



## Texas Bassmaster Team Trail Official Rules – 2018

**1. RULE CHANGES:** Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. These rules shall remain unchanged throughout all events for the season. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions, as he deems appropriate, including and without limitation, disqualification, and forfeiture of prizes, entry fees and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Decisions of the Tournament Director and Tournament Officials are final in all matters, and are not subject to appeal, and are not reviewable by any court of law. The Texas Bassmaster Team Trail (TBTT) reserves the right to make needed changes to these rules in order to ensure the safety, welfare of the TBTT anglers, and/or the public and preserve the integrity of the TBTT. Any rule changes will immediately supersede all previously published copies of rules. It is your responsibility to read and understand the rules and how you, any points, and qualification for the Championship are affected by not complying with the following rules. Every angler, by submission of a signed entry form, acknowledges and agrees that he/she has read, understands, and accepts all rules.

**2. PARTICIPANTS, TEAMS, INSURANCE AND ELIGIBILITY:** All tournament participants must be 16 years old or older and **BASSMASTER Team Championship member** in good standing to register or participate. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of competitor. All contestants must have a valid fishing license. **DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND TOURNAMENT HOURS NO CONTESTANT MAY OPERATE A BOAT WITHOUT PROOF OF BOAT LIABILITY INSURANCE OF \$300,000 OR MORE.** Proof of insurance is required to be sent in with the tournament registration, and may also be checked on the boat as requested. If the insurance binder is not available when/if requested the boater will not be eligible to participate in the tournament and may be disqualified.

- Paid guides may not register or participate in a TBTT tournament that they have guided on the tournament lake in the previous 30 days. (Fishing Guide Definition – A person who, for compensation, accompanies, assists, or transports a person or persons engaged in fishing for bass in the water of this State).

All TBTT tournaments are team events, with all points/awards going to the team. Anglers may not fish as individuals. A team consists of two (2) anglers, one of which must be designated as the "Boater." Teams may assign one (1) alternate partner for any one (1) qualifying tournament during the year if registering for multiple qualifier events. A team shall complete the registration form prior to fishing the qualifying event declaring Boater and Partner for the Tournament Year. The designated Boater shall receive and be responsible for all tax forms and all Points for the TEAM. Should a break up of a team occur, all points earned will stay with the designated Boater, no exceptions. In the event of a death of a partner, or military deployment, an alternate team member may be requested, and is subjected to the sole and absolute approval/disapproval of the Tournament Director.



By your participation in this event you agree to submit to a polygraph test. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be the sole responsibility of the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director shall select the place, the individual and the scope of questions. The contestants shall make themselves available at their own expense for this examination.

**3. REGISTRATION:** See Texas Bassmaster Team Trail Registration Procedure on the website, for any special instructions. <http://www.texasbass.org/>.

Entry forms shall be used for membership registration purposes.

- **Mail or Hand Delivery:** In accordance with Rule #4, Teams that do not elect to participate in the Official Practice period may mail/courier delivery, or hand deliver a completed entry form, with all registration payments, along with insurance verification documents, to the Tournament Director or Regional Director no later than 7:00 pm, the Saturday prior to the tournament date – herein after referred to as the “final registration due date”. Mailed or Hand delivered registrations not delivered to, or by the due date to the appropriate Tournament Director or Regional Director are not the responsibility of Texas B.A.S.S. Nation, and must be postmarked at least seven (7) days in advance. Late entries will be subjected to a twenty-five (\$25) dollar late processing fee.
- **Mail or Hand Delivery (Practice Period Allowed):** In accordance with Rule #4, Teams that elect to participate in the Official Practice period shall have their registrations and payment completed no later than 7:00 pm, the Monday preceding the Official Practice Period – herein after referred to as the “practice period registration date”. All mailed/courier delivered Entry Forms should be mailed to the address listed on the Texas BASSMASTER Team Trail website and as listed on the entry form. Entries received after 7:00 p.m., on the Monday preceding the Official Practice Period shall be subject to a twenty-five (\$25) dollar late processing fee. Registrations delivered elsewhere or not by the due date and time, are not the responsibility of Texas B.A.S.S. Nation.

Notice - Contestants that have not paid the entry fee and submitted the registration form and documents by the “practice period registration due date” may not enter the tournament waters during the Official Practice period. Any team determined to have practiced without meeting the registration guidelines, or in any way violated Rule #4, shall not be eligible for “final registration”.

Official on-site “final registration” and tournament briefing will commence at 4:00 pm thru 6:00 pm, the day preceding the tournament, at the official take off location for the tournament. Although it is not mandatory to attend the final registration and tournament briefing, it is the contestant’s absolute responsibility to obtain any special instructions given at the official registration and tournament briefing. A team that has registered and pre-paid for a tournament, but is unable to attend the tournament, may cancel the registration by notifying the Tournament Director or Regional Director before the start of the official registration period at the ramp. The entry fee of the TEAM may be applied to the next



tournament on the schedule or refunded if cancelation reason is determined justified by Tournament Director.

#### **4. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE/OFF LIMITS: (Safe Light Hours Only)**

- Off-limits Period: All Qualifying TBTT events have no off limits with two Official Practice Days prior to the event. The TBTT Championship tournament shall have a ten (10) day off limits period, beginning on Monday, ten (10) days prior to the Championship Official Practice Period.
- Official Practice Period: For all Teams that have met Rule #3, and completed registration and payment by the “practice period registration due date”, may enter the tournament waters during the official practice period. The official practice period for all qualifying tournaments shall be the two days preceding the scheduled qualifying tournament, with the exception of the Championship Tournament.

The Thursday and Friday (safe-light hours) prior to the Championship tournament will be considered official practice.

No contestant may be on the designated tournament waters for any reason during the official off-limits period (this includes “walking” the shoreline, marinas, boat docks, etc. for the purpose of locating or catching fish). Tournament waters are also off-limits for the purpose of locating or catching fish from 6:00 pm (or designated off the water time) on the evening prior to the tournament date, until takeoff the morning of the tournament.

**5. BOAT, BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT, MOTOR and SAFETY:** Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by tournament competitors. During official practice and tournament hours, each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver. This life preserver must be worn anytime the combustion engine is operating. The preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely, and maintained in that condition until the competitor reaches his fishing location and the combustion engine is shut off. Tournament officials have the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. For the safety of all, boats must be equipped with some type of ignition kill switch. This device must be attached to the driver any time the combustion engine is operating.

All boats must be 16 ft. or more in length. No stick steering boats permitted to be used. No Contestant may have a platform, raised deck, or ladder which is higher than the gunnels of the boat. Standing on the fishing seats or outboard motor will not be allowed in TBTT events. No air or jet drive boats will be permitted during official practice or competition days. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks. Optional remote engine tanks must be factory or factory authorized dealer installed and be strapped or otherwise secured. 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. Every boat must have all required US Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and live well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain a limit catch of bass.



Tournament Safety: Tournament days may be shortened or canceled due to unsafe weather or any conditions that would endanger the safety of the competitors at the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek shelter in bad weather, at which time no fishing may occur. The Tournament Director may also permit trailering for any event.

**6. SPORTSMANSHIP:** Contestants are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation in accordance with BASSMASTER rules and policies. Any contestant(s) who displays poor sportsmanship, violates these rules, or any federal, state, or local laws, or brings unfavorable publicity to the sport of bass fishing will be disqualified and shall forfeit all entry fees and/or prize money. During official practice and all tournament hours, no competitor shall use alcohol or drugs other than those prescribed by a physician. Doing so will result in immediate disqualification. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially in the vicinity of a non-competitor's boat. All contestants are required to obey all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Examples of conduct not complying with Rule #6 standards including, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any previous conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation for a felony, a crime involving moral turpitude, or a crime related to, arising out of, or involving an fishing tournament or event, except with the full, prior written disclosure to the Tournament Director under oath and by affidavit of all facts and circumstances surrounding the conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation at least ten (10) days before the TBTT event being entered, and thereafter subject to the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion that such conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation does not result in the Contestant's honesty, integrity, character, or qualifications to enter the event being unreasonably questionable.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any mind-altering substance during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.
- Chemical substance abuse or addiction.
- Actions or words which reflect unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, and fair competition.
- Disqualification from TBTT or other fishing organizations that resulted from unexplained rule violations that result in a Contestant's honesty, integrity, character, and qualifications for entry into a TBTT event being questionable in the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion.

Upon review of the circumstances by Texas Bassmaster Team Trail and the Tournament Director, the Tournament Director shall have the right to refuse any registration, or to deny a confirmed registration, by returning the entry fee of the previously accepted application, or disqualifying Contestant. The Texas Bassmaster Team Trail reserves the right to place an official observer in a Contestant's boat at any time during competition hours.



**7. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:** Dip nets are allowed. Dip nets cannot exceed 6 1/2 feet in overall length. If fish are netted, B.A.S.S. recommends the use of a rubber or vinyl-coated net. 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 (10ft. max. from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. All other types of rods 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 live and in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will lose their day’s catch. When visible fishing, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before unhooking to be a legal fish. No gaffs may be used to boat a bass or be permitted in the boat at any time. The use of grippers in landing bass is prohibited. The use of non-penetrating cull rings is requested for the 2018 season and shall be required in all 2019 events conducted, per B.A.S.S.

**8. STARTING POSITION:** Contestants will receive their starting position as assigned by the Tournament Director. Boat numbers will be randomly drawn, by the end of the final registration period. Any contestant who starts prior to their assigned number being called may have their day’s catch nullified.

Contestants at the Texas BASS Team Trail two-day Championship event – Day 1 take-off, will receive their starting position based upon computer random selection. Day 2 takeoff will be reversed from Day 1, for the Championship two-day event.

**9. INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE:** Other than using publicly-available information (e.g. newspaper reports and internet reports), no fishing information may be purchased, bartered, solicited or received from any person within 30 days prior to any tournament, or during the days of competition for all TBTT events. Contestants may not receive fishing information from non-competitors or follow a non-competitor’s boat or participate in the placing of markers by non-competitors or participate in the practice of “hole sitting” by anyone. No skin diving or scuba diving on the tournament waters during official practice or tournament days. No use of CB Radios, VHF marine band radio or cellular phones for the purpose of locating or catching fish. All of the above may be used in the case of an emergency for location purposes only. The hiring of a bass fishing guide within 30 days prior to any tournament is strictly prohibited. (Fishing Guide Definition – A person who, for compensation, accompanies, assists, or transports a person or persons engaged in fishing for bass in the water of this State). The use of mobile communication devices, such as cell phones, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CB’s, etc., to communicate fishing information or contact with anyone during the tournament hours is strictly prohibited other than contacting the Tournament Director. In the event of an emergency situation, competitors should call 911 first and then notify the Tournament Director. Each contestant agrees to report any violation of these rules immediately to the tournament director. Failure to do so could result in your disqualification.

**10. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS, OFF LIMITS AREAS, AND METHODS:** Contestants may fish anywhere on tournament waters accessible by boat and available to the public, except areas designated as “off limits” or “no fishing” by State or Federal Officials, or within 50 yards of a competitor’s boat which was first anchored (an anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a



weight, power pole, or similar device, with the trolling motor in the up position), or within 25 yards of a non-anchored competitor's boat unless agreed upon by the other tournament angler/team. All such boats are required to advise any other competitor when such boat believes the competitor is close to being within these distances.

The act of moving bass from one area of the lake to another confined area of the same lake at any time, whether or not during official practice days or competition days, is not permitted. The live bass release area established by the tournament director will be off limits. This area will be announced at the tournament briefing. Violation of the rule will result in immediate disqualification.

Only artificial lures may be used with the exception of pork trailers and Berkley Gulp products. Only one fishing rod per angler may be used at any one time. Additional rods may be in the boat and ready for use; however, each cast and retrieve must be completed before another cast is attempted or rod is used. Trolling with the combustion engine, as a method of fishing is prohibited. Switching or sharing fish with other teams or individuals is a violation of these rules and will result in immediate disqualification. All bass must be caught alive, in a conventional, sporting manner. When sight fishing for bass, all fish must be hooked inside the mouth, to be counted as a legal fish. All angling 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, or locate bass.

The use of Alabama Rigs or similar style rigs are prohibited in all Bassmaster Team events this year to follow Bassmaster Team Championship Rules by B.A.S.S.

**11. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT:** All angling must be done from the boat. Contestants may not leave their boat to land a fish or make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during each tournament day. Contestants must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. No trailering of tournament boats will be allowed except by the direction of the tournament director.

**12. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:** There shall be only one official point for boat inspection and check out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon, and the posted launch site is designated as such for each tournament. Following a mandatory live well check, and safety inspection, all contestants are expected to be in the water ready for the first safelight take off. Take-off will be in order of number assigned by the Tournament Director. Failure to go through boat check-out in the morning or failure to officially check-in at the check-in point will result in disqualification from such event. It is the sole responsibility of each Contestant to arrive at the designated check-in location on-time. Regardless of what you are told or understand, it is the responsibility of each contestant to verify their provided flight card time, or check-in time. All fishing must cease upon check-in, or upon such other time as may be designated by the Tournament Director.





Trailing is not allowed, however, in the event of severe weather, alternate take-off and check in instructions will be given at the registration site and tournament briefing, at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director. All boats must leave the official check point by boat in the order designated at registration. Contestants may launch their boat at any public available boat ramp other than the designated take-off location, but all contestants must come through the official check-in location before leaving to fish. Contestants must leave and return to the check-in by boat. Contestants' boats must remain in the tournament waters during the event. In the event of a mechanical breakdown, there are two permitted methods of returning to the check-in:

(1) by remaining in the boat and being towed by water, or (2) by entering the boat of another competitor. The Contestants must return to the official check-in time to avoid a late penalty. 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. Any contestant 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 the Contestant to locate the Tournament Director to request a restart.

**13. SCORING:** Will be based upon a 200- point system. (Example-200 points for 1st, 199 points for 2nd, 198 points for 3<sup>rd</sup> and so on through the placements). Points drop by one for each position until all entrants are awarded points who weighed fish. A "team" not weighing in fish shall be awarded 10 points less than the points awarded for the last point placement. Each Team should ask to have his/her big fish weighed. Each Team may weigh a 5-fish limit with a minimum length of 14 inches (courtesy check is allowed) unless the lake minimum is greater. Contestants, who present bass at weigh-in which fall short of the official length or presents more than the legal limit of bass, shall lose that day's catch, as this constitutes a violation of State law. Culling of fish is each contestant's responsibility and no more than 5 fish may be kept in the live-well. Culling of dead fish is not allowed. Only Largemouth, Guadalupe, Smallmouth and Kentucky Spotted Bass will be weighed. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the tournament official's discretion. It is the contestant's responsibility to ensure all fish presented for weigh-in are of legal length according solely to the TBTT official measuring board.

**14. KILLING YOUR CATCH:** Each competitor is expected to keep his catch alive and properly aerated. There will be a .50 lb. penalty for each dead fish presented at the weigh in. The culling of dead fish is a violation of Texas law, and a violation of B.A.S.S. rules. Any contestant that culls a dead fish shall lose that day's catch. No dead bass will be eligible for Big Bass awards or prizes. The utilization of chemical live well additives which promote the healthy return of bass to their natural habitat is recommended.

**15. LATE PENALTY:** Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area, as described in rule 12, at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one (1) pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of his catch that day, including any weight to be counted towards a Big Bass award. Any competitor more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch. All fishing must cease



when that contestant has checked in. After the tournament begins, fishing the tournament water is prohibited except during the tournament hours. Tournament start and check-in times will be announced at the tournament meeting.

**16. TIES:** In case of a tie, the following tiebreakers will be used; (1) the team with the most fish weighed in, (2) the team with the largest single fish (the contestant must have had their big fish weighed), (3) if a tie still remains, the flip of a coin will determine the winner or the two teams may agree to split (equally) the proceeds of the tied position(s) (does not apply for first place).

**17. ENTRY FEE/PAYBACK:** Entry fee for each tournament will be \$120.00, which includes a Big Bass Pot Entry Fee of \$20.00. The tournament payout at each of the qualifying events will pay one place paid per five (5) entries. Payback for the largest bass by net weight is 100%. For the Big Fish prize winnings, no dead fish may be weighed in. All payback (and any prizes) will be issued at the weigh-in site, or immediately thereafter. The entry fee for the championship tournament will be \$200.00 for the Championship two-day event, which includes the big bass fee. The Tournament Director may amend the Big Bass pot to include a 60/40 split for 1st and 2nd place big bass, and award the big bass pot each day, provided sponsorship funds are obtained.

**18. TEAM OF THE YEAR:** Will be awarded to the TEAM, which has registered and participated in a minimum of three (3) qualifying tournaments, and having the greatest number of points totaled from three (3) qualifying tournaments and the Championship. Points earned at the TBTT Championship will be doubled. In the event of a tie, the TEAM with the highest place finishes during the Trail will be named "Texas Bassmaster Team of the Year." The TEAM of the Year will receive plaques and free entry fees for 3 Qualifying Tournaments in upcoming season.

**19. PROTESTS:** Any protest must be in writing no later than 15 minutes after the close of the daily weigh-in, along with a cash deposit of \$50 dollars, to the Tournament Director. A protest form is available on the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation website, and from the Tournament Director. All participants shall be subject to a polygraph test, including the reporting protestor. If the protest is upheld, the protest deposit shall be returned. Any angler failing the polygraph examination may be subjected to disqualification.

**20. TEXAS BASSMASTER TEAM TRAIL CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION:** The Texas Bassmaster Team Trail representative(s) (TEAM or TEAM's who qualifies to attend the BASSMASTER TEAM TRAIL CHAMPIONSHIP) will be determined at a Championship Tournament, after the Texas Bassmaster Team Trail qualifying tournaments have been concluded – The Road to the Bassmaster Classic.  
<http://www.bassmaster.com/news/bass-federation-nation> Texas Bassmaster. Team Trail Championship Qualification is derived from the following format:





(1) All Championship team contestants must have “entered and participated in” at least one (1) qualifying Texas BASS Team Trail tournament, and finished in the top TEN (10) teams of that field of participants for the qualifying tournament. (Based on a minimum of 20 entries)

(2) Additionally, Team’s that participate in a minimum of two (2) qualifying events will earn an automatic entry to the Texas Bassmaster Team Championship.

(3) Points Qualification Entry rule - All Team contestants who enter and participate in a qualifying Texas Bassmaster Team Trail tournament shall receive points as stated in Rule #13. At the conclusion of the qualifying tournament trail, Texas BASS Nation will award entry to FIVE (5) additional teams with the highest point’s totals to the Texas Bassmaster Team Championship Tournament. Provided a team has already qualified at one of the Qualifying Tournaments, Texas BASS will move down the list to the next team available with the highest point’s total. The Tournament Director determines participation.

The Texas Bassmaster Team Trail Tournament Champion Team (1st Place) or Team(s) will represent the Texas Bassmaster Team Trail (Texas B.A.S.S. Nation) at the BASSMASTER TEAM TRAIL CHAMPIONSHIP. Texas BASS Nation is allowed to send one (1) team to the BASSMASTER TEAM TRAIL CHAMPIONSHIP for every twenty-five (25) registered teams that participate during the tournament trail season. The Champion Team will have finished in 1st place at the Championship, and depending upon participation, additional teams will be qualified beginning with the 2nd place finishing Team.

**21. CLOSING SCALES:** Scales will close 30 minutes after the last flight is due in. Due to certain weigh-in locations this time may be lengthened or shortened at the Tournament Director’s sole and absolute discretion. Any change to the above stated official scale closing time will be announced during registration, during boat check-out, or during weigh-in. It is the angler’s responsibility to verify the official scale closing time and to be in the weigh-in line by such time.

**22. OTHER RULES:** The Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Tournament Rules and Regulations will be used if a rule is not specifically covered in these rules. The Tournament Director reserves the right to make final decisions on any rule/issue.

**23. EMERGENCY/LEAVE EARLY:** If a contestant wishes to leave the lake prior to weigh-in, that contestant MUST notify the tournament director or a tournament official, or leave a note at the designated check-in area. This is a safety requirement that all must adhere to.