

Official Tournament Rules

Boater / Co-Angler Format

(Amended 2025)

1. **Rules Interpretation** – Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the tournament committee. In the event of a rule violation, the tournament committee may impose such sanctions, as it deems appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of this committee will be final in all matters.
2. **Participants and Eligibility** – This tournament is open only to members of The Bass Federation, Inc. (TBF), the Mississippi Bass Federation (MBF), and any other officially affiliated organization who are 16 years of age or older. During the competition and practice days of any MBF tournament, no contestant may operate a boat unless the contestant has proof of a minimum of \$300,000 boating liability insurance on board vessel. A properly completed and signed official application form and the entry fee must be received by MBF no later than the deadline date. The tournament committee reserves the right to extend the acceptance date. Each club may send any number of entrants in multiples of two. You must have an equal number of boaters and co-anglers. The entry fee will be only for the number of entries on the application.
3. **Format** – This tournament will be a Boater / Co-Angler format. Boaters will be competing against boaters and co-anglers against co-anglers.
4. **Pre-Tournament Practice** – There will be an official practice period of two days immediately preceding the first day of the tournament. During the official practice period, contestants / alternates can only practice with: (1) another member of MBF that is fishing the tournament, (2) a member of their immediate family, or (3) alone – no exceptions will be made. The tournament competition will be held on Friday and Saturday. Each competitor agrees to report to tournament officials any violation or infraction of these tournament rules. The failure to report violations or suggestions to violate these rules, or false verification of weigh-in forms will be cause for disqualification. Each competitor agrees to submit, by his signature on the official application, to a polygraph test should he be accused of any rule violation. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the tournament committee, and its agents, and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the tournament committee. Without limiting the foregoing, the tournament committee shall have sole discretion to select the place at which such polygraph test shall be administered, the individual who administers such polygraph test, and the scope of the questions which may be asked during such test. The participant shall be available, at his expense, at the location selected by the tournament committee and shall cooperate in all respects with such examination.
5. **Registration** – Each competitor must register in person with the official tournament committee at the time and place prescribed on the schedule of events. It shall be each competitor's responsibility to check the schedule of events for registration time and location or obtain times from the MBF tournament committee.
6. **Safety** - Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times, including the official practice period, by tournament competitors. Each competitor is required to wear U.S. Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver. This preserver must be worn any time the combustion engine is operating. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the competitor reaches his fishing location and the combustion engine is shut off. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification.

7. **Sportsmanship** – Competitors in MBF 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. Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the MBF tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future MBF tournaments. 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 competitor which reflects unfavorably upon the MBF's effort to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants, prescription or otherwise, shall be in the boat or in the weigh-in area.
8. **Tackle and Equipment** – Only artificial lures may be used. No live bait or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of pork strips, rinds, etc. 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. All other types are prohibited. Other rigs as specified above may be in boat ready for use, however, only one is permitted in use at any given time. All bass must be caught live and in conventional sporting manner.
9. **Horsepower Regulations** – Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in tournament practice or competition will not exceed the horsepower limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard in their ruling of November 1, 1972. When required, each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard horsepower rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer. Any boat manufactured prior to November 1, 1972, must adhere to the ratings set by the U.S. Coast Guard for similar boats. Each competitor agrees to submit, by his 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 any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance to increase the performance of your engine is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor to increase the horsepower over the factory horsepower rating is forbidden and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower rating numbers or the motor also would be cause for immediate disqualification from MBF.
10. **Boat and Motor** – Fishing boats may be used that are 15 feet 6 inches or more in length. The boat must have both fore and aft raised decks such that is equitable for the co-angler's fishing, comfort and safety. For the safety of all contestants, all boats must be equipped with some type of ignition kill switch. This ignition kill devise must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating. The kill switch will be tested by the co-angler prior to each competition day. Any defective kill switch should be reported immediately to a tournament official. A small motor, gas or electric, may be used for slow maneuvering. All bladder tanks and any type of auxiliary gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. No "barges" or similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. It having been determined that boats equipped with "stick steering" present greater than normal safety hazards, no boat so equipped shall be permitted to be used during the tournament by any competitor. The definition of "stick steering" shall be made by the tournament committee. The competitor may use his own boat and motor, if it is allowed under these rules, or rent a boat and motor at the tournament site; such possible rental being sole responsibility of the competitor. A competitor answering affirmatively the question "will you bring a boat and motor?" will be expected to make the boat and motor available for tournament use by himself and his daily partner.
11. **Basic Boat Equipment** – Every boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and life well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass by both fishermen using the boat. Live wells should be checked by the co-angler partner and report any problems to a tournament official immediately.
12. **Boat Operation and Expense** – The boater will have full control of the boat and locations to be fished. The Co-Angler must fish from the rear of the boat. If the Co-Angler is temporarily running the trolling motor, they may not fish. The only exception to this is if the Boater is not fishing. In view of the large

expense involved in operating and maintaining a tournament bass boat, it is suggested that the non-owner partner at least share part of cost of gas and oil for the competition day.

13. **Permitted Fishing Locations** – Tournament waters shall be established by the tournament director for each tournament. Fishing on the tournament waters is permitted anywhere except within 50 yards of another competitor's boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position with the trolling motor raised. No such boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within 50 yard circle claimed by him, to the exclusion of any other competitor. Any water within these boundaries posted off-limits or no fishing by state or federal agencies will be off limits. Also, the live bass release area established by the tournament director will be off limits and will be announced at the tournament briefing. Only that water open to all public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any waters closed to public fishing will be closed to this tournament's contestants. All angling must be done from the boat.
14. **Contestants Must Remain in Boat** – Contestants must not depart the boat to land a fish. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Contestants must leave and return to the official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must remain in boat at all times except in case of a dire emergency. In such an emergency, competitors may be removed from their boat to a boat operated by other competitors, or a rescue boat designated by tournament officials. 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. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions (to contact a tournament official by phone or other means or to report an emergency or break down) 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, and the competitors will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations. Trailering of boats during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of tournament officials.
15. **Official Checkpoint** – There shall be only one official point for checkout in the morning, and check-in in the afternoon, and this point shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of checkout, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all rules set forth by the tournament committee; at check-in, all boats shall identify themselves by means of the numbered flags or cards and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together.
16. **Scoring** – Tournament standings, auxiliary awards and final winners shall be determined by the weight of each competitor's catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only large mouth, spotted red eye, or small mouth bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day. Bringing fish to the weigh-in for culling is strictly prohibited. Anyone found or seen doing so will be disqualified. Normal limits are 5 fish 12 inches in length. A flat board, such as the golden rule, will be used to measure all fish. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed in. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length shall accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each such bass. The penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials.
17. **Weigh-In** – Each competitor must present his catch to the weigh-in officials, and the weight of his catch must be certified by the signature of his partner of that day. Specially designed bags which increase survival rate will be furnished by the tournament committee and these bags must be used for the weigh-in. No bags other than MBF supplied bags will be used. Contestants presenting fish for weigh-in in any other bag will be disqualified – no exceptions.
18. **Penalty Points** – Each competitor is expected to keep his bass alive by use of a properly aerated live well. For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized .5 pound, to be

deducted from his daily score. The tournament director and his designated appointees shall have sole authority for accessing penalty points.

19. **Late Penalty** – Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in rule 14 at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one (1) pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of his catch that day, including any weight to be counted toward a “lunker award”, for each one (1) minute he is late. Any competitor who is 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”. Boat and/or motor trouble will be no excuse for being late. 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 in the tournament waters is prohibited except during the tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the tournament briefing.
20. **Ties** – In case of a tie for 1st thru 12th place, the following tie breaker will be used:
 - (a) The most fish caught on the first day will break the tie,
 - (b) The most fish caught on the second day will break the tie,
 - (c) If the individuals are still tied, the weight of the first days catch, then the weight of the second days catch will be used to break the tie,
 - (d) Ties for lesser positions shall be resolved by means selected by tournament officials.
21. **Pairing of Contestants** – Two contestants will be assigned to each boat. Announcement of your pairings partner shall be made at the tournament briefing, which must be attended by each competitor or their representative. No two club members will be paired together either day. It shall be the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to check out at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. It is suggested that a minimum of 30 minutes is required for preparation to depart to the checkout point. When two contestants 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 (see rule 13). A contestant must not allow any bass caught by him to be counted on the score of another contestant. In such a case, both contestants shall be disqualified from the tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by MBF.
22. **Leaving Tournament Before Completion** – Any team member leaving the tournament after pairing and/or the first day of competition will be disqualified from the tournament (exceptions for illness, death in the family, etc. may be allowed by the tournament committee).
23. **Protest** – Any and all protests must be filed in writing with the tournament committee within 15 minutes after completion of weigh-in on the day in which alleged infraction of the rules occurred.
24. **After Weighing In** – Once you and your partner have signed or initialed you weigh-in slip, you have attested to the correctness of weight shown on the weigh-in slip. Any questions regarding your weight must be brought up at the scales to avoid any delay or questions regarding your weight. Totals may be questions as to addition after the posting of the weights. If this procedure is not followed, you will no longer have the right to question your or anyone’s weight for that tournament.