

2011 OBF TOURNAMENT RULES* (REV. 12-04-10)

1. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Section 1: First-year Club Eligibility

A club must have been affiliated at least 21 days preceding their Regional Tournament and then qualify for their State Qualifying Tournament (SQT), Ohio Bass Federation Championship and Ohio Tournament of Champions Tournament .

Section 2: Individuals: General

To participate in FEDERATION tournaments, you must be a member of an affiliated club, the OHIO BASS FEDERATION, THE Bass FEDERATION (TBF), and FLW. You may be a member of a maximum of three clubs and may participate in a maximum of three Regional Tournaments if you are a member of a club in those regions and, if you are qualified, you may fish one or both State Qualifying Tournament.

Section 3: Clubs: Regional Tournaments

To participate in the FEDERATION's Regional Tournaments, a club must meet the following requirements:

(A): Clubs must have been affiliated at least 21 days preceding the tournament. **Regional Directors must do a club roster check using the TBF online roster system immediately after this date and only members listed with current dues paid are eligible to fish Regional competition.**

(B): Clubs may send as many entries as they wish. EACH entry must include a boater and a no-boater.

(C): The completed entry form, with \$100 entry fee and insurance verification for boaters, must be submitted to the Regional Directors no later than 21 days prior to Regional Tournament date. This is the competitors' responsibility, not the club's responsibility.

(D): At Regional competition, a percentage of participants statewide shall be established resulting in a maximum of 300 entries for advancement to the SQT's. All Regionals must be completed by June 15. Entry forms for the SQT's shall be distributed by the appropriate Directors at the Regional tournaments. Completed entry forms, with insurance verification for all boaters, and **\$50 payment in full** for the entry fee, must be RECEIVED by the Tournament Director no later than July 3. This is the competitors' responsibility, not the club's. Entries received after that date will NOT be accepted.

Section 4: State Qualifying Tournaments (SQT's)

(A) To participate in the State Qualifying Tournaments, an individual must have qualified through Regional Tournament competition and meet requirements in Sections 1, 2 and 3. **The SQT's will be held at a site and date selected by the Tournament Director and approved by the board. Entry fees for SQT's are \$60** SQT-1 (North) shall include all qualifiers from Regions 2, 3 and 4. SQT-2 (South) shall include all qualifiers from Regions 1, 5 and 6. Qualified members may apply to fish both SQT's. Members from outside their Region SQT may only fill non-boater spots in other SQT that are still open. If there are more applications than openings then they will be selected by a lottery.

(B) Boater status at SQT's shall be determined by position of finish in Regional competition. The top 50% in order of those advancing from each Region indicating they will bring a boat, and including proper insurance verification, shall be boaters in each SQT. Contestants in both SQT's and the Ohio Bass Federation Championship will keep their same partner both days of the tournament.

(C) A minimum of 61 finishers at each SQT advance to the Ohio Bass Federation Championship. The top 30 in order of finish indicating they will bring a boat, and including proper insurance verification, shall be boaters.

Section 5: OHIO BASS FEDERATION CHAMPIONSHIP

Participation is by qualification through SQT's and Ohio Tournament of Champions only and is limited to 125 contestants, plus that year's National Championship contenders (boater and no-boater) and the defending State Championship winner. All contestants must meet requirements in Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4. Entry forms shall be distributed at each SQT. Completed entries, with **\$70** payment in full and insurance verification for all boaters, must be RECEIVED by the Tournament Director no later than September 1. This is the competitors' responsibility, not the club's. **The Ohio Bass Federation Championship shall be held at a site and date determined by the Tournament Director and approved by the board.** The winner of this event shall be the OHIO BASS FEDERATION State Champion. Boats must be longer than 15 feet for use at the Ohio Bass Federation Championship.

2011 OBF TOURNAMENT RULES* (REV. 12-04-10)

Section 6: OHIO TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

Participation is determined by local clubs **being able to send two boaters and two no-boaters**. Entry fee is \$100 total for each boater and non-boater and must include insurance verification for the boaters. This event shall be a one-day event **at a site and date selected by the Tournament Director and approved by the board**. The first and second place finishers shall be invited to enter the Ohio Bass Federation Championship as a boater and no-boater. 100% payout after all OBF expenses shall be 1st place – 40%, 2nd place – 23%, 3rd place – 17%, 4th place – 12% and 5th place – 8% with plaques to the first and second place finishers. Must have a minimum of 20 teams to hold tournament while paying 3 places. With each additional 7 boats an extra place will be paid.

2. DIVISIONAL TEAM AND ALTERNATE SELECTION: The following shall be invited to be on the Ohio team that competes in the TBF Northern Divisional Tournament:

(A): The top twelve (12) finishers at the Ohio Bass Federation Championship.

(B): The 13th, 14th and 15th place finishers at the Ohio Bass Federation Championship shall comprise a pool of alternates. The first of those three, in order, willing to make the trip shall be designated the official alternate with the others as back-up. Once the entry forms have been mailed to TBF, no further changes can be made.

(C): Six (6) official Team Ohio boaters shall be taken in order, based on availability, by position of finish at the Ohio Bass Federation Championship.

(D): Anglers invited to be members of Team Ohio shall be required to sign an official contract either stating their agreement to follow its guidelines or declining to be a member of the team.

GENERAL RULES: The following rules pertain to all state and regional tournaments conducted by the OHIO BASS FEDERATION, INC. Nothing in these rules shall be interpreted as placing limits on a person with a disability being able to compete in a tournament conducted by the OHIO BASS FEDERATION, INC. It shall be the responsibility of the Tournament Director to make

reasonable accommodations as necessary to insure that a person with a disability is able to compete as equally as possible with other contestants.

3. RULES CHANGES: Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. The following rules will remain unchanged, except for special tournaments conducted by the FEDERATION. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions as he deems appropriate, including, without limitations, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the Tournament Director and tournament officials shall be final in all matters except where an appeal to the Board of Directors is provided.

4. PARTICIPANTS & ELIGIBILITY: Participation in all FEDERATION state and regional tournaments is by invitation only in accordance with Tournament Rule 1. Tournaments are open only to members who are 16 years of age or older. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the potential competitor. During any FEDERATION tournament, no contestant may operate a boat unless he has submitted documented proof of a minimum of \$300,000 boating liability insurance with his entry. This documented proof must show an effective date and expiration date. **Persons born on or after January 1, 1982 must have successfully passed an Ohio Division of Watercraft NASBLA approved boating education course before operating a boat in an Ohio Bass Federation Tournament.** Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, is handicapped in such a manner as to endanger the safety and well being of his partner or himself shall not be eligible.

5. SPECIAL RULES/VIOLATIONS: During the tournament, a competitor may not “skin dive” or “scuba dive” on the tournament waters. During the tournament, a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, a cellular phone,

2011 OBF TOURNAMENT RULES* (REV. 12-04-10)

or any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish. If so equipped, contestants may listen to the marine band weather information. Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director any violation or infraction of these rules. Violations, the failure to report violations or suggestions to violate these rules or false verification of weigh-in forms will be cause for disqualification. Each competitor agrees to submit, by his signature on an entry form, to a polygraph test should he be accused of any rule violation. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the Tournament Director, and his agent, and shall be used (or not used) at his discretion. Without limiting the foregoing, the Tournament Director shall have sole discretion to select the location at which such polygraph test shall be administered, the individual who administers such polygraph test, and the scope of the questions which may be asked during such test. The participant shall be available, at his expense, at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all aspects of such examination.

6. REGISTRATION: Each competitor must register with tournament officials no later than 60 minutes before the designated starting time each tournament day. Competitors registering later than 60 minutes before the designated starting time will be penalized one pound and may be disqualified if not registered 30 minutes prior to that time. The penalty shall be subtracted from the competitor's total catch. On each tournament day, any boats not launched and prepared to start the tournament at least 30 minutes prior to the designated starting time may be disqualified. In Regional tournaments, this may also result in requiring the other member on that competitor's entry to be withdrawn from the tournament. A competitor who, without notifying a tournament official, fails to register prior to the start of each tournament day will be disqualified from that tournament and all remaining FEDERATION tournaments for that tournament season and the following tournament season. The competitor will be notified in writing and may appeal the disqualification to the Board of Directors of the FEDERATION. The appeal shall be made in writing through the FEDERATION President within 30 days of the disqualification. The appeal

shall state the reason(s) for the competitor's failure to abide by this rule. A competitor withdrawing from ANY state tournament after the entry deadline for that event will forfeit his entry fee. Withdrawing within the final two weeks prior to, or during, any event may also result in disqualification from all remaining tournaments for that tournament season and all tournaments in the following tournament season.

The Tournament Director shall have full authority to rule on the validity of cancellations and withdrawals, and the imposition of disqualifications. Appeals may be made in writing to the FEDERATION President within 30 days of pre-tournament disqualifications. The Board's decision will be final. An angler must state that he is filing an appeal when told that he will be assessed a penalty or disqualification at an event. Forms will be provided with a copy of the tournament rules at that time and he shall have 30 minutes to file the appeal. At the Regionals, SQT's and Championship, all appeals will be ruled on by a five-person panel of Board members present. (At Regionals, the Directors will appoint five people present to a panel.) The decision of this panel will be considered final, as the OBF Board will not meet in time to conduct an appeal process.

7. SAFETY: Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times. Each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved chest-type life preserver any time the combustion engine is operating and it must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. SOSpenders-type inflatables do not count as a life preserver unless they are being worn. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification. The Tournament Director has the right to delay or cancel the start of a tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather and unsafe conditions.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP: Competitors are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship (such as not passing to better your position in a no-wake zone), courtesy (profanity is unacceptable), safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed

2011 OBF TOURNAMENT RULES* (REV. 12-04-10)

cause for disqualification. Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future FEDERATION tournaments. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors and in areas near gas pumps. Any act of a competitor which reflects unfavorably on the FEDERATION effort to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants, prescription or otherwise, shall be allowed in the boats during competition or when in the weigh-in area. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon the FEDERATION's efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any entry and for disqualification.

9. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT: Only artificial lures may be used. No "live" or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of pork rinds, strips, etc. Only one casting, spinning or spin-casting rod (8-foot maximum length from butt to tip) and reel may be used at any one time. All other types are prohibited. Other rigs as specified above may be in the boat ready for use, however, only one is permitted in use at any given time. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible bass on spawning beds will have their day's catch disqualified. When fishing for visible bedding bass, your partner must confirm that any fish caught is hooked inside the mouth before it is unhooked for it to count. The use of grippers or gaffs is prohibited. Landing nets may be used.

10. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: Maximum horsepower for all outboard motors used in competition will be 250 hp and minimum horsepower shall be 25 hp. In no case shall it exceed the horsepower limitations set by the Coast Guard. The minimum horsepower requirement may be reduced for a Regional Tournament only, providing each competitor is

notified a minimum of two weeks prior to the tournament. When required, each boat MUST have a Coast Guard horsepower rating plate attached by the manufacturer and the horsepower of the outboard engine must NOT exceed the rating specified on this plate. By his signature on the entry form, each competitor agrees to submit the boat and outboard motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory-trained personnel if there is any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance to increase the performance of your engine is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor to increase the horsepower over the factory horsepower rating is forbidden and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on tournament entry forms or altering the horsepower rating numbers on the motor would also be cause for immediate disqualification.

11. BOAT AND MOTOR: All boats must be equipped with some type of operable ignition kill switch. This ignition kill device must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating and, when in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Fishing boats may be used that are 15 feet or more in length, except at the Ohio Bass Federation Championship which must be over 15 feet, and have a maximum horsepower rating of no less than 35 hp. Any raised platform or decks cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat. An electric trolling motor may be used for maneuvering, however trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. All bladder tanks and any other type of auxiliary gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by a manufacturer's authorized dealer are legal. Boats that do not have factory installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gas in tanks that meet Coast Guard regulations. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in the boat. No "barges" or similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. No boat equipped with "stick steering" shall be permitted to be used by any competitor. The definition of "stick steering" shall be made by the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may disqualify any boat from competition that, in his judgment, is deemed unsafe.

2011 OBF TOURNAMENT RULES* (REV. 12-04-10)

12. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT: Every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump, properly aerated livewell space to adequately maintain alive a limit of bass by both fishermen using the boat and an available fishing seat if requested by the no-boater. The Tournament Director shall have the sole responsibility for determining if aeration and capacity are "proper and adequate."

13. BOAT IDENTIFICATION: Prior to each day's start, each boat must have an inspection by a tournament official and receive a boat number, which must remain with the boat and be displayed at the request of tournament officials, and shown at check-in.

14. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE: A full discussion of the schedule of boat operation must be held between the two partners prior to the morning departure. This schedule must permit each partner equal time to fish from the front of the boat and to operate the trolling motor so as to afford each partner the opportunity to fish his selected waters an equal number of hours. Distance traveled to fishing locations must be considered in order not to deprive either partner fishing time while traveling to and from fishing waters. If a contestant waives the above rights, he shall retain the right to select the fishing waters for one-half of the tournament day. Any contestant who, in the judgment of tournament officials, operates the boat in such manner as to unfairly handicap his partner shall be disqualified. Each State Qualifying Tournament (SQT) and Ohio Bass Federation Championship non-boater shall pay his boating partner a **MINIMUM of \$20** for boat expenses for that day. At the Regional Tournaments, the non-boater pays this expense money directly to the boating member on his entry. (See also Rule 25.) When a non-boater requests travel to a distant fishing area, he is expected to compensate his boating partner accordingly. At Regional and State Tournaments where a ramp fee is charged, a tournament committee member shall charge each competitor that fee at check-in.

15. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: 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. No such boat shall permit any selected competitors to fish within the 50-yard circle claimed by him, to the exclusion of any other competitor. Any waters within tournament boundaries posted as "Off-limits" or "No Fishing" by state or federal agencies will be deemed off limits to all contestants. All live fish weighed in at Regional and State Tournaments must be released at a location other than at the weigh-in site or launch ramp. A live-bass release area established by the Tournament Director may be designated off limits. It will be the host club/region's responsibility to enforce the release policy with the approval of the Tournament Director. A club conducting off-site release may use it as an approved environmental project.

Only that water open to all public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to tournament competitors. All angling must be done from the boat. Competitors wishing to change fish habitat by placing any object in the tournament waters may do so if such action does not violate any state or federal regulations. All contestants in all Ohio Bass Federation tournaments must have in their possession all required fishing licenses for the tournament waters being fished.

16. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT: Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain on tournament waters during tournament days. Contestants must leave and return to the official tournament checkpoint by boat. In case of an emergency or breakdown, contestants must notify the tournament director or his representative either by cell phone or other means. All contestants will be provided with cell phone numbers. One contestant is permitted to remain with the boat while the other returns in another boat with the catch of both anglers. Fish must be marked in such a manner that each angler's catch can be identified. The catch will then be weighed and the other angler rescued. If an emergency results that one angler cannot fish, both anglers must cease fishing and a tournament official must verify their catch in order for it to be counted. If, after the emergency situation is resolved by tournament officials and enough time is left for the competitors to resume

2011 OBF TOURNAMENT RULES* (REV. 12-04-10)

fishing, a restart will be allowed and their catch will count. Trailering of boats during tournament hours is prohibited except by direction of tournament officials.

17. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT: There shall be only one official point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon. At the time of check-out, all competitors and their boats shall be in full compliance with all rules set forth by the Tournament Director. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves by means of the numbers issued at registration and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together through check-in and weigh-in.

18. SCORING: Tournament standings shall be determined by the total weight of the competitor's catch less any penalty. Only largemouth, spotted and smallmouth bass will be weighed. The limit on all inland waters and the Ohio River shall be five (5) of these species combined unless the prevailing state limit is less than five or a special limit is established by the Tournament Director, in which case it shall be the tournament limit. All tournaments on Lake Erie and its tributaries shall be restricted to a three (3) fish limit **and Canadian waters are off-limits**. Contestants may NOT cull any legal dead fish. All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the states within which they fish. At no time shall a competitor possess more than the limits described above. Tournament officials may check for violation of this provision, and in the event a competitor has in his possession more than the above-described limits, shall cull the largest bass first, down to the limit described. The official length for legal bass shall be determined by the Tournament Director; in most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line shall be weighed. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length limit shall accrue penalties at the rate of one (1) pound for each such bass and this penalty shall be deducted from the competitor's total score. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials. After a competitor checks in at the official checkpoint he must present all

legal fish in his possession to tournament officials. Once a catch is measured, counted and verified by a tournament official, that contestant may not return to his boat until his catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time and no culling systems may be used that join two or more bass together in livewells. Specially marked bags will be furnished and only fish in these bags will be weighed.

19. PENALTY POINTS: For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized six (6) ounces, .4 or .38 pounds, to be deducted from his daily score. This penalty shall **NOT** count against weight for Big Bass prizes. The Tournament Director and his designated appointees have sole authority for assessing penalty points.

20. LATE PENALTY: Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in Rule 17 at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one (1) pound per minute for each one (1) minute he is late, to be deducted from the total weight of his catch, including any weight to be counted toward a daily "big bass" award. Any competitor more than 15 minutes late shall lose that day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and no competitor shall be allowed to make up "lost time." After proper recognition at the check-in point, all fishing must cease. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced by the Tournament Director. After the tournament begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during tournament hours.

21. TIES: Any ties will be broken as follows: (A): Largest number of LIVE fish weighed for the tournament, (B): Largest number of fish weighed for the tournament, (C): Largest weight for a single day's catch (minus penalty points), (D): Largest number of LIVE fish weighed for a single day's catch, (E): Largest number of fish for a single day's catch, (F): Flip of the coin.

22. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS: Pairings and starting positions will be made randomly. Contestants will keep their same partner both days of the tournament in both SQT's and Championship only. It shall be each partner's responsibility to check out at the official checkpoint

2011 OBF TOURNAMENT RULES* (REV. 12-04-10)

and appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to start on time. Tournament officials have no responsibility for locating missing partners. The Tournament Director, at his sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the take-off. When modifications must be made due to competitors withdrawing from the tournament or failing to register on time, every effort will be made to make the changes as fairly as possible. In Regional Tournaments, this may also result in requiring the other member on the competitor's entry to be withdrawn from the tournament. Only one observer will be used in each SQT and the Championship. If two boaters cannot agree on whose boat to take, a coin toss will be used to determine the boater. When two contestants check out at the beginning of the day, they must stay together and within sight of each other's catch throughout the day until the weigh-in is completed. A contestant must not allow any bass caught by him to be counted on the score of another contestant. In such case, both contestants shall be disqualified from this and all future FEDERATION tournaments.

23. OFFICIAL BOARDING: None of the above rules shall prohibit a tournament official from approaching or boarding a competitor's boat at any time during a tournament.

24. PENALTY ASSESSMENT: All weight penalties included in these rules shall be assessed against the individual competitor and shall not exceed a daily total of zero (0-00) weight except for the short fish penalty (Rule 18). This penalty will accumulate negative weight.

25. CLUB BOATER RESPONSIBILITY: At Regionals, one half of each club's contestants shall be responsible for furnishing boats on competition days. Should a club not be able to do so, it is their responsibility to contact another participating club and arrange for someone to fill any vacant boater positions. The two clubs involved shall work out financial compensation as outlined in Rule 14 and shall notify the Regional Directors of revised boater/no-boater status.

26. APPEALS: All disqualifications or penalties in the Regionals, SQT's, Championship or any OBF tournament that might result in an individual

not advancing to another tournament must be appealed within 30 minutes after the scales close on the day the disqualification or penalty is imposed. An angler must state that he is filing an appeal when told that he will be assessed a penalty or disqualification, and forms will be provided with a copy of the tournament rules at that time. His catch will then be weighed. If his appeal is approved, then the weight of his catch will be allowed. If the violation is upheld, then the catch will be penalized or disallowed as outlined in these rules. At the SQT's and Championships, all appeals will be ruled on by a five-person panel of Board members present. If occurring at a Regional Tournament, the Directors will appoint five people present (including Board members when possible) to a panel. The decision of this panel will be considered final, as the OBF Board will not meet in time to hear an appeal.

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***NOTE:** *Where reference to a disqualification is in this underlined italic type, it shall be FOR THAT DAY ONLY.* Where reference to a disqualification is in this regular type, it shall be for the entire tournament.

Approved at the December 4, 2010 Board Meeting

Ohio Bass Federation Board of Directors