



NJ B.A.S.S. Nation  
Official Tournament Rules  
(revised 1-2019)

The following rules shall apply to all NJBN tournament events. These rules may differ for special (team, STQ) events and participants will be notified of such change. These rules may be changed by the Tournament Director before an event. If such change must be implemented, prior notice will be delivered at one prior membership meeting and posted on the website ([njbassnation.org](http://njbassnation.org)). Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director (or his designee). In the event of a rules violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions as he deems appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeit of entry, forfeit of prizes and prohibition of participation into future NJBN tournament events. The decision of the Tournament Director shall be final on all matters. Rules violation must be reported to the Tournament Director at least 15 minutes after the final fish are weighed. There will be an official form for filling a protest available at each event for anglers wishing to do so.

**A. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY:**

(1). A NJBN tournament is open to all current members (in good standings) of the NJBN who are 16 years or older. Proof of age must be sent to the Tournament Director prior to the event being entered. Any candidate for competition, who in the judgment of the tournament staff, is disabled in such a manner to unfairly hinder his partner or cause an unsafe boating or fishing situation, shall not be eligible to participate.

(2). During the “Official Practice Period” and competition days of a NJBN tournament, NO competitor may operate a boat unless that contestant has documented proof of a minimum of \$300,000 boating liability coverage for the boat being used in the tournament. Proof of insurance must be on hand at all events. Random checks will be conducted and any competitor that does not produce proof of insurance may be disqualified. A copy of your boater’s insurance as well as a current boater’s safety certificate must be sent in by the entry deadline of tournament #1. If your proof of insurance is not received by that date and time, you will not be eligible to fish.

(3). A properly completed and signed entry form and entry fee must be received by the Tournament Director BEFORE 11:59 pm of the posted deadline date. The accepted method of payment will be electronically (credit, debit, PayPal) via the website, or some form of check (personal, bank, M.O.). No cash will ever be accepted. If entering by check, it must be in the delivered mail of the Tournament Director the day of the posted deadline. There will be no postmark dates or postmarked checks allowed. If payment is not received by 11:59pm on the deadline day, contestant will not be eligible to fish. Once the partner draw is completed, THERE WILL BE NO REFUNDS. Refunds will only be given out prior to the tournament draw, and notification of such refund request must be given in advance of the pairings.

## B. PRACTICE AND COMPETITION

(1). Prior to regular season points events, the Tournament Director will post a map depicting areas to be deemed "OFF LIMITS". It will appear on the website with the posted pairings, and in the morning handout. Contestants will be disqualified if found to be fishing in these areas.

(2). During the tournament and any official practice days, a competitor may not have the assistance of anyone for the purpose of locating or catching bass. The competitor may not enter the tournament waters with anyone who has been on the tournament waters during the off-limits period including but not limited to, a professional guide, state or federal wildlife agency employee, or any other person deemed an "expert" on these tournament waters by the Tournament Director, unless they are a registered competitor in the tournament.

(3). No competitor may buy or barter a fishing location from any other competitor for use during any competition day.

(4). During the official competition days of the tournament, a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, a cell phone, or any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish. Competitors are permitted to transmit by cell phone or radio only in the event of an emergency. If so equipped, competitor may listen to the marine band weather information.

(5). A designated tournament official must be granted access into a competitor's boat at any time during the official practice or tournament days. Failure to grant such access may result in immediate disqualification.

(6). Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director any violation or infraction of any tournament rule. Failure to report violations, or false verification of weigh in forms will be cause for disqualification.

### C. REGISTRATION:

(1). Each competitor must register by the time and place listed on the tournament schedule posting. Failure to register by the deadline posted by the Tournament Director will result in the contestant not being eligible to participate in the tournament. Deadline will not be altered or extended for any reason. In the event of a tournament cancellation, competitors may request a refund, or have the entry transferred to the next tournament or the rescheduled event.

(2). NJBN points tournament trails are a pro-am format. Boaters fish against boaters and riders fish against riders. The non boater can only come to the front of the boat for the purpose of landing a fish or to run the trolling motor to avoid a non safe boating situation.

(3). In the event that there are more non boaters registered than boaters, the non boaters who entered last will be turned away in chronological order. Any boater who is drawn with no partner, will not be allowed to fish alone AGAIN during the season, until all competitors have had that same solo opportunity. The exception will be tournament officials. A registered non boater may switch to the boater division for an upcoming tournament, but must report such action prior to the official practice days, but must pay the balance of the tournament fees, before practice starts.

(3). Any competitor who registered in a respected boater or non boater division must compete there for the entire season. If there is a reason for a competitor to switch to another division, his or her points will be taken from the division he or she fished the majority of tournaments in. The points from the departing division will be forfeited.

### D. Safety

(1). Safe boating conduct must be observed at all times by all competitors. During the official practice and tournament days, each competitor must wear a Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver. The preserver must be worn any time the combustion engine is running. The preserver must be snapped, strapped and zipped securely and maintained in that position until the gas motor has been shut off. Violation of this rule will result in immediate disqualification of the person cited for the infraction.

(2). Tournament officials reserve the right to delay, shorten or cancel the official start of a tournament day because of weather or any other factor that would endanger the safety of any competitor. Tournament waters may also be altered due to bad weather or unsafe conditions.

(3). The Tournament committee may also alter the speed limit on any body of water due to unexpected conditions. Failure to adhere to such alteration will be grounds for immediate disqualification for both Boater and Rider.

(4) Any summons given to a competitor by a state or municipal officer for any infraction, including speed, no wake, reckless driving, Private property etc. will be grounds for immediate disqualification for the Boater. Additionally, any summons given

[Type text]

from a Fish and Game warden for any reason, will result in immediate disqualification for both contestants. If a contestant receives a Fish and Game summons and fails to report such infractions, both contestants will be disqualified when and if the infraction becomes public knowledge.

(5). In the event of an emergency situation, the contestants must first call 911, then contact the Tournament Director. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek shelter or safety when danger is immanent.

#### E. SPORTSMANSHIP:

(1). All contestants in a NJBN tournament are expected to follow a high standard of sportsmanship, safety, courtesy and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be cause for disqualification.

(2). Use of Alcohol or illegal drugs ( except for prescription or over the counter drugs) by any competitor during the official practice or during the tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for immediate disqualification from said event and any future NJBN sponsored tournaments. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants, prescription or otherwise, shall be allowed in the boats of any contestants, during official practice or tournament days, or in the weigh in area.

(3). Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of a non-competitors boat who may be on the tournament waters.

(4). All competitors are bound by the prevailing statues and regulations of the various states within they are fishing.

(5). Conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, substance abuse or addiction or other conduct which may place any member of the NJBN in harm's way, may not be allowed to enter a NJBN tournament.

#### F. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:

(1). Only artificial baits may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared baits" will be permitted during official practice or tournament days. Pork rind or Pork strips are permitted. Only ONE (1) casting, spin casting, or spinning rod and reel (10 ft maximum length from butt of handle to tip) may only be used at any one time. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. Any contestant guilty of snagging or snatching visible fish will have his or her catch disqualified. When a contestant is visibly fishing for bedding bass, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth, and witnessed by your partner before said fish is unhooked to be counted as a legal catch. See B.A.S.S. rules regarding A-rig type baits. Their use is prohibited. The use of a gripper in landing a bass is not allowed.

#### G. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:

(1). The maximum horsepower allowed on all boats during official practice and tournament days shall be 250 HP. Horsepower cannot exceed the limitation set by the U.S. Coast Guard. Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard horsepower rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower on the boat must not exceed the Coast Guard rating plate nor the horsepower limits set by the NJBN. If, for any reason, a competitor alters the horsepower of the outboard motor other than factory settings, such competitor may be subject to disqualification. Posted speed limits must be observed and all boats must be operated in a safe manner.

#### H. BOAT AND MOTOR:

(1). For the safety of all competitors, ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH AN APPROVED TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH. The ignition kill switch device must be attached to the driver's body any time the gas engine is running. Any time the gas motor is running and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat and in full control of the boat. Only boats measuring 16ft or larger can be used for official practice and tournament days. Standing on the outboard or seats while fishing is not allowed. An electric motor may be used for slow maneuvering, however trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. All bladder tanks or any other tank that is not installed by the boat manufacturer is not allowed. Boats that do not have a factory installed gas tank are restricted to 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat.

#### I. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT:

(1). Every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment as well as a functioning bilge pump and Livewell space, properly aerated, to adequately hold two live limits of fish. NJBN recommends live wells be maintained at full levels and aerators on manual mode. The tournament committee will determine whether a boats livewell meet such criteria. Boaters must have a back seat available for non-boaters for each competition day.

#### J: BOAT IDENTIFICATION:

(1). When a contestant arrives to the launch site, a NJBN tournament official will inspect the boat for any unsafe conditions. Live well doors must be open, so the official can inspect the size and condition if the livewell and confirm that no fish are present.

(2). Each day, a contestant's boat will be given a key fob with the boats official tournament number on it. The number must be kept with the boat all tournament day and returned to the check in boat at the contestant's designated return time.

#### K. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSES:

(1). All NJBN points tournaments are boater , non-boater fishing tournaments. Boaters fish from the front deck and non boaters fish from the back deck. Non boaters are only allowed to drive the boat in emergency situations, with the exception of loading or unloading the boat at the launch ramp. Any boater who operates the boat in such a manner to unfairly handicap the non – boater, shall be subject to disqualification. At no time will a boater tell a non boater not to fish. In view of the large expense involved in operating a tournament boat, it is suggested by the NJBN, that all tournament day expenses be split by the two competitors.

#### L. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:

(1). Tournament waters shall be determined by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must be responsible to obtain such information from the NJBN tournament committee. Any water within these boundaries posted “OFF LIMITS” or “NO FISHING” by state or federal agencies as well as the release area established by the Tournament Director, will be OFF –LIMITS. Such areas will be posted on the NJBN website, announced at the pre tournament briefing, and contained in the tournament morning handout. Only waters open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. All angling must be done from the contestant’s boat. No anglers must leave the boat to land a fish. Such a fish landing is an illegal catch and cannot be kept.

(2). Competitors must not leave the boat. During the tournament day, competitors may not leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to other fishing waters. Boats must remain in the official tournament waters during the tournament day. Competitors must leave from and return to the official checkpoints by boat. In case of an emergency, contestants can be removed from the boat by either a boat operated by another competitor or by a rescue boat approved by the Tournament Director. Tournament boat partners must remain together at all times. Partners must stay within sight of each other for the duration of the tournament for their catch to be legal. In the event of a bathroom break, when a contestant leaves the boat, all fishing must stop until the two partners are back together in the boat. If a boating emergency should arise and the boat goes back to the dock or is taken out of the water, all fishing must stop and their catch must be verified by a tournament official, to be counted as legal. If enough time remains in the tournament after the emergency is taken care of, the anglers can resume fishing and allowed to fill their limit, if they did not have a limit at time of emergency. Towing boats on their trailers to additional tournament waters is prohibited, except as per the direction of the Tournament Director.

#### M. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:

(1). There shall be only one (1) official take off point and one official check in point as determined by the Tournament Director. Official points will be chosen and reported to

[Type text]

all tournament anglers via the NJBN website, tournament briefing and morning handouts. At time of “take off “all competitor and their boats must be in full compliance to all tournament rules set forth by the official Tournament rules. All competitors must align themselves in designated number order, with running lights on and livewell doors open and pumps running. As they pass the start boat they will receive a numbered key fob. After passing the start boat by 25 yards, the boater must demonstrate the kill switch to his partner. At check -in, all boats must identify themselves by boat number and return the key fob back into NJBN possession. At this point, the competitor’s tournament day has ended. Each tournament may have a different procedure, and all contestants will be notified of any changes to the normal. ALL BOATS MUST BE IN THE WATER AND READY FOR TAKE OFF 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO THE OFFICIAL START TIME. There will be no waiting for a competitor, if he or she is not in their number slot in line. If you are not ready to start, you will go to the back of the line. NO EXCUSES.

#### N. SCORING:

(1). Tournament winners and angler’s standings shall be determined by the pound and ounce weight of each competitor catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass are eligible to be weighed. All contestants must request to have their big fish weighed in the event there is a tie in weight. **For Boaters, there shall be a five (5) fish limit and for non-boaters there shall be a three (3) fish limit.** A limit consists of Largemouth or Smallmouth or the combination of both species, unless stated otherwise by the Tournament Director. At no time must a competitor have more than the legal Tournament limit in his possession, except at the time of a cull. At no time shall there be more than five (5) fish in the competitor’s livewell. **CULLING OF DEAD FISH IS ILLEGAL (see CULLING rule O).** The tournament committee can conduct random checks throughout the tournament day. If a competitor has more than the legal limit, the angler must cull down to the legal limit, starting with the largest fish first. If an angler comes to the scales with more than the legal limit in his tournament bag, their limit will be culled down, starting with the largest fish first. There shall be no culling down to another competitor. All legal bass weighed must be caught by the angler who is weighing the fish in. The size limit (official length) of fish will be determined by the Tournament Director and reported to all Anglers via the three outlets, website, tournament briefing and handout. Fish shall be measured on the official NJBN rulers. A courtesy board will be available for an angler to measure his fish before coming to the official scale ruler. All Bass must measure the legal limit set forth for each tournament, by keeping the mouth closed, and the tail fanned or waved to reach the legal limit. Tail will not be squeezed or any way altered as to contort the fish to anything but it’s natural state. After the angler decides if his fish is legal or not, and he hands off his catch to a tournament official, his catch becomes the property of the NJBN. If any bass fails to measure the official tournament length, a one (1) pound penalty will be assessed to each fish that does not reach the legal limit. The total amount of the penalty will be deducted from the total weight of the competitor’s daily catch. Once a competitor leaves his boat with his catch, he or she must proceed directly to the weigh in. The competitor cannot return into his or her designated boat or any other competitor’s boat. After the

[Type text]

competitor's catch has been weighed and recorded, bass must be immediately released and the angler cannot return to his boat with any fish. If any angler does not immediately return his days catch (minus picture opportunities), they may be subject to disqualification and their catch erased. During the course of the tournament day, if a bass has expired, it cannot be released back into the water, and must be taken to the scales to be weighed in. A penalty of .25 pounds will be given for one (1) dead fish. A penalty of .75 pounds will be given for two (2) dead fish, 1.5 pounds for three (3) dead fish, 2.5 pounds for four (4) dead fish and 3.75 pounds for five (5) dead fish. Keep your catch alive.

(2) There will be NO piercing cull tags allowed in a NJBN Tournament. Only NON PEIRCING culling tags can be used. It is up to the angler's discretion as to which type of NON PEIRCING tag they should use. However, the tag cannot PEIRCE or PUNTURE the fish in any way.

#### O. CULLING:

Culling is the process in which an angler has a limit of bass in his livewell and catches another fish that may be bigger than the smallest fish in the angler's creel. The angler then has to determine (by the anglers own means) which fish to keep and which to return back to the water. No dead fish can ever be culled. At this point, the angler CANNOT put all 6 fish in the livewell. The angler has to determine which fish to keep by always having only 5 fish in the livewell. Additionally, at this juncture in the fishing day, the anglers fishing practice must cease, until the culling process is complete. No other contestant can cull for the angler. At no time can the angler have any fishing lines in the water. Failure to adhere to this rule can result in disqualification.

#### P. POINTS:

(1). Point will be awarded to NJBN contestants in the boater and non-boater divisions for their respected finish in the tournament that they have just participated in. 200 points will be given for a first place finish, 199 points for a second place finish, 198 for a third place finish and each remaining position will receive one less point for each spot. Anglers who do not have a legal Bass for weigh in will be awarded show up points in the amount of one less point than the final competitor who had a legal bass scored. Only anglers who are members in good standing are eligible to fish in a NJBN event.

#### Q. LATE PENALTY:

Competitors who fail to return the official check in point at their designated time shall be penalized at the rate of one (1) pound per minute. **The angler is considered late when the clock strikes 1 minute after the designated time. Example: If an anglers check in time is 3:00 pm, the angler is considered one minute late at 3:01.00.** This penalty will be deducted from the anglers total tournament days catch, and will be deducted directly from any "big fish" weight. Any competitor that is more than fifteen (15) minutes late shall lose all credit for that days catch. There will be no excuses for tardiness, and in no case shall a competitor make up lost time.

After proper recognition at the check point, there will be ample time given for a competitor to proceed to the weigh in scale. However, after check in, all fishing must stop. Weigh-in will start approximately one half hour after the end of the first flight check in, unless otherwise noted by the Tournament Director. The official flight time, start and finish, will be posted on the website, stated at the tournament briefing, and highlighted in the morning handout. It is the competitor's responsibility to confirm the daily check in time that corresponds with his or her boat number for each day of any tournament. At certain events, there may be an "off limits" period or a date and time set when official practice must end, and anglers must be off the tournament waters. If these certain times are not adhered to or times violated, all anglers involved in the infraction will be disqualified.

#### R. PAYOUTS:

(1) Payouts will be based on the number of boats entered and the percentage of the amount paid back will be 80% (minus tournament expenses) of that field. The baseline entry will be a 50 boat field. If such a field is reached, then the top 4 boaters and top 4 riders will be awarded prizes. If 60 boats enter, then 5 spots will be paid, if 70 boats enter then 6 spots will be paid. The NJBN will round to the higher payback as the field moves to the next plateau. Example: If 55 boats enter, the NJBN will pay 5 spots and so on. Monies collected for each division will be paid out to that division. Lunker for the boater side will be 10% of the boater's entry fees, and lunker for the rider side will be 10% of all rider entry fees collected. That 10% collection will be paid at 100% to each division. Before receiving any prize money, competitors must provide your social security number, boaters safety certificate, and a valid B.A.S.S. membership card.

#### S. PAIRING OF COMPETITORS:

(1). Two competitors will be paired in each boat, unless otherwise instructed by the Tournament Director. The partner draw will be posted on the website, and will be included in the morning handout. It will be the responsibility of all competitors to retrieve your partners name and make contact with that person. It will also be the responsibility of all contestants to have a meeting plan in the morning before the boat launch period. It is NOT the responsibility of the Tournament Director to find a missing partner for a contestant.

#### T. TIES:

(1). In the event of a tie (same exact weight), the angler with the heaviest one (1) Bass will be the top angler. If a tie still exists, then an absolute tie will be the outcome. Points will be given to both anglers at the highest level and the sum of the two place prize money will be split evenly. If the tie outcome is with a money and non-money place, then the money for that higher place will be split evenly.

**U. YEAR END TIES:** The purpose of the NJ B.A.S.S. Nation tournament trail is to qualify anglers to participate on the yearly NJ B.A.S.S. Nation state team. Accumulative points from each tournament determine who those anglers would be. The final points standing from the tournament year in descending order will determine eligibility. The #1 points earner will become Mr. B.A.S.S. and the State team captain for the following years regional. The next points earners ( both in the boater and non-boater divisions) will also be members on the state team until the determining numbers of anglers are needed to fill the state team roster. If two or more anglers end the season with the same amount of earned points, the tie breaking factor will be total weight of all Bass caught in the tournament season. If a tournament season includes a drop tournament, then the total weight will be from the final number of tournament fished.

#### **V. WAIVER AND RELEASE:**

(1). As a condition of participation in each tournament, each competitor must execute a waiver and release of liability, complete application and a name and likeness release.

#### **W. PROTESTS:**

(1). Any competitor who feels they have witnessed an infraction of any tournament rule and if any rider feels that his or her fishing opportunity has been comprised they may submit a protest. There will be a protest form available at the weigh in trailer for any angler who wishes to file one. The protest will then comply with the following actions:

a. The person wishing to file a protest should immediately notify the Tournament Director upon arrival to the weigh in site. The protest must be submitted within 15 minutes of the official end of the weigh in procedure.

b. The tournament Director will then make a determination as to the validity of the protest.

c. All such valid protests shall then be considered. The Tournament Director, after consultation with the Board of Directors, shall determine a possible action. If a conclusion cannot be reached for any set of circumstances, the protested angler shall not receive any prize money or points until the matter is resolved.

d. The use of Polygraph test will be made available and put to use if deemed necessary. The protester shall be responsible for the cost of the test if the result of the tested person is negative.

**THE DECISION OF THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR SHALL BE FINAL IN ALL MATTERS**

**NJBN (2019)**