

## BASS NATION TOURNAMENT RULES – Updated 1/30/2022

1. **BASS TOURNAMENT DEFINED.** Bass tournament shall be defined as a competitive event in which the practices collectively known as fishing are skillfully applied by participants to catch bass and present them for scoring by weight, length or other criteria to determine a winner or winners who receive certain awards and/or other recognition.
2. **PURPOSE OF TOURNAMENT RULES.** Tournament rules are adopted for the express purposes of providing equal opportunity for all participants to successfully apply their fishing skills and abilities, of improving the safety of both participant and non-participant users of the tournament area resources, and of providing for proper handling of the fish.
3. **AMENDMENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS.** Only the Tournament Committee of the B.A.S.S. Nation of Virginia Inc. shall amend the Tournament rules. They are subject to interpretation only by the Tournament Committee, under the coordination and supervision of the Chairman. Decisions of the committee approved by the chairman shall be final. All tournament rules will be recommended to the Board for their approval or disapproval.
4. **BASS DEFINED** Bass shall be defined as any of the species known as large-mouth bass (*Micropterus Salmoides*), smallmouth bass (*Micropterus Dolomieu*), spotted bass (*Micropterus Punctulatus*), suwannee bass (*Micropterus Notius*), redeye bass (*Micropterus Coosae*), and guadalupe bass (*Micropterus Treculi*), all of which are of the genus, *Micropterus*, in the family, *Centrarchidae*, the fresh water sunfish.
5. **ENTRY FEES** Applications from otherwise qualified members; clubs of regions to enter and compete in tournaments shall be acceptable only when accompanied by the fee established by the tournament committee with approval of the Board. Fees shall not be refundable to individual, team or regional applicants once the fees have been accepted by the Nation except in extenuating circumstances approved by the board.
6. **ELIGIBILITY** Members, and clubs in good standing whose official application and entry fee are received by the secretary/treasurer prior to the published deadline for the Mr. BASS and Team Championship and the Fall Classic shall be eligible to compete, conditional upon acceptance by the Tournament Committee. In order to be eligible to participate in the Mr. BASS Tournament and the Team Championship Tournament the member must have been a member of that club at the time of submission of that club's official roster (no later than January 31st). Any member whose name is not present on the official roster submitted to the Nation Board will not be allowed to participate on that club's team.

7. **REGISTRATION.** Each team must designate a team manager who shall have sole responsibility for registering his team in person at the tournament site. Registration will be held at times designation by the tournament committee prior to registration for the event. In an emergency situation where the team manager can not arrive before 12:00 noon one day prior to the event, he can register his team by telephone prior to the 12:00 noon deadline. Any team, which has not officially registered by 12:00 noon Friday, will not be allowed to participate in the tournament.

8. **ETHICS~ SPORTSMANSHIP AND PERSONAL CONDUCT** All participants shall observe high standards of ethics, sportsmanship and personal conduct. They shall obey all of the laws, and the authorities having jurisdiction in the tournament area. They shall keep themselves informed and aware of the rules, laws and conditions applicable to the tournament. They shall yield to all other recreational users of the Tournament resource, sufficient distance or other courtesy to avoid interference with their activities. For example, duck blinds, which are occupied, on lawful duck hunting days, shall be given sufficient clearance to avoid interference with ducks approaching the blind in flight and to avoid danger from shot. Where a blind is situated in a narrow passage, boats shall move past them at no wake speed without stopping to fish. Drunkenness during the practice, competition and scoring activities will be cause for immediate disqualification. No alcoholic beverages shall be permitted in competition boats during competition hours. Participants shall yield to inspection by tournament officials at any time during the tournament.

9. **PRACTICE DAYS AND COMPETITION** Tournament waters are open at all times to all competitors. However, any Nation sponsored tournament no competitor may hire, buy or barter the use a fishing location from any other competitor for use during any competition day. Failure to comply with the rules will result in disqualification from the tournament.

10. **TOURNAMENT WATERS** Tournament waters shall be defined as all public waters which are accessible by boat or such off limits areas as may be designated and announced at registration time by the Tournament Committee. All fishing by participants shall be done from a boat on tournament waters and all participants and competition boats shall remain on tournament waters throughout the competition hours. Violators shall be disqualified for that day's competition.

11. **COMPETITION HOURS** Competition hours shall be determined by the Tournament Committee and announced at registration. The hours may be changed by the committee as necessary because of changing conditions and with reasonable notice to participants during the tournament. Late arrival at the check-in point at the end of competition hours shall not be excused. No make-up time shall be granted for any reason to any participant who has been unable to compete during any part of the tournament.

12. **WEATHER CONDITIONS** Tournaments shall proceed as scheduled regardless of weather conditions, except that competition may be suspended or terminated by the

Tournament Committee whenever it finds weather conditions to be hazardous. Competitors shall not fish during periods of suspension or after termination of competition. They may decline to compete without penalty only after the Tournament Committee has accepted their notice, given prior to withdrawing, that they believe weather conditions to be hazardous.

13. SAFETY AND INSPECTION Safety shall be the concern of first priority to all participants. All competition equipment shall be presented for inspection before the beginning of competition and all participants shall yield to inspection upon the request of tournament officials during the entire tournament event including scoring, award ceremonies, and the protest period and during the deliberation of any protests that may be registered by participants. Competition equipment found to be unsafe or unseaworthy by the Tournament Committee shall not be used in the tournament.

14. SAFETY EQUIPMENT Participants, throughout the official practice and competition hours, shall whenever their primary propulsion engine is in gear, wear a vest type personal floatation device, or life jacket, which is approved by the United States Coast Guard. Each tournament boat shall be equipped with a functional device, known as a kill switch, which will terminate the operation of the primary propulsion engine when the operator leaves the controls. The kill switch shall be attached to the operator whenever the engine is in operation. Each tournament boat shall be equipped with a functional power operated pumping device, which will remove water from the boat effectively, and in a manner acceptable to the Tournament Committee. Violators will be disqualified for that day's competition.

15. BOAT REQUIREMENTS. Competition boats shall be sixteen feet or more in length and powered by at least a seventy-five-horse power engine. The boat must also have an electric bow mounted trolling motor and sufficient live well capacity to maintain a limit of bass by both contestants in good condition during the tournament hours. No cumbersome craft, stick steering or motors of a horsepower that exceeds the manufacturers rating plate will be permitted. All boats must comply with all the applicable federal and state regulations. All boats that do not meet these requirements cannot be used in any of the state level draw tournaments conducted by the B.A.S.S. Nation of Virginia. Boats built on or after November 1, 1972 shall display horsepower rating plates installed by the manufacturer. Boats built before November 1, 1972 shall display horsepower rating plates if plates were installed by the manufacturer. All tournament boats shall be powered within their rating plate specifications, or in the absence of rating plates they shall comply with the United States Coast Guard horsepower rating formula. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor to increase the horsepower over the factory horsepower rating is forbidden. Any violation of these rules will result in immediate disqualification from that day's competition. "All boats used in state and region events of the Virginia B.A.S.S. Nation must have no less than \$300,000.00/300,000 liability insurance on these boats. In order to use a boat, proof must be provided for all events. If you do not own the boat to be used in the event, a

letter of permission to use the boat in that event must be provided by the owner (s) prior to use. Jet drive engines are not allowed during both official practice and competition.

#### 16. OFFICIAL INSPECTION OF BOAT AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Boats will be checked at tournament start for lights, life jackets, kill switch and live wells. Any non operating equipment will send the boat to the end of the tournament launch line and must be corrected prior to release. Prior to being allowed to compete in a tournament each boat must be checked and approved by the Tournament Committee. Each boat must meet all guidelines specified in Regulation #14 and Regulation #15. Ample time prior to the tournament will be designated and announced for boat inspections. It is the responsibility of each competitor to make sure that his boat has been registered and officially approved prior to beginning the tournament. Any competitor who competes without an official boat inspection will be disqualified.

17. FISHING TACKLE: Use of grippers for landing bass is prohibited during tournament competition. During practice and competition no more than one artificial or biodegradable artificial lure may be attached to a line at one time. One lure is defined as a single manmade device designed to attract and/or catch one fish at a time. Adding trailer hooks, plastic trailers, blades, etc., to a single lure is acceptable. If multiple fish are caught on a single manmade lure, on a single cast, all fish are considered legal and may be added to the daily catch subject to scoring rules (17). No “live bait,” “dead bait,” or “prepared bait” will be permitted during official practice and competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds. Any umbrella-type rigging, harness, or other device designed to hold more than one lure at a time with or without hooks –is not allowed. Such rigging, harness, or device cannot be added to a single lure as described above. Traditional twin arm spinnerbaits or buzzbaits are allowed. Trailer hooks and plastic trailers must be on the main hook of the bait; only spinner blades can be affixed to the arms. The head on the main stem may be hinged. On these twin arm spinnerbaits or buzzbaits, no more than two wires, with a maximum length of 6 inches, may extend off the main arm or body of the lure at the line tie point. The “head and hook” portion of the lure must be even or trail behind where the blades attach to the wires. B.A.S.S. officials have the sole authority to determine whether a lure is considered a single lure as defined above. Only ONE casting, spin casting or spinning rod (10 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. No competitor may intentionally snag or foul hook a bass to be counted in their daily catch. 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.

18. **FISHING METHODS** Trolling as a method of fishing shall be prohibited. Participants shall hook, play and land any fish they catch in competition, using no devices other than a landing net, tackle as provided in section 8.1 - 17, and that participant partners or observers may assist in landing and bringing them into the boat. All fishing must be done from the boat. Contestants must not depart from the boat to land the fish. Boats may not be trailered during tournament hours.

19. **PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS** Fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere except where posted or otherwise stated by the Tournament Director or President as otherwise specified by the Tournament Committee or within 50 yards of marina gas pumps or within 50 yards of another competitor's boat which was first anchored. Any such anchored boat shall have its trolling motor retracted from the water. No such anchored boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within the 50-yard circle claimed by him, to the exclusion of any other competitor. Violation will result in disqualification for that day's competition. It is the responsibility of the anchored boat to make other competitors aware that he is anchored.

#### 20. **FISHING PARTNERS REQUIRED**

Participants shall fish with the team member from their club that they are registered with for that tournament. Laws of the Virginia B. A. S. S. Nation, Inc. In the event an entrant has to exclude him-self / her-self from the competition they shall report immediately to a member of the Tournament Committee and notify them of the situation. Upon the loss or absence of their duly assigned partner the entrant's partner shall fish ONE DAY only by himself.

#### 20. a. **STATE CHAMPIONSHIP ONLY: FISHING PARTNERS REQUIRED**

Participants shall fish with partners assigned and approved by the tournament committee. No two members from the same club will be paired together at the initial pairings. The selection of partners by the Tournament Committee will be in accordance with Chapter 7.3 of the Constitution and By Laws of the Virginia B. A. S. S. Nation, Inc. In the event an entrant has to exclude him-self / herself from the competition they shall report immediately to a member of the Tournament Committee and notify them of the situation. Upon the loss or absence of their duly assigned partner the entrant's partner shall terminate all activity and report directly to a member of the Tournament Committee. The Tournament Committee shall be responsible for pairing the entrant with another tournament entrant or observer if available. Only as a last resort shall this entrant be paired with someone from his/her own region. In the event that an entrant cannot be paired with someone, then another member of the departing entrant's club shall fish by themselves on day two ONLY. Flight out will not begin until such time as all pairings

are finalized. Violators of this rule are subject to the penalties provided for in Regulation #30.

## 21. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSES

Participants in the Mr. BASS, Team Championship and Fall Classic tournaments compete as teams and shall share all boat expenses and operations as determined by that team. Participants in the State Championship tournament compete in boater and co-angler (non-boater) divisions in a PRO-AM format. Operation of the boat and decisions on fishing location shall be the decision of the boater. In the PRO-AM format the co-angler is not allowed to fish from the front deck of the boat or operate the trolling motor. Boat operation in manner, which unnecessarily handicaps a partner or any other competitor, shall be prohibited. The owner and his participating team will assume all expenses incurred in the operation of the boat. It is expected that the non-boat owner will share in paying the expenses of the boats supplied by the other members of his chapter team. The exact mechanism whereby boat expenses are shared by a chapter team is their responsibility.

22. CONTACT WITH OTHER BOATS No fishing shall be permitted within fifty yards of the anchored boat of another participant. Anchored boats shall not restrict navigation through narrow channels to or from other tournament waters. Participants shall not approach closer than necessary or otherwise make physical contact with other boats or persons during competition hours for reasons other than emergencies. Any competitors' boats seen in physical contact on the lake without the existence of an emergency will be disqualified from that day's competition.

23. EMERGENCY CONDITIONS Emergency conditions are defined as conditions which subject persons or property to imminent danger or conditions which are deemed by the Tournament Committee to be of emergency nature. Only under emergency conditions, or in cases where boats are disabled, may participants leave their boats. In cases of dire emergency or where safety is involved, both contestants must remain in the boat at all times. Under such conditions (dire emergency or safety), they may ride in other boats and bring their fish to the tournament headquarters for scoring subject to all requirements otherwise applicable. Otherwise, they shall remain in sight of each other at all times until their fish are turned over to tournament officials. In such cases, both partners, or the non-boating partner alone may take their/his fish to the weigh-in in another contestant's or official's boat. The contestant or official providing the return ride becomes responsible for signing the weigh-in forms for the non-boater who returned without his original partner. The contestant who remained behind is disqualified as soon as his original partner leaves in the other boat. Except for this emergency situation partners must remain in sight of each other's catch for the catch to be scored. Violators are subject to the penalties provided in Regulation #30.

24. HANDLING OF FISH DURING COMPETITION Competition boats shall be equipped with a functional, adequately aerated fish holding device, known as a live well,

sufficient to maintain live bass of average size. All fish caught and retained in possession of participants shall be segregated for identification and kept in a live well. No stringers, ropes, or other devices, which would injure fish or subject them to unnecessary stress, shall be used. Dead fish large enough for scoring shall be kept by participants and submitted for scoring. Fish too small for scoring shall be returned to the water. No more fish than may be scored may be held in captivity at any time during competition hours. Fish shall not be mutilated or otherwise intentionally injured or mistreated. A swallowed single hook shall be cut free of other tackle and left in place whether the fish is to be kept or released. Lures may be extracted in the least injurious manner available.

**25. CHECK IN AND LATE PENALTY** All competitors must check in with tournament officials at the official check-in site by the previously announced finish time. Failure to do so will result in a penalty of 1 pound per minute or portion of a minute deducted from the competitor's total weight of catch for that day. Any competitor who is more than 15 minutes late will lose all credits for that day's catch. There will be no acceptable excuses for tardiness.

**26. HANDLING OF FISH AT CHECK-IN AND DURING THE WEIGH-IN** All fish present in a competitors boat when he checks in at the check-in point become the property of the Tournament Committee. Discarding or transferring any fish will result in immediate disqualification. The practice of culling and measuring after check-in is prohibited. All fish shall be placed in containers supplied by the Tournament Committee for transport to the scoring area. The containers may be placed in landing nets for added strength. Water shall be added to reduce injury. All fish that are alive at the completion of the scoring procedure shall be returned to the water by tournament officials except that the requests of governmental, education and research agencies may be honored, and trophy fish may be returned to the participants who caught them when they request them for mounting and display. Fish not judged by tournament officials to be alive shall be protected from spoilage, and disposed of as food, or otherwise in a manner, which complies with the law if; they are unfit for use as food.

#### **27. TOURNAMENT CREEL AND SIZE LIMIT**

At no time shall a team have more than five fish in the live well. Possession of more than five fish will result in disqualification. The minimum acceptable length of fish will be 12 inches with the exception of those bodies of water with a slot limit or a 14"/12" law (example 2 – 12" and 3 – 14"). Any fish which does not meet the minimum acceptable length will be removed from the competitors catch and the competitor will be assessed a one pound penalty for each short fish deducted from the total weight of his remaining legal fish. Any fish presented for weigh-in, which is judged to be dead will result in an four-ounce penalty for each such fish, deducted from the total weight of fish.

#### **27.a. STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT CREEL AND SIZE LIMIT**

At no time shall a boater have more than five fish and a co-angler have more than three fish in the live well. Possession of more than five fish will result in disqualification. The minimum acceptable length of fish will be 12 inches with the exception of those bodies of water with a slot limit or a 14/12 law (example 2 – 12” and 3 – 14”). Any fish which does not meet the minimum acceptable length will be removed from the competitors catch and the competitor will be assessed a one pound penalty for each short fish deducted from the total weight of his remaining legal fish. Any fish presented for weigh-in, which is judged to be dead will result in a four-ounce penalty for each such fish, deducted from the total weight of fish.

28. SCORING Each team's score will be the weight of the legal bass, minus penalties, caught and kept during competition hours. The team with the greatest accumulated weight will be the winner. Total weights will be arranged in descending order for other places.

29. TIES All ties will be determined first by the number of fish caught and then by the flip of a coin.

### 30. VIOLATIONS. PROTESTS AND PENALTIES

Participants shall honor the letter and the intent of the Tournament Rules or they shall be judged to have violated them. All judgments are reserved to the Tournament Committee. Participants who suspect that the Tournament Rules have been violated may protest to the Tournament Committee at any time during the tournament or within 15 minutes after arrival at the tournament sight followed with a written protest within 30 minutes after closing the scales. Protests shall be decided by the Tournament Committee through any means available within the Constitution and By-laws and Tournament Rules in consideration of the statements and other evidence presented by the concerned parties and witnesses. Polygraph examination, administered by a qualified examiner who is duly licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia, shall be included among the methods available to the Tournament Committee for consideration in their deliberations. All participants shall be presumed to be familiar with the Tournament Rules and to have implied their consent and agreement to submit to polygraph examination when they affix their signatures to the official registration list. Polygraph examination may be requested only by the Chairman of the Tournament Committee and shall be provided under his supervision and at the expense of the B.A.S.S. Nation. Refusal to submit to such examination reasonably requested and provided may be considered during protest deliberations. Participants held by the Board of Directors to have violated the principles of fairness, sportsmanship and ethical conduct explicitly or implicitly included in the Tournament Rules may be declared ineligible to compete in present and future tournament events. Participants held by the Tournament Committee to be in violation of the Tournament Rules shall be penalized as specified in the rules. When a penalty is not specified for a violator the Tournament Committee has the discretion of determining what degree of penalty is appropriate for the violation.



### 31. COMMUNICATION

During competition days of the tournament, a competitor may not use a cellular phone, a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, 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. Violators will be disqualified for that day's competition.

### 32. PREMATURE WITHDRAWAL FROM TOURNAMENT.

Any competitor or team that leaves a Virginia B.A.S.S. Nation sponsored draw tournament prior to notifying a tournament official will not be eligible to participate in any Nation sponsored draw tournaments in the remaining year of the violation nor in the following calendar year. Those individuals may appear before the Board of Directors in order to appeal their suspension to present their reasons for leaving the tournament not later than the next board meeting after the occurrence. The affected regional director will notify the respective chapter officers of the violation.

33. None of the above rules shall prohibit a properly designated tournament official from approaching or boarding any competitor's boat at any time during the warm-up period or competition day.

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