



2024 NORTH CENTRAL REGION OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES

1. RULE CHANGES: Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. These rules shall remain unchanged throughout all events. 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 B.A.S.S. Nation reserves the right to make needed changes to these rules in order to ensure the safety, welfare of the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation anglers, and/or the public and preserve the integrity of the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation. 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. PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY: All anglers must be a minimum of 16 years of age or older. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the contestant. Anglers under the age of 18 must be accompanied to the event by a parent or legal guardian and have a release of liability form signed prior to fishing. Each participant must be a member in good standing of B.A.S.S., the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation, and a Texas B.A.S.S. Nation affiliated club. Members in good standing from any Texas B.A.S.S. Nation region may fish any region's tournament events and accumulate points for the region in which the event is held. Contestants coming from another region are responsible for presenting verification of membership in good standing in the contestant's region. **All contestants must have a valid fishing license.** Any contestant that is handicapped in such a manner as to unfairly hinder his partner or endanger his safety shall not be eligible to participate.

NO CONTESTANT MAY OPERATE A BOAT WITHOUT PROOF OF BOAT LIABILITY INSURANCE OF \$300,000 OR MORE DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE OR TOURNAMENT HOURS. All contestants that register as a boater are required to provide proof of boat liability insurance coverage of \$300,000 at check in for each registration. A copy provided to the Tournament Director and put on file can help speed up the registration check-in. If the insurance binder is not available, when/if requested the boater will not be eligible to participate in a tournament.



3. REGISTRATION AND ENTRY FEES: See North Central Region Registration Procedure on the website for any special and/or additional instructions. www.texasbassonline/nc-tournaments. The Tournament Entry Fee for all contestants for each North Central Region tournament, including the two day regional championship tournament, is \$75.00 plus optional \$10.00 Big Bass Pot Entry.

Online: Contestants may register and pay the entry fee by online registration at www.texasbassonline.com/nc-tournaments **no later than 7:00 p.m. on the Thursday immediately prior to the tournament date** – hereinafter referred to as “**due date**”. Contestants who have completed the registration form and notified the Regional Director by the due date may pay the entry fee in cash, cashier’s check, money order before the tournament begins and present the completed registration form and proof of insurance (if applicable) to the tournament director at the ramp during official registration.

Regular Mail: Anglers can send a completed registration form and entry fee by mail addressed to the Regional Director if postmarked no later than Friday of the week prior to the tournament date. Anglers may pay the entry fee by check enclosed with the mailed registration form. Checks will not be accepted at the ramp. The entry fee can also be paid by cash, cashier’s check, or money order and may be paid at the ramp.

E-Mail: An emailed registration form will be for record and notice purposes only. Registration fee must be paid at the ramp (cash only) prior to launch. Send e-mail to: sfarrar@texasbass.org

At Ramp **With Notice**: A fully completed registration form and a paper copy of boat insurance will be accepted at the ramp during the Official Registration with prior notification to the Regional Director by the due date and the entry fee must be paid in cash, cashier’s check or money order;

At Ramp **Without Notice**: A fully completed registration form will be accepted at the boat ramp during the Official Registration without prior notification by the *due date*, however, in addition to the entry fee, a \$25.00 per tournament late registration fee will be collected and deposited into the Region Fund, and the entry fee and late registration fee both must be paid by cash, cashier’s check and/or money order only. The late registering contestant will be placed at the end of the take off order.

Official Registration will begin 60 minutes prior to the start time of each tournament. It is the contestant’s responsibility to obtain any special instructions given at the official registration.

Cancellation of Registration -Notice required: A contestant who has registered, but is unable to attend the tournament, may cancel his registration by notifying the Tournament Director or other Regional Director before the start of the official registration period at the ramp. The entry fee of any such contestant shall be applied to



the next tournament on the schedule or refunded to the contestant if requested. If the cancellation is for the last event of the season the contestant's entry will be refunded. If an angler registers for an event but is unable to participate, you must notify the Tournament Director or Regional Director before the start of the official registration period at the ramp for refund of fee or move your entry to another event. Failure of notification will forfeit your entry fee and any points for the event. Additionally, a contestant who has registered for the event by the due date and fails to attend the event without notifying the Tournament Director or Regional Director prior to the start of the official registration shall still owe the full amount of the tournament fee.

A contestant who takes part in the official launch proceedings of an event shall be deemed to have participated in the event. A contestant must participate in the event to be awarded any points. Exception(s): A mechanical breakdown of the tow vehicle or boat or verifiable family emergency after 6pm on the day before the tournament and prior to the start of the tournament will not cause forfeiture of the entry fee but will result in no points being awarded for the tournament.

Boaters/Non-Boaters: When registering the contestants shall declare themselves as a boater or non-boater. A random pairing of registered boaters and non-boaters will take place prior to the start of the tournament. The random pairing shall be conducted so that registered boaters receive equal sharing of registered non-boaters throughout the tournament trail. (example: 20 registered boaters and 5 registered non-boaters – After the random draw, the 5 boaters who are paired with a non-boater will be removed from the random draw for the next tournament, and the process repeated until all boaters have been paired with a non-boater). A registered boater that chooses to register with a non-boater shall provide the name of the registered non-boater on the registration form and will be allowed to fish together. All other registered non-boaters will be placed into the random draw to be paired with a registered boater. *Registered boaters will take their boat regardless of pairing.*

4. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE/OFF LIMITS/GUIDES: There will be no “off limits” period for any of the regular qualifying tournament events. All contestants must be off the water by 6:00 pm on the day prior to the scheduled tournament event. Tournament Director will establish safe light. Contestants may not utilize the services of guides within thirty (30) days prior to the official tournament event. Paid guides may not register or participate in a Texas B.A.S.S. Nation tournament if they have guided on the tournament lake within the previous thirty (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 waters of this state.



During the tournament, a competitor may not have the assistance or advice of anyone other than another contestant for the purpose of catching or locating fish. The purchasing or bartering of information or the hiring of a bass fishing guide within thirty (30) days prior to any tournament is prohibited. No skin diving or scuba diving on the tournament waters during official practice or tournament days. No use of CB radios, VHF marine band radios, or cell phones for the purpose of locating or catching fish. The above equipment may be used in case of emergency for location purposes only. **Each contestant agrees to report any violation of these rules to the Tournament Director or tournament officials. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of days catch and/or disqualification.**

5. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: The Tournament Director will establish tournament waters. Any posted off limits or no fishing areas established by state or federal officials will be off limits. The live release area established by the Tournament Director will be off limits. This will be announced at the official registration prior to the start of the tournament. Anglers are not allowed to leave the boat to land fish or make the boat more accessible to fishable waters. After a tournament has begun, fishing the tournament water is prohibited except during the tournament hours.

6. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES & DRUGS: No alcoholic beverages or drugs (unless prescribed) are allowed in the boat or to be consumed during Official Practice and all Tournament hours. Doing so will result in immediate disqualification. Tournament hours are concluded for a contestant when their weigh-in slip is signed.

7. SPORTSMANSHIP: Contestants are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, and conservation. Any contestant(s) who displays poor sportsmanship, violates the rules of 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. The use of communications devices for the purpose of locating fish is prohibited. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially in the vicinity of a non-competitor's boat. All angling must be done from the boat. Contestants must always remain 75 ft. or casting distance from another contestant's boat. A contestant who believes another competitor is close to or within 75 feet is required to advise the other competitor of the same. **In a continuous effort to promote fairness and sportsmanship a draw partner who shares or divulges a previous partner's fishing locations with other competitors will be disqualified along with the person utilizing this information.**



8. BOATS & MOTORS: All boats and motors must meet U.S. Coast Guard and State regulations. No motor shall exceed the BIA rating for that boat. The maximum horsepower allowed for any contestant's boat will be 250 hp. Minimum boat length for any contestant's boat is 16 ft. Boats are required to be equipped with a functioning ignition kill switch. Boats with raised platforms or decks higher than the gunnel are not allowed. Bladder or auxiliary gas tanks that were not installed by the boat manufacturer are not allowed. Stick steering boats are not allowed. All boats must have a working kill switch and a functioning bilge pump. All boats must have a properly aerated live well that has adequate space to maintain a limit of bass by both fishermen using the boat. All boats will be inspected by a tournament official prior to the start of the tournament. It is required that all contestants carry a minimum of \$300,000 of liability insurance coverage for a boat used in a Texas B.A.S.S. Nation tournament. A copy of the certificate of insurance must be presented on request by tournament officials or the contestant will not be allowed to fish in that tournament. An electronic trolling motor may be used for positioning only. Trolling with the electronic trolling motor for the purpose of fishing is prohibited.

9. SAFE BOAT OPERATION: 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 U.S. Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver at all times that the combustion engine is in operation and the kill switch must be attached to the operator. 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. When returning to the check in point and/or boat ramp, Non-boaters must keep their life jacket on and remain seated until the boat comes to a stop at the dock or on the bank. Boaters must keep their life jacket on until they have beached the boat or until it is safely on the trailer. This will be carefully monitored and if you violate this rule, you will be assessed a one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) pound deduction.

Each contestant being considered a boater is expected to make that boat and motor available for use by himself and his daily partner, and the boater has full control over their boat. Any contestant who, in the judgment of the tournament official(s), operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap his partner shall be disqualified.

In view of the large expense in operating and maintaining a tournament boat, it is strongly suggested that the non-boater at least share part of the cost of gas and oil for the competition day, and it is common practice for the non-boater to offer those funds to the boater at the end of the competition day.



10. TACKLE & EQUIPMENT: All fish must be caught in a legal sporting manner on artificial lures. No trolling with the combustion engine or snagging of fish is permitted. No live or prepared bait is permitted, with the exception of pork rind. Liquid fish attractants are allowed. Only bait casting, spinning, or spin cast rods 8 ft. or less in length may be used, all other types of rods are prohibited. Only one rod and reel may be used at any one time, however, 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 fish must be caught in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snagging visible fish will forfeit their days catch. When "sight fishing" for visible fish all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your non-boater (if present) before unhooking to be a legal fish. No gaffs may be used to boat fish or be present in the boat at any time. The use of grippers in landing fish is prohibited.

Landing (dip) nets are allowed however, they must not exceed 6.5 ft in overall length. Rubber or vinyl covered nets are preferred and recommended. During practice and competition, no more than one artificial or biodegradable artificial lure may be attached to a line one time. One lure is defined as a single device designed to attract and/or catch one fish at a time. Adding trailer hooks, plastic trailers blades etc. to a single lure is acceptable. No "live bait" "dead bait", or "prepared bait" will be permitted during official practice and competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds. 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. Only non-penetrating cull rings will be allowed for culling.

11. STARTING POSITION: 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 or the competitors.

Contestants will receive their starting position as assigned by the Tournament Director or Regional Director. Boat numbers will be randomly drawn by the Tournament Director in the presence of at least one other participant or tournament official, by the end of the official registration period. Any contestant who starts prior to their assigned number being called may have their day's catch nullified. Pairings for the Championship will be done by a computer-generated pairings list based upon points received from the regional trail. **In order to be deemed as participating in an event and to receive points for the tournament, participants must take part in the official launch proceedings.**



12. PROTESTS: All protests must be submitted in writing to the tournament director, within 15 minutes of the close of the weigh-in. A Protest Form is available on the website. www.texasbassonline.com/nc-tournaments.

13. POLYGRAPH: All contestants are subject to a polygraph examination at the request of the tournament director should a contestant be accused of any rule violation. 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 the questions. The contestant shall make themselves available at their own expense for this examination.

14. TAKE-OFF & CHECK-IN: There will be only one official checkpoint for take-off and check-in, and the posted launch site is designated as such for each tournament. Tournament start and check-in times will be announced at the tournament briefing. All anglers will use the designated tournament launch site. 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. Trailering will only be allowed at the discretion of the Tournament Director for safety reasons. Take-off will be in numbered order assigned by the Tournament Director and/or Regional Director. Each contestant is required to leave and return to the designated checkpoint.

Late Penalty- Any contestants who are not in the official checkpoint area, as described above, at the appointed time, as determined by the Tournament Director, will be penalized at a rate of one (1) pound per minute from the total weight of his catch that day up to fifteen (15) minutes. The penalty will also be deducted from big bass weight. After fifteen (15) minutes, no weigh-in will be allowed. 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 briefing.

Emergency/Leave Early: If a contestant wishes to leave the lake prior to weigh-in, that contestant IS REQUIRED to notify the tournament director or a tournament official, leave a note at the designated check-in area, or notify another tournament contestant that will be present at the weigh in in order to receive points for the tournament. This is a safety requirement that all must adhere to.

15. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN IN 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 the official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency.



Partners must remain together at all times, in sight of each other and each other's catch under the conditions cited above in order for their catch to be scored. If a competitor must violate this rule, then both partners must cease fishing and have their catch verified by a tournament official in order for that catch to be scored. A restart will be allowed, and the competitors will continue from that time. The only exceptions to this rule will be restroom breaks and when launching and loading the boat, one angler will be allowed to park and retrieve the launch vehicle.

16. SCORING: Scoring will be based upon a points system and points will be awarded based on finish. Points will be used to determine "Angler of the Year" standings and for ranking of the contestants that qualified for the Regional Championship tournament. Points will be awarded based upon finish as determined by total weight, with 200 points for first place, 199 points for second place, 198 for third place and dropping by one point for each place until all contestants who weighed fish are awarded points. Any contestant not weighing in fish shall be awarded 30 points less than the number of points awarded for the last point placement. (Example: five contestants total, three weighed fish and two did not weigh fish - 200 points for 1st place, 199 points for 2nd, 198 points for 3rd and 168 points for 4th and 5th). Each angler should ask to have his/her big fish weighed. Each boater may weigh a 5-fish limit with a minimum length of 14 inches (courtesy check is allowed) unless the lake minimum is greater. Non-boaters may weigh a 3-fish limit. 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 (three for non-boaters). 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. The Check-It-Stick will be the official tournament measuring board.

17. FISH CARE: 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.

18. TIES: In case of a tie, the following tiebreakers will be used; (1) the individual with the most fish weighed in, (2) the individual with the largest single fish (the contestant must have had their big fish weighed), (3) if a tie remains, the flip of a coin will determine the winner, or the two individuals may agree to split (equally) the proceeds of the tied position(s).



19. ENTRY FEE/PAYBACK: Entry fee for each tournament will be \$75.00 plus an online registration fee. The Optional Big Bass Pot Entry Fee is \$10.00. Table 1 shows the allocation of the \$75 dollar entry fee by category. The tournament payout at each of the six qualifying events will pay one place paid per five (5) entries, through the first 25 entries, and increase one payout per additional five entries. Payback for the largest bass by net weight is 100%. For the Big Fish prize winnings, Fish must be alive when brought to the scale. All payback (and any prizes) will be issued at the weigh-in site, or immediately thereafter.

Any late registration fees, or other fees collected will be added into the Region fund.

Table 1 — Tournament Entry Fee Allocation

<u>Category</u>	<u>Allocation of \$75.00 entry fee</u>
Tournament Payout	\$54.00
Operating Fund	\$12.00
State Team Support	\$6.00
Angler of the Year Fund	\$3.00

Table 2 - Tournament payout based on 25 entries:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Payout</u>
1st	\$540.00
2nd	\$405.00
3rd	\$202.50
4th	\$135.00
5th	\$67.50

20. ANGLER OF THE YEAR: Will be awarded to the angler having the greatest number of points totaled from all qualifying tournaments and presented with a cash award. In the event of a tie, the angler with the highest place finishes during the Regional Trail will be named "Angler of the Year." The Angler of the Year will receive the funds from the "Angler of the Year" fund at the conclusion of the North Central Regional Championship. In order to be angler of the year they must fish all six Tournaments to qualify.

21. NORTH CENTRAL REGION CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSIC: The North Central Regional State Team representative anglers (boater / non-boater) who goes to the divisional tournament) will be determined at a Championship Classic draw tournament after the Regional Trail is concluded.

CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION: A contestant who participated in at least four (4) of the six (6) Regional Trail qualifying tournaments receives an automatic bid to the championship. In order for a contestant to be deemed as participating in an event the



contestant must have taken part in the event's official launch proceedings. Contestants are not allowed to "buy in" to a tournament.

CHAMPIONSHIP PRACTICE/OFF LIMITS: The championship lake will be off limits beginning 10 days before the start of the official practice days. The official practice days for the championship are Thursday and Friday immediately preceding the first day of the championship tournament. The official practice times shall be from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. on the official practice days. There will be a mandatory meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Friday to verify registration and partner pairings and all contestants shall be present, unless other arrangements have been made with the Regional Director. The Regional Director will notify all championship contestants of the location and details of the mandatory meeting prior to the beginning of the official practice.

The North Central Regional Championship will be a two-day draw (boater/non-boater) event. The Championship will have an even field of boaters and non-boaters. If there are more boaters than non-boaters, the top qualifying boaters will be matched with the qualifying non-boaters. The remaining boaters will be split with the bottom half becoming non-boaters. If there are an odd number of boaters remaining, an invitation will be sent to anglers that fished the region trail but did not qualify for the championship.

Once a non-boater has been identified, they will go into the random drawing and act solely as an observer. They may fish during the Championship but are not eligible for prize money or a spot on the State team. The Tournament Champion Boater and Non-boater will represent the North Central Region on the State Team participating in the Central Division qualifier. The Regional Director will determine if adequate Region funds exist to enhance the prize winnings at this event. All North Central Region participants are encouraged to solicit sponsorship, prizes, gifts, etc. and provide the Regional Director with assistance, and ensure that sponsorships are sent to the Director's attention. Any sponsorship or support will receive special recognition at the tournament site and throughout the year on the North Central Region's website.

Those members that choose to be Considered for the Region Team shall have paid their dues to their Club before the Tournament year begins.

22. REGION TEAM: The contestants for the Regional Team competing in the State Individual Championship or the Top Six Championship will be selected from the North Central Regional Championship Classic contestants. The Regional representative(s) must also be a paid member of a Regional Club and remain a member in order to fish



the regional championship. (B.A.S.S. rules allow each person to maintain membership with up to "3" three B.A.S.S. Clubs).

23. 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 North Central Regional Director reserves the right to make final decisions on any rule/issue.

EMERGENCY/LEAVE EARLY: If a contestant wishes to leave the lake prior to weigh-in, that contestant IS REQUIRED to notify the tournament director or a tournament official, leave a note at the designated check-in area, or notify another tournament contestant that will be present at the weigh in in order to receive points for the tournament. This is a safety requirement that all must adhere to.