

Official Rules 27th Air National Guard Bass Tournament

The following rules shall apply to all Air National Guard Bass Tournaments. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director or his/her designee at a tournament.

1. **RULE VIOLATIONS:** In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director or a rules committee may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate by them, including without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes, entry fee and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the Tournament Director, his/her designee, or the rules committee, shall be final in all matters. 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 in question. (c) Loss of catch for the day of the violation (d) Disqualification from the tournament in question (e) Disqualification from future Air National Guard Bass Tournaments, which may be from a specific number of events, a specific period of time, or may be a lifetime disqualification.

2. **PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:** This is an invitational tournament. The following areas are permitted to participate: Area 1: Members of the Air National Guard, Army National Guard, retirees of the ANG/ARNG Area 2: Federal employees assigned to an ANG/ARNG unit Area 3: Active Duty members assigned to an ANG/ARNG unit Area 4: Immediate family member of Air/Army Guardsman. Immediate family member shall be defined as parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling (including "step"), and spouse This event is sanctioned by the National Guard Bureau. This sanction allows for permissive TDY to be granted to any participating AGR members and is at the discretion of their Unit Commanders.

3. **ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT:** Anglers participating in any Air National Guard Bass Tournament 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 general public and does not reflect unfavorably on the Air National Guard Bass Tournament, its members, officers or representatives, tournaments or sponsors. To this end, anglers shall use their best efforts to demonstrate professionalism and integrity in support of the sport of tournament bass fishing. Any angler who violates any of the provisions of the Angler Code of Conduct may be subject to penalties outlined in section 1.

4. **PRACTICE AND COMPETITION:**

(i) There will be no off limits period for any tournament unless specified by the Tournament Director.

(ii) There will be an official practice period immediately prior to the first day of competition. Two official practice days will begin at 12:01 am the Monday prior to the start of

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

(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.

(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.

(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, or suggestions to another competitor that they violate these rules, or false verification of weigh-in forms, may be cause for disqualification.

4. REGISTRATION: Each competitor must register for each event in accordance with guidance set forth by the specific tournament director.

5. SAFETY:

NOTE: Michigan DNR requires boaters to carry flare kits while on Lake St Clair!

(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 the reason for disqualification. Inflatable PFD's are allowed as long as U.S. Coast Guard regulations are met. It is suggested the boater have a safety check with the Co-angler each day prior to launch to familiarize the location of all safety equipment.

(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, 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.

(v) The Air National Bass Tournament 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 Air National Bass 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. Competitors are responsible for research of fishing and boating regulations.

7. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT: During practice and competition adding trailer hooks, plastic trailers, blades, etc., to a single lure is acceptable. If multiple fish are caught on a single man made lure, on a single cast, all fish are considered legal and may be added to the daily catch subject to scoring rules. No "live bait," "dead bait," or "prepared bait" will be permitted during official practice and competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds. 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. 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 are allowed to share baits and tackle at all times with one another.

8. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in official tournament practice and in tournament competition may not exceed 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. 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 Air National Guard Bass Tournaments. Posted speed limits and those imposed by the Tournament Director must be observed and all boats must be operated in a safe manner. Violations of speed limits shall result in penalties outlined in section 1.

9. 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 manufactured lanyard may be used and it 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. Standing on the outboard 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 line technique is only allowed with the trolling motor. 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, 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.

10. 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. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is proper and adequate.

11. 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.

12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the Air National Guard Tournament Officials. 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.

13. 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. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Competitors must leave from and return to official checkpoints by boat. Both competitors must remain in the boat at all times, except in case of dire emergency, or with permission from the Tournament Director. Exceptions spelled out in rules 5, 13, and 16. In such an emergency, or with permission of the Tournament Director, competitors may be removed from their boat, either to 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 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. In the event of a needed restroom break or refueling situation at a marina gas pump, contestants are allowed to leave the boat, at which time all fishing must cease until partners are back together in the boat. If a competitor violates any of the above conditions (to contact a tournament official by phone or other means, or to report an emergency or breakdown), 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, the competitors will continue, and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations as determined by the Tournament Director or his/her designee. Towing boats on trailers during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of tournament officials. Competitors are

allowed to leave the boat to retrieve a lure. All fishing by that competitor must cease until back in the boat before making another cast.

14. 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 11 and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. 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.

15. 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 14 inches or greater Largemouth or Smallmouth bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 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. 14" 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 as long as they don't penetrate the skin and jaw area.

16. 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. A DEAD BASS MAY NOT BE WEIGHED IN FOR ANY "BIG BASS" AWARDS. The Tournament Director, or his/her designees, shall have sole authority for assessing penalties. 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. 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. Proper fizzing technique is suggested when needed.

17. LATE PENALTY: Competitors who are not at the official check-in point, as described in Rule 14, 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. 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.

18. TIES: All ties will be resolved in the following order: (1) team 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 team with the largest number of legal fish weighed during competition; (4) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the team 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.

19. 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. **Should not be required for this tournament!**

20. 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