

TENNESSEE BASS FEDERATION, INC.

TOURNAMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

Revised: November 2, 2019

- 1) ***RULE CHANGE:*** *The following rules of this tournament shall remain unchanged, except for special tournaments conducted by the Tennessee Bass Federation, Inc. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director and State Officers. The decision of the Tournament Director and tournament officials shall be final in all matters.*
- 2) ***ELIGIBILITY:*** *This tournament is open only to members of **THE Bass FEDERATION, INC./FLW OUTDOORS** who are 16 years of age or older and who are active members of the Tennessee Bass Federation affiliated clubs. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of potential competitor. Each member club, whose dues are up to date and who has been member of the Tennessee Bass Federation, Inc. for at least one (1) year (defined below) may send as many six (6) man teams as their membership with allow to compete in the State Tournament. They will fish as separate teams. Entry fee for each team will be \$500.00. A club can enter a four (4) man team or a two (2) man team with the same entry fee. Exception to this rule is stated below:*
 - a. *A club who was a dues paying member in good standing within the last five (5) years may re-apply for admission and send a team/teams to fish the State Divisional Tournaments without the one (1) year waiting period by meeting the following requirements*
 - (a) *Meet dues requirements*
 - (b) *Pay an additional entry fee of **\$200.00** which will be added to the payout*
 - b. *For New Clubs, one (1) year is defined as November 1st of previous year with:*
 - (a) *Roster submitted and dues paid to Tn. Bass Federation (\$120.00)*
- 3) ***STATE TOURNAMENTS:*** *The State Tournament will be divided into two (2) Divisional State Tournaments. The West Divisional shall consist of clubs within the boundaries of the West Division (Region 1 and Region 2) and the East Divisional shall consist of clubs with the boundaries of the East Division (Region 3 and Region 4). Each club within these competing*

*divisions will be able to send as many **(6) man teams** as their membership will allow to fish in their State Divisional tournament provided they have met the membership requirements. Clubs who fail to send at least one (1) member to their respective Regional/Area meeting in the spring and late summer will not be eligible to send any six (6) men teams. All team members must have been on the roster at least thirty (30) days prior to the entry deadline. All competition will be based on a six (6) man team; however, a club can enter less than six (6) men. Entry fee for each State Divisional tournament will be five hundred (\$500.00) for each club team which will include the Big Bass pot money. **Pay-out will be 70% of the entry fees with the first \$500.00 going to the State Team fund. The remaining 70% less the \$500.00 will be broken down to include the following: \$1,000.00 paid out for the top three (3) individuals split as follows: 1st place - \$500.00, 2nd place - \$300.00, 3rd place - \$200.00.** The remaining balance will be paid in either cash, prizes or a combination of both to the top 20% of clubs fishing the tournament. The remaining 30% of entry fees plus the initial \$500.00 withheld from the 70% in each Divisional will go to the National Semi Final team and the National Federation representatives for expenses.*

There will be an optional Big Bass side pot, paid at registration in cash. The cost of this pot will be \$10.00 (cash only) for any angler who wishes to participate. Payout will be all cash to the 65% going to the big bass and 35% going to the 2nd big bass of the tournament.

4) REGISTRATION FOR TOURNAMENT/TOURNAMENTS:

- a. PRE-REGISTRATION:** *A properly completed and signed official entry form must be received by the TN Bass Federation, Inc. on/or before the application deadline date. The Tournament Director reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications or the right to extend the acceptance date. Deadline for entry to each tournament is thirty (30) days before the first competition day. If an application is received after this date, it shall incur a late penalty of \$50.00. Clubs not entering the tournament at least fifteen (15) days before the 1st tournament day shall be considered not fishing the tournament. The Team Captain from each club will be responsible for "Pre-Registering" his club and team members. He shall provide the following:*

- (a) Name of the Team member*
- (b) Boater and Non Boater designation*
- (c) Cell Phone #*

(d) Where team is being housed

b. REGISTRATION DAY: *On Thursday, all team members "must be present and check in as a team" with the tournament officials. The time and place of registration will be announced. Fishing is permitted on Thursday, registration day until 3:00 pm for all participates/competitors entered in the tournament. Failure to follow this rule will result in disqualification from the tournament for that individual. At registration, the following information is required:*

- (a) Any changes in team personal or equipment can be changed at registration*
- (b) Proof of liability insurance with a minimum of \$300,000.00 showing the effective and expiration dates. These papers must stay in the possession of Tournament Officials.*
- (c) If a boater is using another fisherman's boat, a letter stating giving permission and signed by the boat owner must be presented to Tournament Officials. Insurance proof is also required.*

5) THE TOURNAMENT: *During the tournament a competitor may not have the assistance or advice of anyone for the purpose of location or catching bass. He shall not enter the tournament waters with a professional guide, state and/or federal wildlife agency employee or any other person deemed an **"expert"** on these tournament waters by the Tournament Director, unless the person is a contestant in the tournament. During the tournament, a competitor may not **"SKIN DIVE"** or **"SCUBA DIVE"** on the tournament waters. No competitor may buy or barter a fishing location from any other contestant for use during any competition day. During competition days, a contestant may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine-band radio, cellular phone, or any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish. Contestants are permitted to transmit by radio or telephone only in the event of an emergency. If so equipped, contestants may listen to the marine-band weather information. Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director any violation or infraction of the Tournament Rules. 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 take 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 Director and his agents and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Without limiting the foregoing, the Tournament Director shall have sole discretion to select the place, at which such polygraph test shall be administered, the individual who administers such polygraph test and the scope of the questions that shall be asked during such test. The participant shall be available, at this expense, at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all aspects with such examination.

- a. A maximum of six (6) polygraph tests can be administered at “RANDOM”. Failure of polygraph test by any contestant will result in a “LIFETIME BAN” from future tournaments within the Tn. Bass Federation, the TBF, Inc. and may result in a “LIFETIME BAN” from other Tournament Organizations.*
- b. Failure of a polygraph test will result in that fisherman’s entire club team being disqualified from the tournament.*

*6) **SAFETY:** Safe boating conduct must be observed at all times by tournament competitors. During the tournament, each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver. This preserver must be worn anytime the combustion engine is operating. The preserver must be strapped, snapped or zipped 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. Tournament officials have the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather.*

*7) **SPORTSMANSHIP:** Competitors in Tn Bass Federation 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 official practice or during the tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for disqualification from this and all future Tn Bass Federation, Inc. 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 a competitor which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries, conservation, clean waters and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. All competitors are bound by the prevailing statute and regulations in the various states they fish in. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants,*

prescription or otherwise, shall be allowed in the boats during competition days or when in the weigh-in area. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification. Any disqualification or suspension from or other disciplinary action regarding any tournament or fishing organization, shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification.

8) TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT: *Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of port strips, rinds, etc. Only one (1) casting, spin casting or spinning rod (8 ft maximum length from butt 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 a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day's catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked to be counted as a legal fish. Gaff may not be used to boat bass or permitted in boat at any time. The use of grippers in landing bass is prohibited.*

9) HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: *Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in tournament competition will be 250 HP, not to 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. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this rating plate or the horsepower maximum set by the TN Bass Federation, Inc. 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 number on the motor also would be cause for immediate disqualification from the entire tournament for both the contestant and his entire club team. (NOTE: IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CLUB AND TEAM TO POLICE ITSELF)*

10) BOAT AND MOTOR: *for the safety of all contestants, all boats must be equipped with some type of operable ignition kill switch. This ignition-kill device must be attached to the*

driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operation and in gear there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Fishing boats may be used that are sixteen (16) feet or more in length. Any raised platform or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat. A small electric trolling motor may be used for slow maneuvering; however, trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. 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 legal. Boats that do not have factory-installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat. During the tournament, 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 other similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. **Use of boats equipped with stick steering shall not be permitted during the tournament by any competitor.** The definition of stick steering shall be made by the Tournament Director. A competitor answering affirmatively the questions, "will you bring a boat and motor" will be expected to make that boat and motor available for tournament use by himself and his daily partner, if so requested by tournament officials. Those answering the same question negatively will be presumed not to have a boat and motor available and will be paired with one who does when possible. It shall be the responsibility of the fishing partner to mutually agree on a basis for sharing operational expenses. Each club will be responsible for providing their own back-up boat(s) in the event of a breakdown during the tournament.

- 11) ***BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT:*** Every boat must have all required Coast Guard equipment in addition to having a fully functional bilge pump and **livewell space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass by boat fisherman using the boat.** Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate"
- 12) ***BOAT IDENTIFICATION:*** Each boat will be given an official number and such number must remain with the boat until the end of the tournament or unless the Tournament Director changes the numbers. This number could be a button or some other numbering system and must be displayed during the tournament.
- 13) ***BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE:*** Since each boater is paired with another member of his own club, it is left up to the partners to agree on fishing locations, sharing of expenses and boat operations.

- 14) **PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** *The tournament waters will be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the TN Bass Federation, Inc. 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 out of the water. All such boats are required to advise any other competitor when such boat believes the competitor is close to being within the 50 yard radius. No such boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within the 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. All waters closed to public fishing will be closed to this tournament's contestants. 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 and/or federal regulations.*
- 15) **CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT:** *Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Contestants must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. Both contestants must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, competitors may be removed from their boats to: **A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT.** If necessary, one partner shall / can remain with the disabled boat; the remaining partner can bring in both bags of fish, as long as they can be identified... When a competitor must violate any of the above conditions to contact a tournament official by phone or other means or to report any emergency or breakdown, both competitors must cease fishing at that 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. Trailing of boats during tournament hours is prohibited except by the direction of Tournament Officials.*
- 16) **OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:** *There shall be only one official point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon and this point shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of check-out, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all rules set forth by the Tournament Director: at check-in, all boats shall identify themselves by means of the number assigned and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together except at the direction of the Tournament Officials.*

- (17) **SCORING:** *Tournament standings, auxiliary awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound and ounces weight of each competitor's catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only largemouth, spotted, red eye or smallmouth bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day, unless the prevailing state limit is less than 5, or a special limit is established for a particular tournament by the Tournament Officials, in which case the state limit or special limit, shall be the tournament limit. Tournament Officials will conduct checks for violation of this provision and in the event a competitor has reduced more than the above described limits to possession, shall cull the largest bass first, down to the limit described. The official length for bass shall be determined by the Tournament Officials and announced at the tournament briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering tournament waters. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed in. **The official measuring device shall be a flat-board (machine milled type).** Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length shall accrue penalties at the rate of one (1) pound for each such bass. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. Any bass that appears to have been mangles, mashed, mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed at the discretion of **tournament** officials. After a competitor checks-in at the official checkpoint, he **must** present all **legal** fish in his possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed and his/her catch must be certified by the signature of his partner that day. Once a competitor's catch is measured, counted and verified by a tournament official, that contestant may not return to his boat until his catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. **This restriction includes live-well stringer systems used for culling, which are prohibited.** The Tournament Director will furnish special designed weigh-in bags, which increase survival rate and these bags must be used to carry fish to weigh-in. Fish will then be weighed in a matter determined by the Tournament Director.*
- (18) **DON'T KILL YOUR CATCH:** *Each competitor is expected to keep his bass alive by the use of a properly aerated livewell. The few bass that do not survive will be used for scientific study or donated to charity.*
- (19) **PENALTY POINTS:** *For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized eight (8) ounces of weigh, to be deducted from this daily score. Presenting a fish for weigh-in that does not measure the minimum length limit shall be thrown out and the person will incur a 1 lb penalty. The Tournament Director and his designated appointees shall have a sole authority for accessing penalty points.*

20) **LATE PENALTY:** Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in Rule 16 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 counted toward a “**Lunker Award**”, and for each 1 minute he/she is late. Any competitors 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 on the tournament waters is prohibited except during the tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the tournament briefing.

21) **TIES:** In case of a tie for TEAM or INDIVIDUAL standings, the following tie-breakers will be used in the following order:

- a. The team or individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed
- b. The team or individual with the largest number of legal live fish weighed
- c. The team or individual with the heaviest single day catch weighed
- d. The team or individual with the second heaviest single day catch weighed
- e. In the unlikely event that ties remain, then a coin flip will be used to determine the winner(s) and the money, if any will be split equally.

22) **PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS:** Clubs may register a six (6) man, four (4) man or two (2) man team which will fish both days together. Teams can not change partners. A club can not register an odd man team. 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. A contestant must not allow any bass caught by him to be counted on the score of another contestant. In such case, both contestants shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by the TN Bass Federation.

- a. Exception: If one team member can not fish the second day due to illness or other emergency, the other team member will be allowed to fish alone. He must contact the Tournament Director at least one (1) hour prior to blast off.

- b. *If a club team has any two (2) man team fail to show up for the second day blast off, it will result in that team losing one (1) position in the final team standing, provided they have not contacted the Tournament Director at least one (1) hour before blast off.*

23) TEAM PENALTY: *Teams shall be penalized if any member of their teams fails to show up without notifying the Tournament Director at least one (1) hour before the first flight leaves. The team penalty shall be the loss of one (1) place in the final club standings. The individual penalty shall be disqualified from this tournament and future **TN BASS FEDERATION, INC., TOURNAMENTS** for a period of five (5) years. The individual does have an appeals process listed below.*

- a. *The individual can appeal this ruling to the Board of Directors by written letter within thirty (30) days after the disqualification.*
- b. *The Board of Directors, after discussion, can, if circumstances prevail, adjust the length of the ban or leave it at the imposed length stated in the rule.*

24) DISQUALIFICATION: *Unless otherwise specified, rules violations are grounds for disqualification of the violator from the event.*

25) CHAMPIONS: *The top fisherman in each Divisional Tournament will compete in a one day tournament at a time and location to be determined for the bragging rights of "STATE CHAMPION". Each will receive prizes based on funds available at that time, with the winner receiving a larger cache.*

26) NATIONAL SEMI FINAL QUALIFICATION:

INDIVIDUAL:

The top 10% from each State Divisional Tournament of which the top 50% in each divisional qualifying as "BOATERS". The next 50% in each divisional will qualify as "NON BOATERS"

The State will pay entry fees and other expenses based on funds available after the State Divisional Tournaments. If a participant declines this invitation, no monetary benefit will be given.

Failure of any individual to accept this opportunity will result in the “NEXT MAN UP” until the 10% field is filled. This decision is required to be made at least sixty (60) days advance of the tournament. With the Federation paying for the entry fees and other expenses in accordance with the money available, all fishermen representing the State are expected to compete both days. Failure to do so without receiving permission to leave will result in that Angler being disqualified from fishing the Semi Final the following year.

FEDERATION CLUBS REPRESENTATIVES:

Clubs who send at least one (1) team to their respective Divisional tournament can send boats in accordance with the TBF, Inc. guidelines. Team members must be on their club rosters at the time of their State Divisional tournament with their dues fully paid to be able to compete in the National Semi Final. If a fisherman decides to leave after the first day, it is requested and expected that they notify the Tennessee Bass Federation Officer present. Failure to do so and to receive permission to leave will result in that Angler being disqualified from fishing the Semi Final the following year.

26) PROTESTS:

All protests must be turned into the Tournament Director no later than thirty (30) minutes of the closing of the scales. All protest must be in writing. Protests received after the thirty (30) minutes time limit will not be considered.

27) INDIVIDUAL TOURNAMENT:

On an experimental basis for one (1) year, an extra one (1) day tournament will be held on Sunday after the Team Tournament. This tournament will allow the Tn Bass Federation to qualify more members to fish the National Semi Final. Details of the tournament will be presented before each tournament.