

## **OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES & BYLAWS**

(last updated: 1/27/2017)

1. **STRUCTURE OF DUES:** All dues will be paid in-full or you will not be eligible to fish Club tournaments.

Full membership, including State Federation dues, is \$150 / year. To be eligible to fish the MN State Tournament, dues must be submitted to the Club prior to the deadline for 'Final Club Roster' as set by the MN Bass Nation. Associate memberships are for those not interested in participating in the MN State Tournament with dues of \$100 / year. Associate members are eligible to fish all Gopher Bassmaster club tournaments, but are not eligible to fish the MN State Tournament. New members receive a \$25 dollar discount in their first year of a full membership, which equates to \$125 for the year. The new member discount does not apply to the Associate Membership.

2. **BONUS WEIGHT:**

Bonus weight is intended to encourage club member participation in club functions by awarding that is added to a club member's overall weight total for the year. Bonus weight is awarded as it is earned, but may be capped by category.

a. **Show:** All anglers will be awarded one pound (1#) 'Show' weight for each club contest they participate and will be added to the cumulative yearly total. There is no annual cap on 'Show' weight.

b. **Team Bonus:** To encourage and continue a spirit of learning and sportsmanship, a bonus will be awarded to the two anglers sharing a boat who bring in the heaviest combined weight, consisting of two limits in each event. The bonus will be one half pound (0.5#) per angler and will be added to the cumulative yearly total. There is no annual cap on 'Team Bonus'.

c. **Meeting Bonus:** To encourage Club and Fed (State) meeting attendance, club members will be awarded one-half pound (0.5#) per meeting attended, not including club post-tournament meetings. To earn a 'Meeting bonus', the club member must attend at least 75% of the meeting. Meeting Bonus weight will be added to the cumulative yearly total and is capped at four pounds (4#) per year.

d. **Other Events:** Club members who volunteer for any of the following events are eligible for bonus weight. Any combination of bonus weight received from the following activities will be capped at four pounds (4#) annually to be added to their cumulative yearly total.

1. **Pan-O-Prog (aka Fundraiser Tournament):** Club members who volunteer to work at a tournament hosted by Gopher Bass that raises funds for the club are eligible for bonus weight. For each shift worked, a club member may earn one-half pound (0.5#), capped at one pound (1#) to be added to the cumulative yearly total. For example, working the

morning shift is half-pound (0.5#) bonus, but working morning and afternoon shift would be a one pound (1#) bonus.

2. Youth Tournament: Club members who volunteer for a B.A.S.S. Youth Tournament at the Club or State (Fed) level will be awarded bonus weight to be added to their cumulative yearly total. For a full-day of volunteering (boater, observer, worker), club members will receive one-pound (1#). For a half-day of volunteering (worker), club members will receive a half-pound (0.5#) bonus weight.

3. Miscellaneous events: For events that do not fall within the other categories, club members are eligible to receive bonus weight for club organized activities that reflect positively on the club or Fed (State). Examples may include: ramp clean-up, working the MN Bass Nation booth at a sports show, Casting for Kids Clinic, etc. Please inform the club president prior to the event for consideration of bonus eligibility.

### 3. AWARDS

a. Sportsmanship Award for the person who shows good sportsmanship both on and off the water, and is always willing to give someone a hand. Determine by secret ballot.

b. Most Improved Award is for members who show greatest improvement in their overall angling ability.

c. Tournament Winners of each tournament will receive an award.

d. TOC Participants will receive an award.

e. Big Bass Award will be given for the heaviest bass caught in a Gopher Club tournament, for that year.

f. Rookie of the Year Award will be awarded to the top finishing rookie angler in years where we have more than 1 new member.

4. SPORTSMANSHIP: Competitors in the Gopher Bassmasters are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, boat wake control, and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles during a Club tournament may be cause for a disqualification. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the area of non-competitors. Any act of a competitor which reflects unfavorably upon Gopher or B.A.S.S. shall be reason for immediate disqualification, subject to a final decision by the tournament committee.

5. TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE: All decisions of the tournament committee are final. Tournament Committee consist of Tournament Director, President, & Vice-President. If a member of tournament committee is involved, or not present, another club member will be appointed by majority vote.

### TOURNAMENT RULES

## 1. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS: ,

Pairings for the tournaments will be done at random prior to the event by the Tournament Director. At the Tournament Directors discretion, pairings may be adjusted if a pairing has already fished an event together during that year.

No one shall be allowed to fish alone unless authorized by the Tournament Committee.

If a pairing results with both contestants having a boat, a coin toss will determine the boater and the non-boater. The boater has first choice of which 4 hours he/she will have control of the trolling motor and fishing locations. The boater and non-boater will agree to split bow control/fishing location time in half, 50/50. A boater who refuses to split time in the front of the boat, given a split was requested by the non-boater, will result in immediate disqualification of the boater's catch.

A boater has the right to refuse navigating the boat where it may be unsafe. However, a non-boater may file a protest with the tournament committee. If the Tournament Committee determines the waters were safe, the boater will be disqualified (DQ'd).

If participants drop out more than 48 hours in advance of the tournament, the pairings will be redone to accommodate the change. For drop outs within 48 hours of the start of the tournament, it is at the discretion of the Tournament Director to assess a 'no-show penalty' or redo the pairings. For no show penalty, see section #14.

## 2. PRE-FISHING PRACTICE

There will be NO pre-tournament fishing or boating on a tournament body of water for a period of 12 hours before a tournament. Unless waived by the Tournament Director and clearly communicated to all club members in advance.

## 3. SAFETY:

Safe boating conduct must be observed at all times by all competitors.

Each competitor is required to wear a coast guard approved chest type preserver any time the combustion engine is operating. All boats in a club tournament shall be equipped with a safety tether (aka kill switch) switch. A boater will be automatically disqualified if they fail to locate a safety tether switch before take-off on tournament day, NO EXCEPTIONS. In the event of safety tether switch DQ, the tournament director will attempt to pair the non-boater with another participant's boat in accordance with rule #1.

The tournament Director has the power to cancel or delay any tournament before or during fishing due to inclement weather.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages, marijuana, depressants, stimulants, or illegal drugs by any competitor during the tournament (takeoff until the weigh in is complete)

will result in a DQ for this tournament and all other Gopher Bassmaster tournaments. Further, competitors that observe or allow this behavior without reporting it will result in a DQ for that tournament.

#### 4. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:

Only artificial lures may be used. No live bait will be permitted. Only casting, spin casting, or spinning type reels are permitted. All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the state.

#### 5. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:

Maximum horsepower for any boats in the tournament is 250 HP, not to exceed the limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard in their ruling of Nov. 1st, 1972, or BIA equivalent rating. Each boat must have a HP rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer. The HP shall not exceed this rating or the 250 HP maximum set by the Gopher Bassmasters. All boats not having this tag shall have their maximum HP determined by the U.S. approved equations set by the Coast Guard. Normal maintenance to increase the performance of your engine is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory rating is prohibited and will result in a DQ.

#### 6. BOAT AND MOTOR OPERATION:

A small motor, gas or electric, may be used for slow maneuvering. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited.

Every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment. This includes a fire extinguisher and a throwable life preserver (in addition to the torso type) for all boats 16 feet or more in length. Minimum boat size is at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

All boats must be equipped with a functioning livewell, properly aerated, capable of maintaining a limit catch of bass by both fishermen in a healthy, live condition. No minnow type aerators will be allowed. Nets will be allowed in any competitor's boat during the tournament, but nets must be rubber or rubber coated.

#### 7. BREAKDOWNS:

In the event of a breakdown, there are then two permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both paired anglers remaining in their boat and being towed by water, or (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one or both paired anglers entering the boat of another tournament contestant. Under these two conditions both contestants' catches may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) provided that the broken down boat's fish are adequately marked so as to provide clear distinction of their catch to the tournament director. 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.

Abandoning a boat and leaving it adrift without proper tie-off or anchoring after a mechanical failure may result in disqualification of that day's weight.

#### 8. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:

Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the Tournament Director. Fishing on the tournament waters is permitted anywhere except: within 60 feet of another competitor's boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position with the trolling motor out of the water, or within 60 feet of a competitor's marker buoy. However, if an angler abandons a marker buoy (not within 50 yards), for a reason other than to retie or tend to fish on-board, that area is now open. All such boats are required to advise any other competitor when such boat believes the competitor is close to being within this 60-foot radius. No such boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within the 60-foot circle claimed by him, to the exclusion of any other competitor. Competitors may not purchase "rights" to "spots" from another competitor. Any water within these boundaries posted Off-Limits or No Fishing by state or federal agencies will be OFF-LIMITS. Also the live-bass release area established by the Tournament Director will be OFF-LIMITS and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any waters closed to public fishing will be closed to this tournament's contestants. All angling must be done from the boat. Competitors wishing to change fish habitat by placing any object in the tournament waters may do so if such action does not violate state or federal regulations.

#### 9. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT

Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. 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. In such an emergency, competitors may be removed from their boat to: A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT.

Exception: A contestant may leave the boat for the sole purpose of retrieving a lure which has been hooked on private property, and must remain in visual contact of their partner at all times. A contestant may also leave the boat to use a restroom facility.

#### 10. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:

Check-out and check-in will be from the 'OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT' as indicated by the tournament director prior to tournament start. The take-off at each tournament will be in 10 second intervals. The last boat off will designate the 10 second intervals with a hand signal. Travel time to the point of origin shall be mandated so that the second 4 hours of fishing time would be started at origin. The first boat off will be responsible for

fish bag handouts for the tournament check-ins at the takeoff area. Tournament times will be according to the first boat off. Once you receive your bag you are done fishing.

#### 11. SCORING:

Only largemouth and smallmouth bass shall be weighed. The daily limit at the tournament will be determined by the Tournament Director. All fish must be caught in a conventional sporting manner.

The minimum length for bass will be 12" in MN unless the state or lake limit is more than 12", in which case, the local ordinance will prevail. Scoring is determined by the pounds and ounces of each angler's catch during each tournament.

Any bass that appears to be mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of the tournament weighmaster, who also shall make any decisions as to minimum length eligibility. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a bass. Each competitor must present their catch to the weigh in officials. Stringing of your fish is prohibited at any time during the tournament and fish will not be counted, approved culling devices allowed.

For paper tournaments, each angler must verify the length of their partner's catch. In order to do so, the measuring board must have 1/4" increments. The angler measuring a fish must ask their partner to momentarily stop fishing and verify the length of their catch. When measured, the mouth of fish being will be closed and the tail pinched.

#### 12. PENALTY POINTS:

Any angler possessing more than the tournament limit must notify the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the infraction and reduce his/her catch to the tournament limit by releasing live bass. Anglers possessing more than the tournament limit will be penalized two pounds (2#) for each bass over the limit.

Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit will be penalized at the rate of one pound (1#) for each short bass presented. Measuring a short fish where there is a legal minimum length will result in disqualification. (i.e. 14" min. in WI). When measured, the mouth of the fish will be closed and the tail pinched.

Dead fish penalty is four ounces, or a quarter pound (0.25#), for each expired fish. The weigh master determines dead fish.

#### 13. LATE PENALTY:

Competitors who are not at the official checkpoint area as described in rule #9 at the appointed time shall be penalized.

Take-off:

10% of the total legal weight of the days catch will be deducted from the total bag weight.

#### Weigh-In:

Contestants who are not at the check-in area at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight.

Late anglers are not eligible for the Big Bass Award for that day.

Any contestant more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight.

#### 14. NO-SHOW PENALTY:

A 'No-Show' penalty will be assessed to any angler who fails to show up for an event without notifying the tournament director prior to the event. Notification must take place no less than 30 minutes prior to tournament start for extreme cases, with a 24 hour notification strongly encouraged for all normal circumstances. The penalty will be equal to the average weight of that tournament and will be assessed to the yearly weight total for the absent angler.

#### 15. NO-SHOW PAIRING:

If a non-boater does not show, the boater will fish alone. If a boater does not show, the non-boater will fish with the person with the biggest boat and does not get the front of the boat unless deemed by the team they are fishing with. If this happens more than once, boaters with watercraft larger than 19ft will rotate starting with largest and going smaller. This prevents the guy with the biggest boat from getting stuck with a 3rd angler all the time.

#### 16. TIES:

The first tie breaker will be the total number of bass weighted in by each competitor, if still tied, the largest individual fish of each competitor will be weighed, if still tied, the tournament committee will decide the winners.

#### 17. PROTESTS

All protests must be presented in writing to the Tournament Director before weigh-in is completed. If the Tournament Director is not present, it must be presented to a member of the Tournament Committee or Weighmaster.

18. APPEAL: Any contestant adversely affected by the tournament committee's decision at the landing has the right of appeal to the written tournament rules.

I HAVE READ THE GOPHER BASSMASTERS TOURNAMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THEM IN ANY ACTIVITY THAT INVOLVES THE GOPHER BASSMASTERS.

PRINTED NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_