

Sportsmen Bassmasters Tournament Rules

A. Rules

1. The following rules, regulations and recommendations have been formulated by the membership of the Sportsmen Bassmasters. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be the responsibility of the tournament committee and their decision shall be final in all matters.

B. Tournament Committee

1. The tournament committee shall be comprised of two or more members who volunteer or are selected by the club, and the vice president, who shall serve as tournament director.

2. In the event the tournament committee can not reach a decision on any matter, it shall request the highest ranking club officer present at the event who is not otherwise directly involved to cast a tie-breaking vote.

3. All competitors have the right to protest to the tournament committee if they feel that they were treated unfairly by their partner, or if they observe a violation of any of these rules by any other competitor. All protests must be made at the time of the weigh-in and before final placements are determined.

4. Any questions other than those specified in these rules will be left to the discretion of the tournament committee.

5. All decisions of the tournament committee shall be final. It is the responsibility of the tournament chairman to enforce all rules stated herein fairly and equitably. The tournament chairman shall have no discretion regarding selective enforcement.

C. Participants

1. All participants in a Sportsmen Bassmasters tournament must be members in good standing of the Sportsmen Bassmasters or an invited guest.

2. It is the responsibility of each member to inform the tournament director at least ten (10) days prior to any scheduled tournament if he/she is unable to fish the tournament. Any committed member who later drops out is responsible for his/her fair share of the expenses, if that action results in another member traveling to and/or fishing the tournament alone. The tournament committee may, in its discretion and with the concurrence of the other angler, waive this sanction in the case of a serious family or medical situation.

3. Any angler who refuses to fish with a drawn partner shall forfeit any points/pounds gained in his/her highest scoring tournament of the year.

4. Guests may participate only to assure an even number of competitors. A member who fishes with a guest shall not receive credit for any points/pounds earned in that tournament if the guest's participation results in an uneven number of member/participants.

5. Guests are not eligible for club awards. Guests may participate in big fish pools

6. Prior to participation in club tournaments, all boaters shall provide the tournament director with proof of liability insurance with coverage limits equal to that required by the Federation for the State tournament.

D. Pairing of Contestants

1. The pairing of contestants shall be accomplished by the random drawing of names. At the discretion of the tournament director, any boat owner who does not attend the club meeting at which pairings are made or inform a member in attendance at the meeting of his desire to be a boater will automatically be classified as non-boater for that tournament. Two contestants shall be picked for each boat. New members shall not be paired together during their first year in the club.

2. The drawing of partners shall be final. The tournament committee may, in its discretion, alter the pairing on the date of the event if an individual fails to show up at the tournament site.

3. No two contestants shall fish together more than once in any season.

4. All contestant pairs must furnish a boat and motor, rented or owned, at any tournaments.

5. Partners will split boat costs equally. "Boat costs" is defined to include gasoline and oil used during pre-fishing with a non-boater and during the tournament day in both the tow vehicle and boat, and specifically excludes extraordinary repairs, insurance or overhead.

Boat costs will be determined according to the current oil/gasoline market price. It is recommended that the non-boater estimate the tow vehicle gasoline cost at 10mpg and the boat gasoline/oil cost at type of motor, i.e. EFI, OPTIMAX, HPDI etc. And time/distance the boat motor is in use.

The non-boater is responsible for repairs for any damage he or she causes to a boater's boat, trailer or tow vehicle. If the damage is not repaired or the situation is not resolved prior to the next schedule club tournament the non-boater will be deemed ineligible to participate in future club tournaments until repairs are made or the situation has been resolved.

6. Boat partners should get together thirty minutes prior to designated ease off time. Partners must stay together and within sight of each other's fish during all fishing hours or until such time as fish have been weighed and recorded.

7. No contestant may give or receive fish from his partner. An infraction of this rule will be punished by automatic disqualification of both parties and immediate expulsion from the Sportsmen Bassmasters

8. If a boater fails to appear at the launching ramp by ease-off time and his non boater is left without a boater/partner, the tournament director will conduct a random drawing to assign the non boater to fish "three in a boat".

9. Boaters may fish alone only once per year.

E. Official Check Point

1. The tournament director shall designate a single check-out/check-in point at the time of registration.
2. When all boats are in the water, ready for ease-off, or 5 minutes prior to designated ease-off time, which ever comes first, the tournament director shall announce the correct time, designate a finishing time and finishing area, and specify directions for a safe and courteous ease-off. Any boat not ready for ease-off, when the tournament director announces the ease-off order, will automatically be moved to last in ease-off order. The sequence for ease off will be determined by random draw. The last boat drawn shall direct the ease-off. Any boat operator who violates ease-off directions may be disqualified. Boats with less than fifty-one horsepower will be given a two-minute head start.
3. All contestants shall leave and return the official checkpoint by boat.
4. The tournament committee shall be stationed at the finish point to officially end the tournament.

F. Safety

1. Safe and courteous boating conduct must be observed at all times by all tournament competitors.
2. Each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved chest-type life preserver in a securely fastened manner at any time the combustion engine is operating. "Operating" is defined as any time the main engine is running and in gear.
3. All persons shall remain seated with their feet resting on the main floor of the boat when the combustion engine is running and in gear and traveling greater than no-wake speed (5 mph). At no time is the boater/non-boater allowed to fish while the combustion engine is running and in gear.
4. It is recommended that all boats used in competition be equipped with a kill switch.
5. Alcoholic beverages shall not be permitted on board during any club-sponsored event.
6. A boat's combustion engine may not exceed the maximum size recommended by the manufacturer. Contestants shall observe all boating laws and regulations that are applicable to the specific body of water at all time.

G. Fishing Hours

1. The fishing hours shall be announced by the tournament director at the time of registration, including specific start and stop times.
2. The tournament director may alter the announced fishing hours at any time up to ease off, or postpone or shorten the tournament in the event of extreme weather conditions. The tournament director shall announce any lake-specific regulations prior to ease-off.

H. Sportsmanship

1. Competitors in Sportsmen Bassmasters tournaments are expected to follow the highest standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation at all times, with due respect shown to both fellow competitors and non-competitors. Any act of a Sportsmen Bassmaster which reflects unfavorably the club's efforts to promote conservation, clean waters and courtesy may be deemed reason for sanction of the member by the tournament committee.

2. Sanctions for failure to observe the highest standards of sportsmanship are as follows:

A. First offense: loss of all points/pounds scored in the offender's highest scoring tournament of the year.

B. Second offense: expulsion from the club. This sanction shall be imposed only upon recommendation of the tournament committee and the affirmative vote of the membership. Such vote shall be governed by the standards and procedures set forth in the By-Laws,

3. The tournament committee may, in its discretion, issue advisory reprimands to an offending member in the case of a novel or minor situation.

5. A writing setting forth the particulars of any act of unsportsmanlike conduct that could make a member subject to sanction shall be filed with the tournament director as soon as is possible after the alleged incident. The tournament director shall make such writings available for inspection by the membership no later than at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

I. Fishing Methods

1. Only artificial lures may be used during a tournament. No live or prepared bait may be used. Scents and pork trailers are permitted.

2. Only one rod and reel may be in use at a time. Substitute rods may be rigged for use and kept in the boat. No rod may exceed eight feet in length.

3. Motor trolling is not permitted.

4. All boats must be equipped with aerated **or** recirculating live wells to keep the bass alive. Every reasonable effort shall be made to release the fish alive.

Specifically:

A. All boaters shall add rock salt [or similar commercial additive] to the livewells of their boats.

B. It is recommended that contestants tag each fish with diaper pins, balloons, etc. and make a written record of the size of each fish to assure that culling is done as quickly and harmlessly as possible.

Any boat or individual who demonstrates a pattern of dead fish over multiple tournaments may be disqualified from further events or required to provide evidence of repair satisfactory to the tournament committee.

5. All bass shall be released with the exception that an individual's personal best fish may be kept for mounting.

6. No stringers or fish baskets may be used to hold or carry bass.

7. Electronic depth finders, temperature, color and oxygen gauges are permitted; underwater cameras are not permitted during tournament hours.

J. Fishing Locations

1. Fishing is permitted on any location on the lake that is accessible by boat unless otherwise specified by the tournament committee or local regulations.
2. All fishing shall be done from the boat and all fish must be landed from within the boat.
3. All boats must remain on the water during designated fishing hours. No contestant may leave a boat except for emergencies. Contestants are not allowed to disembark to pull, portage or trailer a boat from one fishing location to another.
4. No contestant may fish within fifty feet of an anchored boat with the trolling motor up. The anchored boat is expected to alert other competitors of its status. An area may not be blocked from access by an anchored boat. Normal courtesy distance of fifty yards should be observed between non-anchored boats. "Cut-offs" are strongly discouraged.

K. Boat Operation

1. Partners shall discuss and work out an agreement regarding boat operation prior to the tournament. Each contestant is entitled to operate the trolling motor fifty- percent of the day. If a contestant waives the right to boat operation and this choice is satisfactory to his partner, the waiving party still retains the right to select route and fishing water one-half of the time. The non-boater is responsible for any expense resulting from damage to the trolling motor incurred while he/she is operating the motor. The non-boater is responsible for any/all damage he negligently caused to a boat during the tournament or while pre-fishing.
2. Any contestant who deliberately operates a boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap his/her partner shall be disqualified from the tournament. Unfair handicaps shall include positioning the boat in any systematic or intentional manner so as to deprive the non-operating partner of reasonable access to the obvious target casting area. Any individual who feels aggrieved by his partner's conduct shall request the appropriate courtesy as a prerequisite to making a formal protest under Section H.

L. Boat Inspection

1. Any boat may be inspected by the tournament committee prior to ease-off. All compartments, ice chests, etc. may be inspected prior to the tournament ease off for fish, alcoholic beverages, safety equipment and live-well operation.

M. Scoring and Weigh-In

1. Tournaments may be conducted as either “live weigh-in” or “tape”. The Tournament Committee will make the determination as to which method will be used and inform the participating anglers prior to launch of the tournament. The decision as to which method to be used depends on many factors including but not limited to the following:

- A. Local or DNR restrictions applicable to a particular body of water that are not compatible with accustomed (Minnesota) creel limits.
- B. Weather or other conditions that would expose the bass to increased mortality threats if confined to livewells for extended periods (forecast hot weather or high winds/rough water, etc.)
- C. Unavailability of suitable live weigh-in facilities or location.
- D. Avoidance of adverse public reaction.

2. If the Tournament Committee determines that a “Tape” tournament is appropriate:

- A. All contestant pairs must have access to an accurate ruler that can be used to determine the length of the fish.
- B. Length will be measured with the mouth completely closed and the tail compressed to the longest position, rounded to the next shortest calibration mark on the ruler. Length will be verified by the other angler.
- C. Following measurement, fish should be returned to the water as soon as practical to ensure their survival. “Trophy” fish may be retained in the live well and returned to the weigh-in site for photographs, provided that local and DNR rules are observed.
- D. At the completion of the tournament, length will be converted to pounds by the Tournament Committee using the Official Sportsmen conversion chart.

3. If the Tournament Committee determines that a “live weigh-in” tournament is appropriate:

- A. Bass will be measured on the official measuring board with the mouth completely closed and the tail compressed to the longest position. The official board shall be available to competitors until the official weigh-in commences.
- B. Only bass equal to or greater than the minimum size for keepers as designated by the DNR for that particular body of water will be weighed.
- C. Dead fish may not be culled and must be included in the number of weighable fish per angler. The maximum number of weighable fish per angler shall be one less than the lake limit. The maximum number of fish in possession may be one more than the weighable limit during the culling process.
- D. Measuring and weighing will be handled solely by the tournament committee. All fish become the tournament committee's responsibility after they are turned in by the competitor. Any dead fish will be returned to the angler for removal from the tournament site.
- E. Bass that appear mashed, mangled mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited at the discretion of the tournament committee.
- F. Any bass presented for weighing that does not meet minimum size requirements will subject the competitor to a penalty of one pound for each short fish. Penalties shall be deducted from the competitors tournament and yearly pound totals. Each dead fish will result in the subtraction of .25 pounds from the competitor's total weight for that tournament.

G. No competitor shall handle any fish other than his/her own catch until their weigh-in is complete. The weight of any fish lost through violation of this rule shall be estimated by the partner of its captor. The estimated weight shall be added to its captor's total and subtracted from the total of the party losing the fish.

4. Competitors not within the official weigh-in area at the appointed time will be penalized one-tenth of total weight for each minute they are late. There shall be no excuses for tardiness. The decision of the tournament committee shall be final. The official checkpoint shall be determined by the tournament chairman and announced at ease-off.

5. Tournament winners will be determined by the greatest poundage (to hundredths), according to published point standards.

6. Ties will be broken in the following manner:

A. Individual tournaments:

- 1) All anglers tied for the same position will equally share the points for all the positions affected. E.g., if three anglers have identical weights, the point values for all three affected positions will be totaled, and then divided by three and each angler receives the same points.
- 2) Plaques for the affected positions will be awarded based on a coin toss.

B. Annual award winners:

- 1) Heaviest weight, excluding throwaway.
- 2) Most bass weighed-in, excluding throwaway.
- 3) Heaviest bass for the year.
- 4) Coin toss.

C. Big Bass, individual tournaments:

- 1) The total Big Bass pot will be divided by the number of fish tied. Each fish receives an equal share of the pot.
- 2) Points for Big Fish will be shared equally in the manner described in 6, a., 1), above.
- 3) Plaque for Big Bass:
 - a) Most fish tied for Big Bass.
 - b) Coin toss.

D. Big Bass, annual award:

- 1) Most fish tied for Big Bass.
- 2) Second biggest bass.
- 3) Coin toss.

N. Awards

1. Plaques will be awarded for the top six finishing positions and the big fish in each club-sanctioned tournament. Personalized awards will be presented to the top six finishing positions for the year, Mr. Bass and in recognition of club officers at the annual banquet.

2. In the event a competitor fails to provide creel survey and lure tournament data, either in writing or via website submittal, within 30 days of the tournament, that competitor will be awarded zero points towards Mr. Bass for said tournament. Mr. Bass points include tournament participation, top 6 finish, and points earned for weight of fish. The top six competitors will be awarded plaques and all competitors will be awarded points towards Top Hook--even if no creel/lure tournament data is submitted.

3. All awards will be based solely on fish caught by regular members during regular club sponsored tournaments.

4. Each club member shall elect [or decline] to participate in the "big fish pot" no later than the January meeting of each calendar year. Each club member who elects to participate shall pay the treasurer an additional ten dollars (\$10) with his/her annual dues. The treasurer shall announce the total amount of the pot prior to the first tournament of the spring. One-sixth (1/6) of the total initial amount of the pot will be awarded to the participating competitor who catches the largest bass of each club tournament no later than the next regularly scheduled meeting. Members who join during the tournament year may participate in the big fish pot on a pro rata basis by paying the treasurer an amount calculated by the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Number of tournaments remaining in calendar year} \\ \times \quad \underline{\$2.00} \\ \hline \text{Amount Due} \end{array}$$

A member may also join in the "big fish pot" by indicating his desire to participate to the treasurer before any given tournament. The treasurer shall then collect \$2 from that member and add it to the pot payable in that tournament.