Arkansas High School Bassers Inc.

TOURNAMENT RULES

Copied from By-Laws 08/29/2016 - Updated for 2026/2027 season - 08/1/2026

Section 1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT

These rules will remain unchanged following the opening of our first tournament and remaining until our final tournament of each season. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director(s). Decisions of the tournament director(s) are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each Angler, Boat Captain and Coach agrees to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in weight loss (late penalty, dead-fish penalty and short-fish penalty), the loss of weight up to a particular time in the tournament day, the loss of weight for the entire day, disqualification from the entire tournament or, in an extreme circumstance, ineligibility to participate in future AHSB Fishing Tournaments. Protests are to be made in writing within 20 minutes of the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day.

Section 2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Every team who would like to participate in a tournament should register online. Online registration closes Tuesday at 8 p.m. before the tournament on Saturday. Tournament entry fee is $50 per team The Student Angler Federation through The Bass Federation requires an annual membership fee of $25 for each angler. (This membership will be required for substitutes as well.) You must provide a copy of your TBF registration form and TBF number prior to registration. If form is not provided, you will not be able to fish in the tournament. Registration fees are paid by cash only. We do not accept checks or debit/credit cards. Once fees are paid, there will be no refunds. All team members are required to attend a pre-tournament meeting before each tournament. Pre-tournament meetings will be announced.

Participation is open to 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade school students providing that the 12th grade student does not turn 19 before September 1st of their senior year. There will be no special allowances for anyone not in those grades. Contestants must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the liability form. If you are 16 and older, you must also have a valid fishing license for the waters they fish. Contestants are required to follow all applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws. Any violation of such regulations and laws may result in disqualification from the tournament.

Arkansas High School Bassers has two divisions - High School and Junior Division. Teams, with both anglers in 5th - 8th grade, will compete in the Junior Division. Teams, with both anglers in 9th - 12 grade, will compete in the High School Division. If your team has one angler that is a Junior Division and the other in the High School Division, the team must compete in the high school division. The Junior Division will weigh in before the High School Division.

Section 3. OFFICIAL DESIGNATED TEAM

Arkansas High School Bassers is a Team Tournament Trail. Fishing alone is not considered a Team. However, if an emergency arises and a team member has no one to fish with, here are the officially supported replacements for a

tournament: another Student Angler (Substitute) or Observer (must be an adult). The alternative emergency options may only be used twice in a fishing season.
Teams are responsible for filling observer positions in the boat. If one can not be found by Tournament day, please contact the Tournament Director.

Acceptable Team Combinations:

1. Boat Captain + Team
2. Boat Captain + Team 1 (Angler) + Team 2 (Angler)
    - 2 Teams sharing a boat captain (Note: You will be responsible for paying for two registration fees.) ● Each team will keep separate limits of 5 fish each.
3. Boat Captain + Angler 1 + Observer or Substitution
    - You may only use this option twice in a fishing season.
    - Remember, the substitute angler must pay the $25 membership fee.

There must be three people in the boat in order to fish our tournaments. There cannot be more than 3 people in the boat at any time during the tournament.

Section 4. CONSERVATION

All bass to be weighed in must be presented to the director(s) in a weigh-in bag filled with enough water to sustain the health of the fish through the weigh-in. No team/individual shall possess more than 5 legal bass at any time (Legal culling is permitted). Possession of more than 5 legal bass will be grounds for expulsion from the Tournament in question. Switching or sharing fish with other teams or individuals is a violation of these rules and will result in immediate disqualification.

Section 5. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION
The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted by contestants, coaches, boat captains or anyone working on a team's behalf within 10 days of the start of any tournament. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification. A team may not pay a boat captain for their services. A team may reimburse a boat captain for actual fuel and travel expenses related to the tournament. However, a team or anyone acting on a team's behalf, may NOT pay or "hire" a Boat Captain for their time or knowledge. Contestants, coaches, boat captains, parents (anyone acting on a team's behalf) may not buy or barter a fishing location from anyone.

Section 6. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE AND COMPETITION

Anglers may fish through Monday, 11:59 p.m. of the week of the tournament for that body of water. However, Boat Captains may fish through Friday, 11:59 p.m. of the week of the tournament. Once competition is underway, contestants and coaches may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except contestants and coaches confirmed in the tournament and through publicly available sources (quasi-public websites set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are not publicly available sources). On competition day, teams may not follow a non-contestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers by non-contestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification. Safe light will be determined by the tournament director with a 15 minute take-off warning announced.

Section 7. SAFETY

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 anglers. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. Weather delays on tournament days, resulting in half of the tournament day being lost (first flight take-off and check in), will result in cancellation. In the event a tournament must be cancelled, it will be done so by Wednesday of the week of the tournament.

Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant, coach and boat captain on the water is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved chest-type personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is running. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location with a driver behind the steering wheel or at the tiller in full control of the boat whenever it is on plane or the combustion engine is running and in gear. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation and in gear is not permitted. Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is running. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants, coaches and boat captains. At the discretion of the tournament director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is imminent. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

Boat trouble must be reported immediately to one of the contacts on the information sheet given at check in for each tournament to avoid penalties or possible disqualification.

Section 8. SPORTSMANSHIP

All anglers and boat captains are expected to conduct themselves with the highest standards of integrity, respect, fair play and conservation and to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, the Arkansas High School Bassers, TBF, SAF, MLF, tournaments sponsors, the school the team is representing, the sport of fishing, and our combined efforts to promote the sport.. Unsportsmanlike conduct—including but not limited to cheating, excessive arguing, disrespect toward tournament officials, fellow competitors, or volunteers—will not be tolerated. Competitors should demonstrate honesty, courtesy, and respect for others both on and off the water.

Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the rules for the 2025-2026 High School Fishing season including both the TBF/SAF rules as well as the Arkansas High School Bassers rules. .
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or cannabis products or any kind of mind-altering substance during registration, the pre-tournament meeting or during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- Conviction of a felony within the past 36 months.
- Suspension/disqualification, probation or ban from any tournament or fishing organization.
- Boat operation in an unsafe or unsportsmanlike manner.
- **Boating and Casting Distance Rule**
    - Competitors may not position their boat within **50 yards** (150 feet) of another competitor's boat during official fishing hours.

- Additionally, competitors must not position themselves within **casting distance** of another competitor.
- In the event of a dispute, tournament officials will determine whether a violation has occurred.
- Violations of this rule may result in penalties or disqualification.

- Violation of a posted no-wake area.
- Publicly criticizing or questioning the integrity of the Arkansas High School Bassers, TBF/SAF or MLF or their officials, including but not limited to any rules, policies and procedures.
- Dissemination of disparaging content or content that one should reasonably know would harm the reputation of the Arkansas High School Bassers, TBF/SAF and/or MLF companies, officials and sponsors.
- Any other words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set forth.

The goal of this tournament is to promote friendly competition, teamwork, and a love for the sport of fishing. In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, tournament officials have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete, to disqualify a contestant or impose any penalty outlined herein.

Section 9. BOAT CAPTAINS

Boat Captains must supply and drive boats for their teams. To qualify as a boat captain, the person accompanying a team must be at least 19 years old, have not guided on the tournament waters in the past 90 days, or fished a tournament with an entry fee of more than $500 or more within the last calendar year. Anyone wishing to be considered boat captain that has paid more than this amount to enter a tournament within the past calendar year must be approved by the tournament director.

Anglers **MAY**:

- assist in unloading and loading boat
- operate the trolling motor only, during tournament hours

Anglers **MAY NOT**:

- Operate the boat. The consequence of failure to follow this rule will result in an automatic disqualification from the tournament for the first offense. The second offense will result in disqualification of participation in the tournament trail.

Boat Captains will serve as “officials” during fishing tournaments and will not be allowed to fish. The role of a boat captain is to act as a mentor, coach, observer and captain of the boat. They may suggest fishing areas, techniques, baits, etc., however, the final decision, as long as safety is not an issue, on where to fish or fishing methods will be up to the Student Angler. The boat captain is NOT allowed to cast lines or lures, set the hook, or play fish to the boat on fishing tournament competition days. They may use the dip net. Boat Captains have complete control of the boat and outboard engine at all times. Boat Captains are subject to follow the same rules as the Student Anglers, and penalties may be applied to the team in the boat. Boat Captains are also subject to polygraph tests or truth verification tests the same as the Student Anglers.

The use of mobile communication devices may only be used by the boat captains but not for the purposes of sharing fishing information during the tournament.

Section 10. BOAT AND HORSEPOWER REGULATION

All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 15 feet in length. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated live well space to maintain alive a limit catch of bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards is 250 horsepower, not to exceed the horsepower capacity set forth on the "Maximum Capacities" placard described below. Each boat must have a clearly legible "Maximum Capacities" (or comparably titled) placard 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 placard or the 250-horsepower maximum set by these rules.

By signing the entry form, contestants and boat captains agree to submit their boat and/or motor to an inspection by tournament officials. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating placard will be cause for disqualification from the tournament and may result in ineligibility to compete in future AHSB Fishing tournaments.

Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition.

Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks or auxiliary fuel tanks that are securely strapped or otherwise fastened to the boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle.

Section 11. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS

Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the lure in the water. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Only ONE fishing rod per contestant may be used at a time. **Students must initiate and complete every cast in order for a catch to be considered legal.** Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. All bass caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth and immediately shown to your coach for verification.

Section 12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

Teams may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries defined on Highschoolfishing.org that is available to the public and accessible by boat, except areas designated as "off-limits," "no boats," "keep out," "restricted," "no trespassing" or "no fishing" (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by tournament officials, local, state or federal officials, or within 50 yards (150 feet) of a contestant's boat. Violation of this rule for the first offense will be a warning, second offense may result in disqualification of the tournament. All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament. Teams must leave and return to the check-in by boat. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. Tournament boats may be loaded on a

trailer before the weigh-in. In the event of equipment failure or emergency, there are three permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both contestants remaining in their boat and being towed by water, (2) by one contestant entering the boat of another team or (3) both contestants entering a rescue boat so designated by the tournament director. Under these three conditions the team's catch may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules). Teams that elect to return to the check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day's catch to that point in time of the tournament day. Any team returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the tournament director or his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of teams to locate the tournament director to request a restart. Teams must remain together at all times and within sight of their tournament official until check-in. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for restroom breaks is permitted. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

Section 13. CHECKPOINTS

There will be only one checkpoint for check-in in the morning and afternoon.

Live wells will be checked as the boat passes the buoy boat calling out take off numbers. As you pass by the boat, have your live wells open. Once you have safely passed the buoy boat and out of the no wake zone, close your live wells and take off.

Failure to go through boat check and or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. All fishing must cease upon check-in.

If you are leaving a tournament early, you must 1) contact one of the contacts on the tournament information sheet, and 2) leave the tournament boat number information sheet in the designated area at the AHSB trailer. 1st offense of failing to notify will result in that team taking off last at the next tournament. 2nd offense will result in a 30 minute take off penalty at the next tournament.

In order to be considered checked in, you must check in with officials using your tournament boat number information sheet in the designated area at the boat ramp. The official location for each tournament will be given to you on the boat number information sheet. The tournament boat number information sheet will be turned at the weigh in station whether you have fish to weigh in or not. 1st offense of not turning in these items will result in that team taking off last at the next tournament. 2nd offense will result in a 30 minute take off penalty at the next tournament.

Random boat checks throughout the tournaments and at weigh in will be conducted to look at live wells, life jackets, and safety devices.

Section 14. LATE PENALTY

Teams that are not at the designated afternoon checkpoint at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight. Teams more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight.

Section 15. LIVE FISH

Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated live well. Eight ounces (1/2 lb) will be deducted from the total weight for up to two (2) dead bass presented for weigh-in. Any more than two (2) dead bass presented at weigh-in will result in disqualification. **Ice-Chests as live wells will not be permitted without prior approval from tournament Director(s) .**

If you bring in a “non-releasable” fish or a dead fish, it is your responsibility to remove the fish from the tournament site. Fish determined to be “non-releasable” or those that are dead may not be put back into the water.

Section 16. SCORING

Scoring is determined by the final weight of each team’s catch during each tournament. Only largemouth, spotted, redeye or smallmouth bass are accepted species. The tournament limit is five bass per team unless the state or lake limit is less than five, in which case the state or lake limit prevails. Teams possessing more than the tournament limit will have their catch to that point in the day disqualified and, time permitting, are eligible for a restart from the takeoff location. Any team possessing more than 5 fish at weigh-in will be disqualified immediately. The minimum length limit for bass is determined by the lake where the tournament is being held. Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit will be penalized at the rate of 1 pound for each short bass presented. Each team’s catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag, not a personal weigh-in bag. The winning team is determined by the day’s heaviest catch.

If there is a question related to the weight or measurement of the fish, the anglers must address it at the time of the weigh-in. If you leave the weigh-in area, you forfeit your right to dispute the weight or measurement of the fish.

Any protests or rule violations must be reported within 15 minutes of the closing of the scales to the Tournament Director(s). In the event of a dispute, Tournament Director(s) and Board Members present will meet to discuss the issue and make a final decision.

Section 17. TIES

Ties will be broken by big bass. If a tie remains, the total number of fish for the tournament will break the tie. If a tie remains, it will be broken by a flip of the coin.

Section 18. ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND CANNABIS

During all days of competition, the display or wearing of alcohol, tobacco, or cannabis logos is strictly prohibited. Anglers and boat captains may not smoke or use tobacco or cannabis products during tournament hours, including weigh-in. The use of alcohol is expressly prohibited during tournament hours, including weigh-in. Any angler or boat captain found in violation of these rules will be immediately disqualified.

Section 19. INSURANCE

Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required on all boats used in High School Fishing tournaments. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat. Random checks will be conducted. Failure to provide proof of insurance when requested by the tournament director may result in disqualification.

Section 20. RELEASE OF LIABILITY

Before an Angler, Boat Captain, Coach or Observer is allowed to compete in an AHSB event. That Angler, Boat Captain, Coach or Observer must have a signed Release of Liability waiver for the Arkansas High School Bassers on file with the AHSB.

Section 21. CLASSIC TOURNAMENT ELIGIBILITY

1. The top 20 teams based on the AHSB Classic Standings earned during regular AHSB tournaments are eligible to participate in the AHSB Classic Tournament.
2. The 20 teams will be made up of the top 15 senior high teams and the top 5 junior high teams.
3. Teams must fish at least 5 out of the 7 regular AHSB fishing tournaments to be eligible for the classic tournament.
4. Points are accumulated from the results of the team's points earned in each regular AHSB fishing tournament.
5. The Classic team must be the original registered team. There are no substitutes or observers allowed in the Classic.
6. WILD CARD INVITE: Any senior high team who wins 1st place in a regular AHSB Tournament automatically wins an invite to fish the AHSB Classic, even if their team is not in the top 20 AHSB Classic Standings.
7. TIE BREAKER: In the event of a tie in points at the end of the season, the tie will be broken by assessing the total weight for the season. The team with the higher weight will be placed higher in the final standings.

Section 22. CLASSIC TOURNAMENT RULES

1. All AHSB regular fishing tournament rules apply to the AHSB Classic tournament.
2. The classic tournament will include the top 15 senior high teams, the top 5 junior high teams and any wild card winners.
3. The top 20 teams in the AHSB Classic Standings Final Results are guaranteed a slot as well as any Wild Card Invites, but **MUST** register online by the deadline to indicate commitment.
4. Teams in 21st place and below in the AHSB Classic Standings Final Results are invited to register, we will fill in the 20 boat field according to rank.
5. The final boat field will be announced along with the venue at least one week prior to the Classic tournament.
6. There will be **NO** pre-fishing for anglers or boat captains for the Classic tournament.

Section 23. FINAL SAY

Arkansas High School Bassers Tournament officials will have the final say in all matters concerning rules interpretation or any extenuating or unforeseen circumstances which may arise during any tournament.