



## **Adult Tournament Rules**

The following rules shall apply to all Adult B.A.S.S. Nation of West Virginia (BNWV) tournaments. Rules for High School/Jr. Bassmaster tournaments may differ from those contained herein. These rules may be changed by BNWV immediately upon notice by BNWV to its members, which notice may be published on our BNWV website, social media pages, & email notifications to club presidents. It is the responsibility of each competitor to learn and abide by these rules and all applicable local, state, and federal fishing and boating laws and regulations.

### **1. RULES INTERPRETATION**

The Tournament Committee (comprised of Board of Directors members in attendance) is solely responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of tournament rules. The decision of the Tournament Committee shall be final in all matters.

Penalties for rules violations may include the following:

- (a) Loss of one or more fish caught in potential violation of rules or regulations.
- (b) Loss of catch for the day of the violation.
- (c) Disqualification from the tournament in question
- (d) Disqualification from future BNWV events, which may be for a specific number of events, a specific period, or may be a lifetime disqualification.

Failure to report violations, or suggestions to another competitor that they violate these rules, or false verification of weigh-in forms, may be cause for disqualification.

### **2. RULES VIOLATION PROTEST**

All protests must be in writing and presented to the Tournament Director no later than 15 minutes after the closing of the weigh scales.

### **3. ELIGIBILITY**

Tournaments (excepting Opens) are open only to BNWV members in good standing. In the Team Trail Series, if a team member cannot fish an event, the other partner is

permitted to fish alone or fish one tournament with a substitute partner. Entry deadline will be posted on our website, social media pages, emails, and/or at meetings.

#### 4. INSURANCE

Competitors must have boat proof of insurance listing minimum of \$300,000 liability and effective dates of policy in their possession at tournament for the boat being used. Boat proof of insurance must be presented to the Tournament Director before the start of each tournament for boats #1 and #2 and presented by the winning team at the end of the tournament. Failure to provide this documentation when requested will result in disqualification. Electronic copies will be accepted.

#### 5. SAFETY

All boats must be operated in a safe manner and have all required US Coast Guard (USCG) safety equipment. All competitors must wear a USCG-approved personal flotation device (PFD) while the combustion engine is running. This preserver must be strapped, snapped, or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. Violation of this rule may be cause for disqualification. Inflatable PFDs are allowed in accordance with USCG regulations. Boats must be equipped with a functional bilge pump and an approved type of operable ignition kill switch and lanyard. While the combustion engine is running and in gear, all aboard must be seated in lower seats, with the boater in the driver's seat in full control of the boat with the ignition kill switch lanyard attached to his/her person. Standing on the outboard engine or seats while fishing is prohibited.

#### 6. BOAT AND MOTOR

Boats must be minimum 16 feet in length and equipped with wheel steering. No "barges" or similar craft will be permitted. Jet drive engines and tunnel hull boats are not permitted. Any boat/hull designs other than standard mass-produced units are only allowed at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats is 250 horsepower (HP). Each boat must have a manufacturer-attached USCG HP-rating plate and the outboard engine HP must not exceed the rating specified on this plate. Altering the horsepower-rating numbers on the engine is cause for disqualification. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat. Trolling motor brackets and electronics are not considered "raised platforms". An electric trolling motor may be used for slow maneuvering. Only gas tanks that are installed by the boat manufacturer are allowed. No portable gas tanks or containers capable of holding gasoline can be placed anywhere on the tournament waters or shoreline for use by any competitor. Boats must have a properly aerated live-well with

capacity to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass. Tournament Committee shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is proper and adequate.

## 7. TOURNAMENT HOURS

Tournament hours will be posted on entry forms, website, social media pages, and/or at meetings. Tournament Director retains the right to delay start time or cancel/postpone tournament due to safety conditions. In the event of a delay, tournament hours will not be extended.

## 8. BLAST-OFF AND CHECK-IN

Prior to blast-off, a blast-off order number and check-in site will be given to each boat by a tournament official. All boats must idle by a tournament official for a boat check at blast-off checkpoint and idle safely past all boats and out of all no-wake zones before getting on plane. All boats shall have navigation lights on while running to first location. Blast-off order number must be given to a tournament official at the designated check-in site. Failure to go through boat check, blast-off and/or check-in at the designated site may result in disqualification. At the time of blast-off, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformity with all tournament rules. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves by blast-off order number to a tournament official and proceed to the designated weigh-in area. All fishing must cease upon check-in.

## 9. LATE PENALTY

Competitors who are not at the designated check-in site at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute late to be deducted from the total weight of their catch, including any weight to be counted toward a "Lunker Award". Any competitor more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and competitors are not allowed to make up "lost time".

## 10. OFF-LIMITS AREAS

Go to <https://wvbassnation.org/off-limits-areas/> . Additionally, only water open to all public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Waters deemed off-limits by local, state, and/or federal authorities or Tournament Director must be treated as a wall. No boats or casting behind that boundary while fishing.

## 11. OFF-LIMITS PERIOD

All Adult tournaments shall have an off-limits period beginning at 12:01am Monday prior to each tournament. During any off-limits period, competitors cannot be upon the tournament waters or solicit, gather, or intentionally receive any information from anyone other than another competitor in the tournament.

## 12. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT

The use of landing nets and grippers for landing bass during Team Trail Series and Open tournaments is permitted. No more than one artificial or biodegradable artificial lure may be attached to a line at one time. One lure is defined as a single manmade 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. If multiple fish are caught on a single manmade lure, on a single cast, all fish are considered legal and may be added to the daily catch subject to scoring rules. "Live bait," "dead bait," or "prepared bait" is prohibited, except for 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 prohibited. Such rigging, harness, or device cannot be added to a single lure as described above. Twin arm spinnerbaits, twin arm underspins and twin arm buzzbaits are allowed. Trailer hooks and plastic trailers of twin arm baits 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 these twin arm baits, 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. Tournament Committee has the sole authority to determine whether a lure is considered a single lure as defined above. Only one casting, spin casting, or spinning rod (10-foot maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. A hung or snagged lure that is not in or on the water is not considered in use and may be set aside while another is in use. Other rigs as specified above may be in the boat ready for use; however, only one is permitted in use at any given time. If a competitor breaks his line while setting the hook or retrieving a fish, he/she is allowed to attempt to secure the visible line with the rod being used or with his/her hands to land the fish for it to be counted as legal. The competitor may not hook the line with another lure, rod and reel, or other device. The use of braid or other line to attach one stinger hook (single or treble) is allowed but cannot be over two inches in length. No competitor may intentionally snag or foul hook a bass to be counted in their daily catch. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have his or her catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, to be counted as a legal fish, bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked. With the mouth closed naturally, you must not be able to see where the hook point enters the fish to be considered hooked inside the mouth. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. The "long-lining" or "strolling" technique defined as

intentionally using a trolling motor or outboard to mechanically extend a cast is prohibited.

### 13. SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship is defined as fair play, respect for opponents, and polite behavior while competing in the sport. Competitors are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, safety, and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be cause for disqualification.

- (a) Use of alcohol or the use of drugs (other than those drugs purchased over-the-counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the tournament, will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future BNWV tournaments. Alcoholic beverages or prohibited drugs in boats during competition or at weigh-in area is prohibited.
- (b) Maximum courtesy must always be practiced, especially regarding boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of a competitor which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy may be reason for disqualification.
- (c) A designated tournament official must be granted access to a competitor boat at any time during a tournament. Failure to grant such access may result in disqualification.
- (d) Use of a communication device for the purpose of locating or catching bass is prohibited.
- (e) Passing a competitor boat in a no-wake zone underway in the same direction is prohibited, unless waved ahead by that competitor.

### 14. ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT

Anglers participating in any BNWV tournament or sanctioned event shall observe this code of conduct and the applicable rules for the specific event in which they are participating. Anglers and family members of anglers shall always conduct themselves in a professional manner that demonstrates integrity, honor, and respect toward fellow competitors, tournament officials, and the public and does not reflect unfavorably on BNWV, our members, or sponsors.

Following are examples of unacceptable behavior by competitors or family members of competitors in BNWV events that will be cause for penalties as outlined in these rules:

- (a) Heated public disagreements with BNWV officials, other competitors, spectators, or volunteers during an event.
- (b) Public attacks through media, including social media, upon the integrity of BNWV rules or officials.

- (c) Public comments that an angler or family member knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of BNWV or our sponsors.
- (d) Displays of anger and displeasure for reasons related to fishing competition or the event, where members of the public, including other anglers, spectators, and the media, are present.
- (e) Publicly questioning or criticizing a tournament official or official decision, ruling, or penalty except through the proper channels.
- (f) Abuse (physical, verbal, threatening, or slanderous) of tournament officials, volunteers, fellow competitors, or others connected with a BNWV event, including comments on social media.
- (g) Offensive or slanderous comments with racial, cultural, or sexual overtones regarding tournament officials or fellow competitors. Harassment of any type is prohibited.
- (h) Intentionally interfering with a fellow angler's ability to compete.
- (i) Any disqualification, suspension, or other disciplinary action imposed by any tournament or fishing organization may result in disqualification from BNWV tournaments.
- (j) Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony, or crimes involving moral turpitude, may be grounds for disqualification from BNWV tournaments.

Any competitor who violates any of the provisions of the sportsmanship rules or angler code of conduct is subject to the penalties of rules violations outlined in Section 1.

## 15. CULLING OF DEAD BASS IS PROHIBITED

For each legal dead bass presented to tournament official at weigh-in, the competitor shall be penalized .25 lbs. to be deducted from the total weight of their catch. After weighing their catch, dead bass become the property of the competitor.

## 16. NON-PENETRATING CULL CLIPS

Only nonpenetrating culling clips and culling beams are allowed for use. Any clip or device that penetrates or is designed to penetrate the skin or mouth of a fish is prohibited.

## 17. COMPETITORS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT

During the competition days, competitors must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Competitors may not shift most of their weight outside the boat and onto a dock or other object outside the boat for the purpose of landing a bass or accessing a fishing spot. A bass that cannot be landed

without the angler leaving the boat or shifting his weight outside the boat must be released immediately. While keeping most of their weight in the boat, anglers are allowed for boat protection to push or shove off objects while landing a fish to be counted as legal. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat to retrieve a lure. All fishing by that competitor/partner must cease until the competitor is back in the boat. Only then may another cast be made. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Competitors must leave from and return to official checkpoints by boat. Both anglers must always remain in the boat, except in case of dire emergency or with permission from the Tournament Director. In such an emergency, or with permission of the Tournament Director, competitors may be removed from their boat, either to a boat operated by other competitors, or a rescue boat designated by the Tournament Director. Partners must always remain together, in sight of each other and each other's catch, under the conditions cited above, for their catch of that day to be scored in the tournament, with the following exception: in breakdown situations and with a tournament official's permission, competitors may transfer their fish to another competitor's boat and ride to check-in, and they may leave their partner with the disabled boat. In such cases, a competitor must always stay with their catch and the assisting boat's partners should verify the catch. Any angler whose boat is disabled and rides with another competitor or rescue boat to weigh-in is not allowed to fish. In the event of a needed restroom break or refueling situation at a marina gas pump, contestants are allowed to leave the boat, at which time all fishing must cease until partners are back together in the boat. If a competitor violates any of the above conditions (to contact a tournament official by phone or other means, or to report an emergency or breakdown), both competitors must cease fishing at this point and their catch must be verified by a tournament official to be counted in the tournament. If, after the emergency is resolved by tournament officials, and enough time is left for the competitors to resume fishing, a restart will be allowed, the competitors will continue, and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations as determined by the Tournament Director or his/her designee. Towing boats on trailers during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of tournament officials. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek safe shelter in bad weather where danger may be imminent.

## 18. SCORING

Only largemouth, smallmouth, and/or spotted bass will be weighed. Limit shall be five (5) bass 12 inches or longer. At no time shall a competitor have in his or her possession more than the tournament limit. If a competitor determines they have over the limit, they must immediately reduce their catch to the tournament limit with a live bass of their choice from their catch. Each returned bass will result in a 2-pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. In this case, competitors must attempt to notify tournament officials and, if unsuccessful, must notify officials at weigh-in. Once a

competitor checks in at weigh-in, they must present all fish in their possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured, weighed, and recorded. If a competitor at the verification table has more than the tournament limit, the competitor will reduce with live bass to the tournament limit and each returned bass will result in a 2-pound penalty. If a competitor has his fish verified, weighed and, upon returning to the boat, discovers additional fish over the tournament limit that were not presented to tournament officials, the competitor must then notify tournament officials within one hour of final flight check in to receive a 2 lb. penalty for each bass discovered. Failure to notify tournament officials after one hour of final flight check-in time will result in loss of day's catch. Manmade or foreign object(s) connected to a bass, outside of natural causes, will not be weighed and shall be removed by tournament officials. Competitors who present fish at the verification table with fin clips attached will be assessed a 4-ounce penalty per clip. Competitors are not allowed to replace anything attached to a bass or regurgitated by a bass to be included as part of their catch. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed. Tail fins may be waved, but not pinched, for measuring. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length shall result in a penalty of 1 pound for each such bass, and each such bass shall not be weighed. For each legal dead bass presented to tournament officials at weigh-in, the competitor shall be penalized .25 lbs. After weighing their catch, dead bass become the property of the competitor. 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. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. Specially designed bags, which increase survival rate, will be furnished by the Tournament Director and must be used for the weigh-in. Scores will be based on an individual/team total weight. 1st Place is awarded 100 points; 2nd Place 99 points, etc.

## 19. TIES

- (1) Individual/team with heaviest single day catch during competition.
- (2) If the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual/team with the second heaviest single day catch during competition.
- (3) If the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual/team with the largest number of legal fish weighed during competition.
- (4) If the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual/team with the largest number of legal live fish weighed during competition.

If the tie is not broken by applying the foregoing procedures, the tie will remain a tie, and monetary prizes for each competitor will be awarded in an equal amount between the tied competitors.



## 20. POLYGRAPH

By registering for BNWV tournaments, each competitor agrees to submit to a truth verification test and abide by its conclusion should he/she be accused of any rule violation. The Tournament Committee shall have the discretion to determine the need for a truth verification test. Failure to take or successfully pass a truth verification examination will result in immediate disqualification without appeal. The Tournament Director shall be responsible for selecting an independent expert to administer and interpret the results and establishing, in consultation with the expert administrator, the scope of the questions which may be asked during the test. The Tournament Director shall have sole responsibility selecting the location, date, and time of the test. The competitor shall make himself/herself available at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such test. Anglers taking a truth verification test may be responsible for all costs incurred. Random truth verifications tests may be administered on site during any BNWV event.

## 21. SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR DRAW TOURNAMENTS (regional state championship qualifying tournaments (SQTs) and State Championship)

- A. Two competitors, when possible, will be assigned to each boat. After blast-off, the paired competitors must stay together, and within sight of each other and each other's catch, throughout the day, until presenting their individual catch at weigh-in, except in case of dire emergency or exceptions (see Rule 15). Once bass are bagged for weigh-in, competitors that are not weighing bass do not need to accompany their partner through the weigh-in process. A competitor must not allow any bass caught by them to be counted on the score of another competitor. In such a case, both competitors shall be disqualified from the tournament and all future BNWV tournaments. Boaters must make a back seat available for non-boaters. Non-boaters must be given the opportunity to fish from the front of the boat and their water for ½ of the tournament day. Any boater that, in the judgment of tournament officials, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap their non-boater partner shall be disqualified. At no time may a boater competitor request that the non-boater competitor not fish. For SQTs, fuel costs for all boaters will be handled within each club. For State Championship, all non-boaters shall pay \$50 to their paired Day 1 boater-only to cover fuel costs for both days of the tournament. Members are permitted to compete in one regional SQT only. Minimum age for competing in SQT or State Championship is 16 years.
- B. The use of landing nets and grippers for landing bass is prohibited during SQTs & State Championship.

## 22. WAIVER AND RELEASE

As a condition of participation in each tournament, each competitor must execute a waiver and release of liability, and a name and likeness release.