

~ OFFICIAL RULES ~



- 1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT:** Rules will remain unchanged or amended for the season, unless voted on and approved by NHBF Club Presidents and Executive Board members during monthly meeting. If rules are amended an update will be posted on NHBF's Facebook page and Website. It's the responsibility of each participant to read and know the NHBF Rules. If there are questions you need to address them with the NHBF Tournament Director or NHBF President prior to the start of an event. Strict adherence to NHBF tournament rules is expected by all participants. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left to the on-site NHBF Tournament Director and NHBF President. NHBF officials may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in any NHBF tournament.
- 2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY:** Anglers minimum age for participation in any NHBF tournament is 16 years of age. Any person under the age of 18 must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian on the TBF Event Waiver form, proof of age is the responsibility of the participant. Participation by anyone in any NHBF tournament is at the sole discretion of the NHBF Tournament Director or NHBF President. All participants must have in their possession a valid fishing license covering the waters and all days to be fished. Boaters are required to have a valid NH boaters' certificate or reciprocal boaters certificate/license for the state or body of water a NHBF tournament is being held on. All state rules regarding fishing will be observed unless more stringent regulations are specified in pre-tournament briefing. **NHBF specifically reserve the right to refuse participation in any NHBF tournament or other special event participation, to anyone, for any reason.**
- 3. REGISTRATION & FORMAT:** Registration for all NHBF tournaments will be completed online only at <https://www.nhtbf.com/> and registration will close 48 hours prior to each tournament. The only exception is the TBF Semifinals, refer to NHBF By-Laws on NHBF website and TBF National Semifinals rules for further details which can be found at <http://www.bassfederation.com/> . No refunds for any reason other than if the tournament is cancelled by NHBF. If the event is cancelled by NHBF refunds will be issued (Entry fee minus processing fee). Disqualification from any tournament for any reason will result in forfeiture of entry fee and prohibition from participating. Tournament fees can be found under each individual Tournament Details section located on the NHBF website. The payout is 80% of entry fees.

- 4. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE, CHECK IN, COMPETITION:** Tournament waters are open for fishing anytime until midnight prior to the first competition day. The only exception is the TBF Semifinals, refer to TBF National Semifinals rules for further details which can be found at <http://www.bassfederation.com/>. Each team is required to check in during the morning of each competition day. During the tournament a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band 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 an emergency. If so equipped, contestants may listen to marine band weather.
- 5. SAFETY & TOURNAMENT INTEGRITY:** Safe conduct must always be observed by all participants. Participants must abide by all local navigation laws and always avoid restricted areas. All participants are required and agree to wear a fully zippered fastened or snapped Coast Guard-approved type III or greater chest type personal floatation device anytime the combustion engine is running. Tournament officials have the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day, restrict tournament waters or impose speed limits because of navigation, traffic, bad weather or any other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors or the public. In the event of a storm, lightning, severe weather or any unsafe condition, participants should remove themselves from competition and seek safety or shelter until it is safe to continue. Participants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except in case of emergency. Competitors may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is eminent. They must, however, stay within sight of each other. NHBF will announce emergency contact numbers\instructions at the pre-tournament briefing. ALL the rules, particularly the safety rules, are the responsibility of ALL participants and officials to verify / adhere to.
- 6. SPORTSMANSHIP:** Participants will conduct themselves in a true sportsmanlike, courteous, safe, and ethical manner, always maintaining professional demeanor in public and in communication with officials. The “NHBF and TBF” is the “grassroots ambassadors” of fishing, maximum courtesy must be always practiced, especially regarding boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Fishing on the tournament waters is permitted anywhere except within 50 yards of another competitor’s boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position with the trolling motor out of the water. The anchored boater must also declare that his/her boat is anchored. 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 unfavorable conduct, speech or action by a participant in our efforts to promote sportsmanship, clean waters and conservation will not be tolerated and could affect eligibility to participate. Each competitor is expected to participate in the marshaling of the field to help maintain the highest integrity of competition. 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 and/or any use by the final day

designated "leaders" until any polygraph examinations are complete will not be tolerated and shall be cause for disqualification. All competitors are bound by prevailing state statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. Any conduct prior to or during the event 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/or disqualification. Any disqualification discipline or suspension from any fishing organization may be grounds for rejecting any application for participation or disqualification. Any violation of these basic sporting principles will be taken seriously.

- 7. PAIRINGS:** No Angler will be allowed to fish alone in any NHBF event. If an angler does not show up or must withdraw and a Standby Angler\Observer cannot be found by the start of the event that angler will be dropped from the event with no refund. Boat numbers are randomly drawn by the WeighFish TD app as each team is entered into the tournament via the app.
- 8. BOAT EQUIPMENT & SAFETY:** The safety of all contestants, ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH SOME TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH SAFETY DEVICE. This engine stop 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. Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer if required. The horsepower rating of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this plate. Changing or altering standard factory motor parts to increase horsepower over factory rated horsepower is forbidden and will result in disqualification. During any official practice or competition day(s) of any NHBF event no contestant may operate a boat unless they have documented proof of an insurance policy with reasonable amounts of watercraft liability coverage on that particular boat and a valid expiration date. Proof must remain WITH THE BOAT during the entire event RANDOM CHECKS MAY BE CONDUCTED AT ANY TIME. Digital copy will be accepted. Policy must be in full force covering the competitors in that boat on all dates of the event. NOTE: Statements of "No fixed expiration date" is NOT acceptable. All tournament boats are required to have in their possession all Coast Guard-required safety equipment, including but not limited to approved type III or greater chest type personal flotation devices, a type IV throw cushion, fire extinguisher, distress horn/flag/whistle, and display boat marker (supplied by tournament officials). Great Lakes, Canadian border or navigable water ways may also require and anchor and flares. In addition, each boat must have a functional bilge pump and LiveWell space, properly aerated, to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch. NHBF recommends the use of LiveWell additives to promote the healthy release of all fish to their natural habitat. Further NHBF recommends the use of ICE to cool LiveWell water and improve oxygen levels during "hotter" months. The Tournament Director shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate". Fishing boats may be used that are 16 feet in total length or longer, propeller driven and must have a rear deck, Boater's must make a back seat available to their Co-Angler if so requested. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited with big motor. Gas tanks that are factory installed or auxiliary tanks installed by a factory 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 properly secured or strapped in a

boat, that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to all contenders and/or the public. No "barges" or similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. All tournament boats must be cleaned of all harmful exotic aquatic species prior to entering the water and upon departure from infected waters. CLEAN DRAIN & DRY

- 9. BOAT CHECK & ID:** Each boat will be given a LiveWell and SAFETY INSPECTION check prior to the start of each tournament. NHBF reserves sole discretion to assign boat numbers in any manner. There will be only one checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through official boat check in the morning or to check in at the check-in point in the afternoon can result in disqualification. All fishing must cease upon check-in. At the time of check-out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all safety and tournament rules. If anglers leave the tournament prior to weigh-in, they need to text or call the tournament director.
- 10. TACKLE & EQUIPMENT:** Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" is permitted. Only ONE (1) fishing rod (10-foot maximum length from butt of the handle to rod tip) and reel may be in use at any one time. All other types prohibited. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional and sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day's catch disqualified. When fishing for bass you can see with the naked eye, with glasses or via visual aids, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth. No gaffs or grippers are allowed to land bass nor permitted in the boat. 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. Twin arm spinnerbaits, underspins and 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 twin arm spinnerbaits, underspins and 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 head or line tie point. The bend of the main hook must be even or trail behind where the blades attach to the wires. NHBF Tournament Director and NHBF President have the sole authority to determine whether a lure is considered a single lure as defined above.
- 11. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Tournament waters shall be established by NHBF Officials for each tournament and announced in pre-tournament briefing. Each competitor must obtain this information from the tournament official. Fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere except: Any water within these tournament boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" by state or federal agencies will be OFF-LIMITS. Also, any live fish release area established by NHBF Tournament Officials will be Off-limits and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. No contestant may "Buy" or "Barter" a fish or a fishing location. Only water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to all contestants. Contestants may not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The removal of official local, state or federal barricades or barriers at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited. The use of any type of block & tackle, rope, cable or similar type system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is

prohibited. On tournament days, participants are prohibited from fishing except during designated tournament fishing hours. Participants should stay off tournament waters before and after tournament hours except to navigate to and from the check-in site and launch facilities, if repairs and/or a test-run are needed contact a NHBFB tournament official first. Contestants must leave and return to the check-in by boat and all boats must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No boats may be loaded on a trailer before the weigh-in except by direction of the tournament director or you will be disqualified. In the event of equipment failure or emergency the tournament director must be notified as soon as it is safe to do so. There are only two permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both paired anglers remaining in their boat and being towed by water, or (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one or both paired anglers entering the boat of another tournament contestant, at which point all fishing must cease by all parties. Under these two conditions contestants' catches may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) provided that all contestants fish are adequately marked to provide clear distinction between their catches to the tournament director. Contestants who 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. Otherwise, contestants must always remain together and within sight of each other. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for a restroom break is permitted. However, ALL FISHING MUST CEASE, anytime partners are separated.

12. LATE PENALTY: Competitors not at the official safety check in point as described above at the appointed check in time shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day, including any "Big Fish Award". Any competitors more than fifteen (15) minutes late shall lose all weight credit for that day. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case will a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time." Return time shall be defined as off-plane no longer fishing, within 100 yards and plainly visible by the official timekeepers.

13. SCORING: Scoring will be done with a 100-point system. 1st place team will receive 100 points and scoring will continue in a 1-point descending manner for every place below 1st place. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth Bass will be weighed. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a bass. The fish limit shall be announced in morning briefing prior to the start of each tournament. 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 fish first, down to the stated limit and receive a **2lb penalty**. The official length shall be announced at the tournament briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters; in no case will it be less than 12 inches. **NONE PERCING CULL TAGS ONLY. IF ANYONE IS FOUND TO BE USING ANY TYPE OF PERCING CULL TAG A 1 lb. PENALTY WILL BE ISSUED TO DAILY LIMIT.** 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 1 lb for each non-legal fish. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. **ALL LUNKERS MUST**

BE TAGGED OR THEY WILL NO BE COUNTED TOWARDS LUNKER BUT WILL BE COUNTED TOWARDS TOTAL WEIGHT.

It is the angler's responsibility to determine lunkers. There will be no courtesy measuring and the official measuring devise will be whatever the NHBF tournant director chooses to use. Any fish that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of Tournament Officials. All hooks must be removed from fish's mouth, if not removed an **8-ounce penalty** will be given. 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. Once a competitor's catch has been presented to tournament officials, no one may alter nor add to their catch or return to their boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded. Fish must not be "Stringered" at any time during the tournament or an **8-ounce penalty** will be issued. This would also include any device that would hold more than one fish in the LiveWell. Balance beams can be used for sorting fish but cannot be left attached to a fish.

14. CATCH AND RELEASE: No culling of dead fish. For each legal dead fish presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be **penalized eight (8) ounces**, to be deducted from the total weight of that fish. Tournament Officials shall have sole authority for accessing penalty points. Fish will be released 100 yards from shoreline.

15. TIES: In case of a tie during a NHBF tournament 1.) Largest number of legal fish weighed-in during the competition; 2.) Largest number of legal LIVE fish weighed-in during the competition; 3.) The heaviest single days catch during competition; 4.) The second heaviest single days catch during competition. 5.) The largest lunker caught during a tournament; In the unlikely event a tie remains after these four tiebreakers are employed; a flip of a coin will be used to determine the winner(s) and the money, if any will be equally split. Ties for lesser positions shall be resolved by means selected by the NHBF Tournament Director or NHBF President.

For TOY tie Breakers refer to TOY Rules listed on <https://www.nhtbf.com/> .

16. PROTESTS & TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS: Anyone has a right to protest a contestant. Protests should be in writing prior to the official closing of the scales. If it is a participant protesting another participant there will be a \$25 protest fee paid when submitting protest via cash of Venmo. The fee will be returned if the protest is found valid. Following interviews with concerned parties or truth verification testing if required, a final ruling will be made. In the event rules infractions occurred a penalty of daily and/or tournament weight may be applied, and cash, prizes and awards must be returned if so requested. If a protest is found valid, the disqualified party must pay all investigative costs. **RANDOM and "FOR CAUSE" TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS CAN BE GIVEN AT ANY TIME THROUGHOUT SEASON. EACH COMPETITOR AGREES, BY THEIR SIGNATURE ON ANY ENTRY FORM, WRITTEN OR ELECTRONIC and or by their participation in a NHBF event, TO SUBMIT TO A TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST OR POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO FOR ANY REASON and abide by the conclusion. Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification. The administration and interpretation of the truth verification test shall be the sole responsibility of NHBF, and their agent(s), and shall be used (or not used) at their discretion. Without limiting anything herein, NHBF shall have sole discretion to**

select the place at which such a truth verification test shall be administered, the individual who administers such a truth verification test, and the scope of the questions which may be asked during such test and the determination of the meaning of the results. The participant shall be available, at their own expense, at the location stipulated and shall cooperate in all respects.