



Alabama Bass Federation Inc.

2024-2025 Official Rules of Alabama Bass Federation, Inc., Tournament Trail

1. RULES CHANGES: The following rules of this tournament will remain unchanged, except for special tournaments conducted by Alabama Bass Federation Inc. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the President and Board of Directors. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Officials may impose such sanctions, as he/they deem appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, fine of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the President and Board of Directors shall be final in all matters.

2. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY: This tournament is open only to members of The Bass Federation, Inc., who are 16 years of age or older and who are active members of Alabama Bass Federation, Inc.-affiliated chapters. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of potential competitor. Anglers under the age of 18 years old must have a signed waiver from their parent or legal guardian. **Anglers who are currently fishing the MLF Bass Pro Tour, Tackle Warehouse, Toyota Series, Bassmasters Elite Series, Bassmasters Opens tournament trails and fishing a tournament trail requiring payment of an entry fee \$1,700.00 or greater are not eligible to compete in Alabama Bass Federation, Inc., tournaments.** During the Official Practice and Competition Days of any Alabama Bass Federation, Inc. Tournaments no contestant may operate a boat unless the contestant has proof of a minimum of \$100,000 Boating Liability Insurance available in the boat. This document proof must show an effective date and expiration date and must be available on or before the application deadline date. Contestants will be checked at random and any contestant without proof of Insurance will be disqualified. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Officials, is handicapped in such a manner as to unfairly hinder his partner or endanger the safety and well-being of his partner or himself shall not be eligible. The Tournament Officials reserves the right to discontinue or extend the acceptance date. **Anglers younger than 16 may participate in an ABF Adult tournament with a parent or family member and must be a current active member of an Alabama Bass Federation High School, Junior, or Adult Club. Anglers fish from the front deck and Co-Anglers must fish from the rear deck.**

3. TOURNAMENT/PRACTICE: Official practice will be defined as beginning on the first official practice day prior to the tournament and ending on the start of the tournament. **During the official practice, and during the tournament, a competitor may not have the assistance or advice of anyone for the purposes of locating or catching bass, nor enter the tournament waters with anyone who has been on the tournament waters, a professional guide, state or federal wildlife agency, employee, or any other person deemed an “expert” on these tournament waters by the Tournament Officials, unless he is a contestant in the tournament.** During the official practice and during the

tournament, a competitor may not “SKIN DIVE” or “SCUBA DIVE” on the tournament waters. During the tournament, a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine-brand radio, a 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 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, TO A POLYGRAPH TEST AND MUST PASS SUCH TEST IN ORDER TO RECEIVE ANY WINNINGS / AWARDS. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the Tournament Officials and their agents and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the Tournament Officials. Without limiting the foregoing, the Tournament Officials 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 Officials and shall cooperate in all respects with such examination.

4. REGISTRATION: Each competitor must submit an official tournament registration form (on-line or hard copy) or personal notify tournament officials by 4:00 PM the day prior to first tournament day. Failure to do so may result with the competitor not be paired and will not be eligible to compete. Each competitor is should attend the pre-tournament/pairings meeting or arrange for a stand-in. Competitor will not be eligible for any refunds but can transfer entry fees to an event in same qualifying year. **This rule will be strictly enforced.**

5. SAFETY: Safe boat conduct must always be observed by tournament competitors. In the event of an emergency, competitor should call 911 first and notify tournament officials. During the official practice and the tournament, each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard-approved chest-type life preserver any time the combustion engine is running. The engine kill-switch must be attached to the operator of the boat. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is not running. 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. Alabama Bass Federation, Inc. reserves the right to impose boat speed limits on 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 President/Directors. In the event a competitor is issued a violation ticket by local, state or federal authorities during the tournament is grounds for disqualification.

6. SPORTSMANSHIP: Competitors in Alabama Bass Federation, Inc. 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 or possession in the boat of alcohol or marijuana/cannabis products (“medical” or otherwise) or any drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any participate during the practice, during the tournament, or at the weigh-in will not be tolerated and

shall be cause for disqualification from the tournament and all future ABF tournaments. Maximum courtesy must always be practiced, especially regarding boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on the 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. The prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish bind all competitors. 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.

7. 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 prohibited. 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 removing hook to be counted as a legal fish. No gaffs or grippers may be used to boat bass or permitted in boat at any time.

8. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: 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. Any boat manufactured prior to Nov. 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 more than 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 on the motor also will be cause for immediate disqualification from Alabama Bass Federation, Inc. tournaments.

9. BOAT AND MOTOR: ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH BILGE PUMP, AREATED LIVE WELL SPACE FOR TWO CONTESTANTS, AND SOME TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CO-ANGLER TO CHECK THE EQUIPMENT. This ignition-kill device must be attached to the driver’s body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operating 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 16 feet or more in length. Any raised platform or deck cannot be higher than the gunnel 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 official practice and 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 similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. **NO BOAT EQUIPPED WITH “STICK STEERING” WILL BE ALLOWED DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE OR DURING THE TOURNAMENT.** The Tournament Officials shall make the definition of “stick steering”. A competitor answering affirmatively the question, “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 partners to mutually agree on whose boat to use and a basis for sharing operational expenses. If the partners are unable to agree, the Tournament Officials shall make such a determination, which shall be binding upon the partners.

10. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE: Anglers will have control of their boat. Any contestant who, in the judgment of the officials, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap their Co-Angler shall be disqualified. In view of the large expense involved in operating and maintaining a tournament bass boat, it is suggested that the Co-Anglers share part of the cost of gas and oil for the competition day.

11. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: The Tournament Officials shall establish Tournament waters for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the Alabama Bass Federation, Inc. Fishing on the tournament waters is permitted anywhere except within 50 yards of another competitor’s boat. All such boats are required to advise any other competitor when such boat believes the competitor is close to being within this 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 Officials will be OFF-LIMITS and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. Only water open to all public fishing will be considered tournament waters. 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.

12. 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 the official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must always remain in the boat except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, competitors may be removed from their boat to: **A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT.** Partners must always remain together, 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 breakdown) both competitors must cease fishing at this point, and a tournament

official must verify their catch in order to be counted in the tournament. If the emergency is resolved by tournament official's competitors can continue, and their catch will be counted.

13. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT: Partners must always stay together until check-in is complete with or without any fish. 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 as set forth by the Tournament Officials; at check-in, all boats shall identify themselves to the check in person and proceed immediately to the weigh in area. Competitors not at check-in at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of 1 pound per minute, to be deducted from the total weight of his catch that day, including any weight to be counted toward a "BIG FISH award." Any competitors more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch.

14. SCORING: Tournament standings, auxiliary awards and final winners will be determined by the pound and hundredths weight of each competitor catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Redeye or shoal bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 fish of the above species and varieties per day, for each Angler and Co-Angler limit shall be 3 fish unless the prevailing state limit is less, 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. At no time shall a competitor have reduced to possession more than 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 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 in. Bass presented for weigh-in, which fail to measure the official length, shall accrue penalties at the rate of 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 mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only 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. For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized 8 ounces of weight. 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 this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by Alabama Bass Federation, Inc. When 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. The Alabama Bass Federation, Inc. will furnish specially designed bags, and these bags must be used for the weigh-ins.

15. TIES: In case of a ties for any Place of Finish including AOY Standings will be determined by (1) Number of Fish Caught; (2) Number of Live Fish; (3) Big Fish; AOY Number of tournaments fished.

16. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS: Anglers & Co-Anglers will be permitted to register for tournaments linking each other and will be permitted to fish together for the tournament season.

Two contestants when available will be assigned to each boat. Wherever possible, contestants from the same club will not be paired (except when linked), nor shall two competitors' fish together more than one day (except when linked). Announcements of your first-day fishing partner shall be made at the pre-tournament briefing or by text message to tournament each competitor. It shall be the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time to be at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. The Tournament Officials, at their sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off.

17. Failure to show up at designated departure launch time may result in removal from the tournament as determined by tournament officials.

18. Violation of any of the above rules or Local, State or Federal regulations etc., resulting in the issue of a citation may be grounds for disqualification. In the event of disqualification at a tournament the weight and prize winnings will be forfeited. The earned AOY points for the event may accrued toward the season AOY standings.

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