro competitor, may practice, drive, and fish from the front deck of the boat. Any pro that, in the judgment of the officials, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap their co-angler partner, shall be disqualified. At no time may a pro competitor request that the co-angler competitor not fish. In view of the large expense involved in operating and maintaining a tournament bass boat, it is suggested that the co-angler partner share, at minimum, the cost of gas and oil for the competition day. In B.A.S.S. events where observers replace co-anglers as the official rider, observers cannot assist the pro 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. Tournament 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. Competitors wishing to change fish habitat by placing any object in the tournament waters may do so if such action does not violate state or federal regulations. 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.

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. Anglers must remain in the boat at all times except in case of dire emergency or with permission from the Tournament Director. Exceptions are spelled out in rules 5, 15, and 18. In such an emergency or with permission from the Tournament Director, competitors may be removed from their boat to either 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 their 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, Co-anglers may transfer their boat's (Pro's and Co-angler's) fish to another competitor's boat and ride to check in, and they may leave their Pro with the disabled boat. In such cases, the co-angler must stay with their catches at all times and assisting boat's partners should verify the catch.** In the event of a needed restroom break or refueling situation at a marina gas pump, partners are allowed to leave the boat; however, in that event, all fishing must cease until partners are back together in the boat. If a competitor violates any of the above conditions (without contacting a tournament official by phone or other means or to report an emergency or breakdown), 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 competitor to resume fishing, a restart will be allowed, and the competitor will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations as determined by the Tournament Director or his 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 check point for check-out 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 check-out in the morning or failure to check-in at the check-in point in the afternoon may result in disqualification. At the time of check-out, 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 competitors 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 Pro limit shall be 5, Co-angler limit shall be 3, of the above species and varieties per day, unless otherwise specified by tournament officials (example – hot weather/fish care concerns). 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. 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. Culling tags or clips are allowed. 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 non contestants. Upon mutual consent of both pro and co-angler 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. Non penetrable culling clips are recommended. Proper fizzing technique is suggested when needed. For

instructions on acceptable flogging 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, including "points" credit under Rule 20. 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. Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Opens Series TWO HUNDRED POINT SYSTEM:

Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Opens events will be based on a 200 points system regardless of field size. The winner of each event will receive 200 points, second 199 points, until points run out.

Competitors must weigh a legal bass during competition to receive points. In the case where one or more competitors do not weigh a legal bass, points will end at the place of competitors weighing legal bass.

Year end points tiebreakers will be broken by total weight from full field days

21. TIES:

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

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. Angler of the Year points will be awarded for the place of the tied position and each competitor will be awarded equal points. In the instance where merchandise is involved, it will be awarded as determined by tournament officials. In the Co-angler division, should a situation arise after using all the tie breakers a tie for first place occur, a sudden-death fish off will be arranged between the tied competitors, under the direction and special rules established by tournament officials. Ties for any cut in the Pro and Co-angler division will be resolved in the same order explained above and if the tie is not broken, will be awarded as determined by tournament officials.

22. PAIRING OF COMPETITORS:

Two competitors will be assigned to each boat. Pros may be paired with pros, and share time. 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 check-out 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 fish are bagged for weigh-in, 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 B.A.S.S.

23. 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, if possible, from the date of receipt of the written appeal. 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 while 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.

24. 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. B.A.S.S. 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 B.A.S.S. 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 pro agrees to wear an official B.A.S.S. patch (2 1/4" X 2 3/4") on either left/right chest, with the top of the patch hitting the left/right collarbone during

competition, including the weigh-in. This patch may be embroidered. Co-anglers agree to wear a B.A.S.S. patch on their hat or front of their garment during competition, including the weigh-in. 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.

25. 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.

26. TAXES:

Where and when state laws require income taxes be paid on cash awards to non-residents, 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 points, fines, and/or disqualification from all future B.A.S.S. Events.

27. 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.

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