



KEEPING BASS ALIVE

Top-10 Tournament Fish Care Tips

1. Protect the slime coat - Don't boat-flip bass. Keep them off the carpet. Grasp fish by lower jaw or lift them by the line before they hit the deck.
2. Use a rubber or vinyl-coated soft mesh landing net if allowed – not hard knotted nylon.
3. Minimize air exposure, land fish & remove hooks quickly, handling as little as possible.
4. Hold bass over 5 pounds with two hands supporting the fish under the anal fin.
5. Use non-puncturing culling clips that lock but do not pinch tight on the bass' mouth.
6. Keep both livewells full and divide your catch. More water = more oxygen per fish.
7. Install livewell lid ventilation devices to reduce heat buildup and allow fresh air in.
8. Livewell Operation: Maintaining adequate oxygen & temperature control are critical.
 - Water temps below 65°F --- pump in freshwater at regular intervals to refresh livewell.
 - Water temps from 65-75°F --- pump fresh water regularly - and - aerate continuously.
 - When water temp is over 75°F (70°F for Smallmouth Bass) ---
 - Fill livewells early in the day, do not pump in hot afternoon surface water
 - Turn on recirculating aerator full time (manual). Do not pump in surface water.
 - Cool livewell water with small amounts of ice --- no more than 10°F below lake temperature. It typically takes 8-10 lbs. of ice to cool a 25 gal. livewell 10°F.
 - Add 1 cup non-iodized salt per 15 gallons of livewell water when recirculating.
 - Monitor with floating thermometer and add more ice to maintain constant temps.
 - With 20+lb in the livewell, especially Smallmouth Bass, consider installing an oxygen system (tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/catchrelease/livewell.phtml)
9. Fizz fish immediately when they show signs of overinflated air bladder. Check regularly. Weighted fin clips do NOT cure barotrauma, fish must be fizzed to prevent damage. See videos at www.bassmaster.com/conservation-news/video/fizzing-smallmouth-bass/
10. Fill weigh-in bag with at least 2 gallons of livewell water...not warm water at boat side.

Learn More at www.bassmaster.com/conservation-news