



## 2026 Official Rules

**1. OFFICIAL RULES & SAFETY REGULATIONS:** The Official Rules and safety regulations are “time tested” over years of SAF federation history, interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Officials. In the event of a rule violation, the officials may impose such sanctions, as they deem appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in any future tournaments. Protests and/or alleged rule violations are to be documented in writing by a witness or boat captain within 30 minutes of the check-in time of the final flight OR within 10 minutes of the last fish weighed in each day whichever is later. Decisions of the Tournament officials shall be final in all matters.

**2. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:** Participation in the TBF JUNIOR program is through sanctioned junior programs only and open to all eligible TBF junior members. Qualifying for and/or participation is in, the JWC event is open only to those Junior angler’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade and under who have not yet started the 9<sup>th</sup> grade prior to the second full weekend of July immediately preceding the JWC event they are attempting to qualify for. Proof of age, grade and eligibility is required if so requested. Proof of age and eligibility is required if so requested. All participants must have in their possession a valid fishing license covering the waters to be fished, where required by law. **A PROPERLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED ENTRY FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY TBF ON OR BEFORE THE DEADLINE DATE.** The Tournament Director reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to deadline and also the right to extend the acceptance date. As a participant in a TBF sanctioned event, you agree that while participating in an event, to use any and all official products and equipment so specified and provided by TBF. Officials reserve the right to reject an application for any reason. Each contestant agrees to report, in a timely manner, to the Tournament Director any violation or infraction of these Tournament Rules. The failure to report violations or suggestion to violate these Rules, or false verification of weigh-in forms will be cause for disqualification.

**3. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE:** Check with the TBF sanctioned Junior program you are fishing on their pre-practice rules.

**4. REGISTRATION:** This is a “team” event consisting of two Junior anglers and one (1) non-fishing boat captain/coach, single anglers **CANNOT** register for this event pursuant to the Federal Safe Sports Act there **MUST** be 3 people in each boat. **NO exceptions.** Each team, participant and boat captain is required to pre-register as a team and return completed entry forms and a copy of your birth certificate and proof of grade level to TBF on or before the deadline date. Upon arrival at the event, each participant must check-in at registration and obtain a registration packet. Failure to register in person during the prescribed hours may result in a \$25.00 monetary fine or possible forfeiture of participation. **It shall be the participant’s responsibility to check the schedule of events for official registration time and location or obtain times from Tournament officials.**

**5. SAFETY:** In compliance with the Federal YOUTH Safe Sports Act (that applies to all YOUTH events, etc. of any kind.) No youth angler may participate **ALONE** with an adult in a designated youth event, **ALWAYS** 3 people to a boat during a tournament, **NO exceptions.** In the event of an emergency, competitors should call 911 first and then notify tournament officials. During defined tournament hours and from take-off through weigh-in all participants must be in full compliance with these rules. Safe

boat conduct must be observed at all times by tournament contenders, observers and boat captains. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a recommended on-plane seating location when the combustion engine is running. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation is not permitted. Student Anglers are **NOT** permitted to operate the main engine or drive the boat except in an emergency. Each boat passenger must wear a US Coast Guard-approved **chest-type** life preserver fully zippered, strapped and snapped securely anytime the combustion engine is running. Inflatable PFD indicators should be checked daily. Inflatable PFDs are allowed if U.S. Coast Guard regulations are met. **Federal law phase in** - Depending on the type and model of inflatable the Coast Guard now requires that Inflatable PFDs be always worn to be counted and cannot be taken-off, unless there is an equal number of non-inflatable Coast Guard approved PFDs on board readily accessible. **Therefore**, all boats must carry a minimum of three (3) Coast Guard always approved chest-type **NON** inflatable life preservers on board to be legal in case someone in the boat takes off an inflatable PFD they are wearing, even momentarily. Federal law now requires any vessel under 26 feet to have an operational engine shut off device and that it be attached to the driver when the vessel is on plane. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification. Tournament officials have the right to delay, shorten or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors, if a delay is required additional time will **NOT** be added to that day’s flight and check in times. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. We reserve the right to impose speed limits on any or all events. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, area covered by the speed limit and/or the actual speed limit imposed shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the Tournament Director.

**6. SPORTSMANSHIP:** Contenders in and Junior tournament 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 participant during the official event or tournament days or in our weigh-in process area will not be tolerated and shall be cause for disqualification. 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 contenders are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. 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 ft. max. length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. All other types prohibited. Only one rod and reel outfit as described is permitted in use per angler at any given time. All bass must be caught

alive 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 bass, to be counted as legal fish all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and **must be verified** by your adult Boat Captain before being unhooked. Gaffs may not be used to boat bass nor be permitted in the boat at any time. The use of grippers in landing bass is prohibited. Dip nets will be allowed.

**8. BOAT AND MOTOR:** Each team is to provide their own boat and adult boat captain/coach to operate it that is at least 19 years of age. To qualify as a coach, **(see Rule 22)**. For the safety of all participants, boats must be equipped with some type of ignition/engine stop/shutoff device. The engine stop switch device must be attached to the boat captain's body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operating and in gear, the boat captain must be the driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. A small electric trolling motor may be used for slow maneuvering; however, trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. All boats must be propeller driven, a minimum of 16 feet in overall length. No barges or similar cumbersome crafts will be permitted without approval of the tournament director. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated livewell space to maintain alive a limit catch of bass by both contestants. Maximum horsepower for all outboards is not to exceed the horsepower capacity set forth on the "Maximum Capacities" (or comparably titled) plate that includes a maximum horsepower rating affixed to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the maximum horsepower capacity specified on this plate or any Horsepower limit set by tournament officials. By signing the entry form, each contestant agrees to submit his/her boat and/or motor to an inspection by tournament officials or manufacturers personnel. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating plate will be cause for disqualification from the tournament and may result in ineligibility to compete in future TBF sanctioned events. Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed and or recommended fuel tanks. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public.

**9. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT:** Every boat must have all required safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and **livewell space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass by both competitors using the boat.** TBF recommends the use of livewell additives to promote a healthy release of all fish to their natural habitat. Further TBF recommends the use of ICE to cool livewell water and improve oxygen levels during "summer" months. Leave your aerators on "recirculate" and running. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate." Each boat **MUST** be given, prior to each day's start, a livewell and SAFETY INSPECTION check by a tournament official, also a boat marker, which **MUST** remain in the boat and turned in during check-in at the end of each day. A boat is officially checked-in when the number is logged in.

**10. BOAT OPERATION:** Boat Captains/Coaches will supply and drive boats for their teams. To qualify as a boat captain/ coach, **SEE RULE 22**. In the event that neither Junior angler cannot nor wishes not to run the trolling motor the boat captain may run it for them. The boat captain has sole discretion to veto any selected location for safety reasons.

**11. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each event. Each competitor must obtain this information from Officials. Any water within these boundaries posted Off-Limits or No Fishing by state or federal agencies will be **OFF-LIMITS**. Also, any 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 angling must be done from the boat.

**12. PARTICIPANTS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT:** Participants and boat captain 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. Participants must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. Participants must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, both competitors may be removed from their boat to: A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT so 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 counted. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for a restroom break is permitted, however **ALL FISHING MUST CEASE**, until partners are back together. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions (to use a phone 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 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. Trailering of boats during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of the Tournament Director.

**13. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:** There shall be an official checkpoint 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 check-out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all Safety and Tournament rules set forth by the Tournament Director; at check-in all boats shall identify themselves and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together, through check-in and weigh-in, until weigh-in slips have been signed. **YOU MUST CHECK-IN EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FISH.**

**14. SCORING:** Tournament standing, awards and final standings shall be determined by a method of scoring set forth, and announced in the pre-tournament briefing, **INCLUDING ANY BONUS EARNED**. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Red Eye or Shoal 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 director, in which case the state limit or special limit shall be the tournament limit. At no time shall a competitor have in possession more than the tournament limit. Tournament Officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision, and in the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, shall cull, starting with the largest bass first, etc., down to the stated limit. The official length for bass shall be decided by Tournament Officials and announced at the tournament briefing. Only bass 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 not be weighed and will accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each non-legal fish. 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 competitors check in at the official checkpoint they MUST present all LEGAL fish in possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a team's catch has been measured, counted or verified by a tournament official, that team 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 livewell stringer systems used for culling, which are also prohibited. Each team's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag, which is specially designed and controlled to increase survival rate will be furnished by the Tournament Officials.

**15. CATCH-&-RELEASE:** If it becomes necessary for a team to cull their catch. They must cull themselves but the boat captain may assist. Every effort must be made by the competitors to handle their own fish.

**16. DON'T KILL YOUR CATCH:** Each competitor is expected to keep their bass alive by the proper use of the boat's livewell system, livewell additive and ice. For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized eight (8) ounces of weight, to be deducted from their daily score. The Tournament Officials shall have sole authority for accessing penalty points.

**17. LATE PENALTY:** Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in Rule 13 at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of 1 pound per minute, to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day for each 1 minute they are late. 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 the angler's responsibility to confirm check-in times each day on the daily pairings.

**18. TIES:** In case of a tie for champions, awards, prizes or cut positions the following tie-breakers will be used in order: 1) The team with the largest number of legal fish weighed in during the official event: 2) The team with the largest number of legal **LIVE** fish weighed in during the event. 3.) Heaviest single days catch 4.) Previous day's standings and/or cut position. In the event that individuals remain tied after these tiebreakers are employed, the tie shall be resolved by means selected by the Tournament Director. Ties for lesser positions shall be resolved by means selected by the Tournament Director.

**19. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS:** It is **REQUIRED** by the **Safe Sports Act of 2017** that **3 people are in the boat** - (2) two-person team of contestants will be in each boat, with one boat captain. If, due to an emergency, only one contestant is available to go with a boat captain, an observer will be assigned to ride in that boat with them if available otherwise they will NOT go out that day. A contestant must not allow any bass not legally caught by their team to be counted in their weight. In such cases, both contestants and the boat captain will be disqualified from this and all future TBF sanctioned events.

**20. TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS:** 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 event.

**21. PATCHES AND/OR SIGNAGE:** Anglers are encouraged to wear their own clothing, which may have patches, logos and other signage promoting the anglers' sponsors. Officials may, however, restrict the use of patches, logos, signage, etc. that promote or advertise products which are in TBF's sole judgment, in competition with the products or services of official TBF sponsors or which are, in TBF's sole judgment, in poor taste. TBF will provide as much advance notice as possible to the competitors in such instances. By signing this document, each contestant agrees to wear, if provided by TBF, any ancillary clothing or products (such as life vests, team jerseys, etc.) bearing the logos of TBF or of official sponsors of same, each competitor shall wear such clothing or utilize such products in a manner requested by TBF.

**22. BOAT CAPTAINS\Coaches: AS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE, TEAMS ARE SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED FROM RECRUITING A "LOCAL" BOAT CAPTAIN JUST FOR THIS EVENT. TBF AND/OR TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY BOAT CAPTAIN.**

**EVERY team must bring its own boat and boat captain.** Officials will not plan to provide a boat or boat captain except in an onsite emergency or extreme circumstance, and only in very limited fashion. Providing a volunteer boat and boat captain is solely at the desecration of tournament officials. If a boat/captain is supplied by officials via a volunteer, the volunteer will drive the boat for the team, and the team's coach will NOT be allowed on the water. To qualify as a boat captain/ coach, the adult accompanying a team must be:

- a.) From the same state as the Juniors comprising the team, OR an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister or grandparent) that is at least 19 years old regardless of residence OR, in the limited case of boarder states and boarder-state clubs, the boat captain must reside within 60 miles of one member of the team.
- b.) Boat captains CANNOT have been a bass guide for hire on the tournament waters within the last 12 months unless such person is the parent or documented permanent legal guardian of a contestant on the registered team he or she will be accompanying on the water in the event. (Written proof of permanent legal guardianship to the satisfaction of tournament officials required).

Boat Captains\Coaches will serve as "officials" in the event and will not be allowed to fish on actual tournament days. They are there to act as boat captains, mentors, coaches and observers. They may ASSIST the Junior Anglers in a manner as to coach or mentor them ONLY. They may suggest fishing areas or techniques, baits, etc., but the final decision, as long as safety is not a factor, on where to fish or fishing methods will rest with the Junior Anglers. The boat captains MAY NOT tie knots, cast lines or lures, set the hook, or play fish to the boat on tournament competition days. They may use the dip net if they so chose. Boat Captains have complete control of the boat and outboard engine at all time. The Junior Anglers may not drive the boat, except for loading and unloading and in case of an emergency. Junior Anglers can\should run the trolling motor; however, the Boat Captain has the right to take control of the trolling motor at anytime if safety or equipment is at risk. Boat captains are subject to the same rules as the anglers, and penalties if any can be applied to the team in your boat. Boat Captains are subject to polygraph tests or truth verification tests the same as the Junior anglers. A completed entry form and event wavier must also be submitted.



## **PARTICIPANT RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

### **READ BEFORE SIGNING**

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

### **List Everyone In The Boat By Name**

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_, in consideration for permission to voluntarily participate in ANY event(s), and/or related activities conducted by any Federation Angler affiliated groups including but not limited to; The Bass Federation, (TBF), SAF, NBAA, MWC, NABC, TWF or an affiliated State Federation and all other affiliated events either jointly or separately, **I also agree to receive their event communications through text messages or email blasts and fully understand that I can opt out of those messages anytime. I further understand if I do opt out of them, I forfeit any claims to not being notified about any subject that may affect my chances to compete or my safety.** I acknowledge, appreciate, and agree that: **The risk of injury, disability, death, loss or damage to my person or property from the activities involved in this program is significant, including the potential for permanent paralysis and death, and while particular rules, equipment, and personal discipline may reduce this risk, the risk of serious injury does exist;** AND, I have been advised by the event organizers and have had the opportunity to seek legal counsel with respect to the legal effect of this document; **AND, I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL RISKS REFERRED TO ABOVE, BOTH KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE ORGANIZERS and/or, their officers, officials, directors, shareholders, agents, and/or employees, other participants, and sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, their parent and affiliate companies and, if applicable, owners and lessors of premises and property used to conduct the event OR any others connected to the event (collectively "RELEASEES"), AND HEREBY ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR RISKS ARISING FROM MY PARTICIPATION;** AND, I willingly agree to comply with the terms and conditions for participation. If, however, I observe any unusual significant hazard during my presence or participation, I will remove myself from participation and bring such to the immediate attention of the nearest official; **AND I, FOR MYSELF AND ON BEHALF OF MY HEIRS, ASSIGNS, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES AND NEXT OF KIN, HEREBY RELEASE, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS "RELEASEES", WITH RESPECT TO ANY AND ALL INJURY, DISABILITY, DEATH, OR LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PERSON OR PROPERTY, WHICH I SUFFER OR WHICH I AM FOUND TO HAVE CAUSED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY MY NEGLIGENCE OR INTENTIONAL MISCONDUCT, WHETHER ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES, OR OTHERWISE, TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW.**

**I agree** to submit, by signature on this document, to a truth verification test, and abide by its conclusion. Truth verification test(s) will be used at the organizer's sole discretion, and administered by its agents. I understand that failure to pass the exam as determined by the event organizers will result in disqualification. I certify that the number shown on these forms is my correct taxpayer identification number.

**Having fully acquainted myself with the tournament rules,** I have completed this application and submit it for my entry. In signing this application, and by my presence at the event, I hereby agree to be bound by and comply with all tournament rules, participant release of liability and safety regulations. If I am an equipment operator or a boat operator, I understand as the captain/operator of a vessel or any piece of equipment that I am solely responsible for the safe operation of it and for the safety of any and all occupants in it at all times. I expressly assume all risks associated with the event. If I am using a boat during the official practice or the event, I certify that I now have, or will obtain prior to the event, property damage, excess medical, watercraft liability and/or contractors' insurance having a reasonable limit. Said insurance must cover any and all injury and/or damage incurred in connection with the event. Upon request, I will provide satisfactory evidence of said insurance. I certify that training compliant with the Youth Safe Sports Act of 2017 has been made available to me this year if I am participating in a youth event. I hereby waive my rights of privacy or publicity with regard to the unconditional right to use my name, voice, photographic likeness, video and biographical information and fishing tips and instructions in connection with any reproduction of same, video/audio productions and/or articles and press releases by the event organizers, their parent or affiliate companies, and those acting under their permission, anywhere at any time, through any medium or media. I shall not be entitled to receive any royalties or other compensation in connection with such use. I further understand and agree that the tournament officials reserve the right to reject my application for any reason whatsoever.

**The Participant(s) signifies by their signature below that they have read and understands the foregoing provisions.**

**Angler A-** Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Angler B -** Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Boat Captain (if applicable) -** Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF MINORITY AGE PARTICIPANTS-** As parent/guardian for this participant with legal responsibility, I do consent and agree to his/her release as provided above and of all the Releasees, and, for myself, my heirs, assigns, and next of kin, I release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees from any and all liabilities, incidents to minor child's participation, **EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE of the Releasees.**

X  
**A - PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE** EMERG. PH # (s) : \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

X  
**B - PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE** EMERG. PH # (s) : \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_