



**2022**

**VPA POLICY AND PROCEDURES  
FOR  
BASS FISHING**





### **VPA BASS FISHING COMMITTEE**

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### **POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

**Please note the points of emphasis do not include all changes to the Policy and Procedures Manual. Please review the manual carefully.**

It is the expectation of the Bass Fishing Committee that coaches will rely on anglers “voice” in the “decision making” process including but not limited to choosing the location to fish, where and when to cast their line, which lure to use, etc.

Schools will again be allowed to enter both a VARSITY and a JV boat in both the VPA Classic and in the Vermont State Championship. This is the second year trying this format with the idea of expanding opportunities for student-athlete participation. The boats (anglers) will need to be identified at the time of registration. (Not after the fact.)

- First Date to Practice – Thursday, August 18, 2022
- Roster / Entry Fee Due Date – Monday, September 12, 2022 “Classic” (9/17/22) ●
- Roster / Entry Fee Due Date - Monday, October 3rd, 2022 “State Championship” (10/8/22)
- Twin-State may be TBD (A decision about Twin-State will be made in the future.)

### **I. Baseline Expectations re: Equipment/Insurance Etc.**

There must be at least one cellular phone available on all boats to be used in case of emergency.

The tournament director will request that information in advance of any scheduled tournament.

Every boat must have an adult captain for driving purposes, and only the captain may drive the boat when the outboard motor is in use. A certificate of insurance for the boat must be presented, indicating a minimum of \$300,000 CSL liability coverage.

Schools may enter two (2) teams of up to eight (8) anglers in the State Championship tournament (1 Varsity and 1 JV.) Schools may enter two (2) teams of up to eight (8) anglers each in the Classic tournament. (Varsity/JV designation not required.)

- i. Only two anglers, one coach, and one captain will be permitted on the boat at any time (see tournament info).

All boats must be a minimum of 16 feet in length and have all the required Marine Patrol safety equipment, functional bilge pump, and working live well(s).

School uniforms must be worn during competitions and weigh-ins. Any sponsorship the school has secured cannot be displayed on the uniform or the coach/driver of the boat.

A “Live Well” - Live well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass by all angler using the boat.

#### Background Checks:

In the event that your school district requires background checks, it is the responsibility of **your school** to conduct the background checks.

## **II. Divisional Alignments**

Bass Fishing will continue to be aligned into one coed division: Multiple teams have been added this year. The Bass Fishing Committee will continue to monitor this alignment and changes will be considered as needed moving forward. Last year we added two teams to the Bass Fishing League and the committee anticipates more growth in the sport this season. **Total number of schools participating last year was 18.**

## **III. Regular Season**

A. The season will run from the first date to practice, **August 18, 2022** and end with the last date to play, **October TBD based on Twin State.**

B. Schools can fish from the shorelines, in ponds, lakes, and/or rivers as an alternative to boats during the season.

C. During the regular season, athletes/schools can scrimmage or practice against other schools (live or virtually) or simply practice as a team, in the end, each school will need to identify at least two, but up to 4 anglers (two on the boat, and two onshore as substitutes) to go on to the two VPA Tournaments.

D. It is encouraged that any organized scrimmages or co-practices be communicated to the Chairperson of the Committee so that Vermont Fish and Wildlife Authorities can be notified. (Date, Location, Participating Schools, and Times)

E. There may be some non-VPA tournaments held this year. Look for information from host schools re: these potential events. It is required that host schools are permitted with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Authorities.

Due to the negative impacts that exotic invasive plants and animals can have on VT's aquatic communities, it is imperative that all anglers check their boats and trailers for aquatic invasive species prior to launching **and** when leaving a waterbody. This includes checking boats and trailers for aquatic plants as well as making sure that live wells and other equipment is completely dry after use. Not only is it illegal to transport exotic plants and animals in Vermont, but increasing instances of boats arriving at launches with exotic species on them will only make access to boat access facilities more difficult in the future. Additionally, exotic invasive plants have the potential to lead to impacts to native plant communities and the fish that depend on them.

The VT Fish and Game Department is very excited that VT high school students now have the opportunity to participate in fishing as a sanctioned High School Sport and fully supports this endeavor. Have a safe and productive tournament season.

#### **IV. Tournaments**

##### **A. Tournament Dates:**

i. **VPA Classic High School Tournament** on **Saturday, September 17, 2022** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero (each school may enter up to 2 boats) from 7 am to 2 pm – More Details will be provided in advance of the tournament.

ii. **VPA State Championship High School Tournament** on **Saturday, October 8, 2022** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero (Each school may only enter 1 Varsity Boat and a maximum number of 4 anglers (min. of 2) and one JV Boat with a maximum of 4 anglers (min. 2) for the State Championship - 2 on the boat at a time. (Substitute anglers may not fish from shore)

7 am to 2 pm – More Details will be provided in advance of the tournament.

#### **V. Entries, Withdrawal Procedures, and Eligibility:**

- A. Participation: Only individuals from VPA Member Schools who have communicated an intent to participate in the VPA Bass Fishing Season may participate in the tournaments.
- B. Tournament Rosters: All participating member schools must submit rosters to the VPA Committee by **Monday, September 12, 2022** for the Classic Tournament. All participating member schools must submit rosters to the VPA Committee by **Monday, October 3rd, 2022** for the State Championship Tournament.
- C. Roster Changes: Any changes to a roster must be in communicated to the tournament director a minimum of 48 hours prior to the tournaments. Extenuating circumstances will be handled by the committee.
- D. Eligibility: All participants must meet all requirements established by the VPA, as in any sport. This includes having a physical examination as required by the VPA or the local district; whichever is most stringent.
- E. Fees: Entry Fees will be collected for each school/team competing in each of the tournaments. Fee Structure is as follows:
- a. Volunteer Captains – A **minimum** \$75 gas offset per event should be paid directly to your boat captain. **(Please consider current gas prices when working with your captains re: gas offset.)**
  - b. Entry Fee per tournament will be \$50 per team/boat. (Made out to EWSD) c. Entry Fee checks can be submitted to Jeff Goodrich at Essex High School 2 Educational Drive Essex Junction VT 05452 and made out to EWSD.

## **VI. Tournament Structure and Schedule:**

- A. VPA Classic (State Qualifier) Date: **Saturday, September 17, 2022** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero
- i. Rain Date: TBD; the tournament will be held rain or shine if safe and possible.
- B. Schools will be divided into two (2) flights as needed. The VPA shall notify all schools of what flight they will be in, as well as the order in which they will launch boats.
- C. State Championship Round Date: **Saturday, October 8, 2022** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero
- i. Rain Date: TBD; the tournament will be held rain or shine if safe and possible.
- D. Twin State (vs. New Hampshire) Date: TBD Location: TBD (This event may or may not

occur in 2022.)

E. Launch order for the Championship Round will be based off of the Classic tournament results.

>Weight will be re-set to zero after the Classic tournament

F. Coaches/Captains/Volunteers at 7:00 a.m. morning of each tournament. Schools cannot arrive with their boats until after 6:30 a.m. no exceptions. Please arrive by 6:45 am the day of tournament.

<p><b><u>Flight 1</u></b> (Varsity)</p> <p><b>7:00 a.m.</b> Mandatory pre-tournament meeting on shore for all boat captains, coaches and anglers.</p> <p><b>7:15 - 7:30 a.m.</b> Safety checks for boats will be done on a first come first serve basis. They will be checked for invasive plants and other species. Boats in water.</p> <p><b>7:45 a.m.</b> Tournament begins</p> <p><b>2:45 p.m.</b> Participants must be docked <b>3:00 p.m.</b> Weigh-in begins</p>	<p><b><u>Flight 2</u></b> (JV)</p> <p><b>7:00 a.m.</b> Mandatory pre-tournament meeting on shore for all boat captains, coaches, and anglers.</p> <p><b>7:30 – 7:45 a.m.</b> Safety checks for boats will be done on a first come first serve basis. They will be checked for invasive plants and other species. Boats in water.</p> <p><b>8:00 a.m.</b> Tournament begins</p> <p><b>2:00 p.m.</b> Participants must be docked <b>2:15 p.m.</b> Weigh-in begins</p>
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Flight Itinerary – When two flights are needed / Qualifiers (Note: Adjustments to this schedule may be made at the discretion of the Tournament Committee.)

**Awards shall be presented following the final weigh in.**

## **VII. Tournament Regulations:**

- A. The tournament will be set for at least six (6) hours of fishing. This may be adjusted due to the weather. The tournament shall be considered complete if half of the minimum scheduled time has been fulfilled; approximately three (3) hours.
- B. All participants must have a current and valid Vermont Fishing License on their person the day of the tournament if they are age 15 or older.

- C. All participants must be back to the identified check-in location on time. Penalties will be 1 lb. per minute late. After 15 minutes, no weight will be allowed for that day. It is the participant's (Coach/Captain) responsibility to notify the tournament manager in advance of the deadline of any problems that may have occurred.
- D. Permitted fishing locations and off-limit areas shall be established by the tournament manager and will be covered during the pre-tournament meeting of captains and coaches.
- E. There will be a six(6) fish per boat limit. The minimum length of a legal bass is 12 inches. Fish may be culled if a participant(s) has six(6) fish in the live well. No more than six (6) fish can be in the live well at any one time. Participants exceeding the fish limit will be disqualified.
- F. All participants must wear a US Coast Guard-approved life jacket the entire time they are on the water. If they do not, disqualification will occur. It is highly recommended that participants have available, a full (jacket/pant) rain suit in case of inclement weather.
- G. There must be at least one cellular phone available on all boats to be used in case of emergency.
- H. Student-athletes are allowed to use the team gear and or the gear of the captain. At the discretion of the coach/captain student anglers are permitted to operate the trolling motor.
- I. Every boat must have an adult captain for driving purposes, and only the captain may drive the boat when the outboard motor is in use. A certificate of insurance for the boat must be presented, indicating a minimum of \$300,000 CSL liability coverage.
- J. Coaching: The captain/coach of the boat may make suggestions in advance of the launch but is not allowed to choose locations or strategies once on the water. Coaches/captains WILL not fish in any respect. This includes but is not limited to tying lures, netting fish, and handling fish, or gear. Adults may help unhook fish to help with the health of the fish.
- K. All fish will be released immediately after the weigh-in. All fish put in the live well must be kept alive. Dead fish will have a ½ pound deduction and cannot count for the largest fish for the boat. Dead fish may not be culled. It is illegal to "dump" dead fish. Please care for the bass population.
- L. Schools may enter one (1) Varsity team of up to four (4) anglers and (1) JV team of up to four (4) anglers in the Championship tournament. Schools may enter two (2) teams of up to four (4) anglers each in the Classic tournament.
  - i. Only two anglers, one coach, and one captain will be permitted on the boat at any time (see tournament info).



M. All boats must be a minimum of 16 feet in length and have all of the required VT Marine Patrol safety equipment, functional bilge pump, and working live well(s).

N. The total weight of the six(6) fish limited to a boat would count for the team total for the tournament. Individual weight will also be recorded for the top fish designated by each boat. The heaviest fish award will be given to each participant of the boat that weighs in the heaviest Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass of the Championship Round.

O. Ties will be broken, if the poundage is equal, in the following manner;

- i. First tie-breaker shall be the number of fish caught.
- ii. Second tie-breaker shall be the largest fish by weight.

P. No live bait or trolling is allowed at the tournament; artificial lures only. Only one casting, spin-cast, or spinning rod, eight (8) foot maximum, and reel may be used at any one time.

Q. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional manner. Anyone guilty of catching a fish by means of “snagging” will be disqualified. All bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be certified by the boat captain to be counted as a legal fish.

R. Participants must stay in the boat unless they are using a restroom facility or due to some other emergency or malfunction. If an emergency or other malfunction should occur, the boat must contact the local manager or his/her designee prior to leaving the boat.

- i. All angler substitutions must take place at a designated area to be selected by the committee, and disseminated with the captain’s information prior to the tournament.

S. Any transfer of fish from one live well to another live well in another boat due to malfunction must be made in the presence of the local manager or his/her designee.

T. Participants may not obtain fishing patterns or locations from a non-competitor’s boat, follow a non-competitor’s boat or participate in the practice of “hole-sitting”; a practice wherein a non-competitor sits on the fishing spot, holding it for a contestant. In addition, non-participants may not place markers for a school. **All of these acts are prohibited and will result in the immediate disqualification of the boat**

U. School uniforms must be worn during competitions. Any sponsorship the school has secured cannot be displayed on the uniform or the coach/driver of the boat.

V. Each tournament manager shall appoint (in addition to themselves) a Tournament Committee of at least three (3) participating coaches or school administrators. The decision(s) of the Tournament Committee shall be final in matters pertaining to the VPA Bass Fishing Terms and Conditions listed.



W. Unsportsmanlike Conduct:

- i. All participants must adhere to VPA By-Law Article IX, Sportsmanship. Any participant, coach, and/or other person guilty of profane or indecent language or of gross unsportsmanlike conduct shall be disqualified.

X. One line may be in the water per student angler, no coach nor captain will be permitted to fish at any time of the tournament.

**VIII. Tournament Policies:**

A. Damage to Property or Equipment:

If contestants or others from any school entered in the tournament are found guilty of maliciously breaking, damaging, or destroying property or equipment belonging to the host site, the school shall be held responsible for costs incurred by replacing or repairing such property or equipment.

B. Media:

- i. Media is welcome to attend and cover the VPA Events. Please contact the Committee Chair for more info / specific instructions.

C. Tobacco Products:

- i. No coach, game official, athletic team member or player of an VPA member school shall use or smoke any tobacco product (smokeless or otherwise) at any VPA sponsored or sanctioned event in which the coach, game official, team member or player is involved.

D. Use of Inhalers:

- i. A student with asthma may possess and use his/her medication during a VPA competition while under the supervision of school personnel, provided the school meets the outlined procedures of self-administration in the VT School Code.

E. Alcohol Beverages and the VPA State Events:

- i. The possession, distribution, or sale and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages are prohibited at the site and on any affiliated property of any VPA state contests.

F. Officials:

- i. Official weigh-in supervisors will be assigned by the VPA for the tournament.

G. Awards:

- i. Trophies / Plaques / Medals will be given to the top two schools overall (State

Champions and Runner-up) to the coaches/participants (at the state final tournament only.) Other acknowledgements may be made for the following classifications.

- H. Spectator Boats: Spectator boats are allowed on the lake the day of the tournament. Spectator boats must stay a reasonable distance from competitors and may not fish or help competitors in any way. Any spectator wishing to launch a boat from the tournament launch site must wait for all participants to launch.

## **IX. Outdoor Environmental Safety:**

### **Lightning:**

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect outdoor athletics. Within the United States, the National Severe Storm Laboratory (NSSL) estimates that 100 fatalities and 400-500 injuries requiring medical treatment occur from lightning strikes every year. The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike. Additionally, thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment, and its distance from the observer.

The following guidelines are mandatory:

- A. All athletic staff and game personnel are to monitor threatening weather. Establish a chain of command as to who makes the decision to remove a team or individual from athletic sites or events (athletic/site/event director, game officials/umpires, sports medicine staff?). An emergency plan should include planned instructions for participants as well as spectators.
- B. Be aware of potential thunderstorms that may form during scheduled athletic events or practices. Included here should include National Weather Service-issued (NWS) thunderstorm “watches” and “warnings” as well as signs of thunderstorms developing nearby. A “watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a “warning” means that severe weather has been reported in an area and for everyone to take proper precautions.
- C. Know where the closest “safe structure or location” is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.  
Safe structure or location is defined as:
  - i. Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and /or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and **do not use** the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.
  - ii. In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled-up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which

dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. **DO NOT TOUCH THE SIDES OF THE VEHICLE!**

D. WHEN YOU FIRST HEAR THUNDER OR SEE LIGHTNING, SUSPEND ACTIVITIES AND GO TO A SAFE SHELTER OR LOCATION. “**IF YOU CAN SEE IT** (LIGHTNING), **FLEE IT** (TAKE SHELTER). **IF YOU CAN HEAR IT** (THUNDER) **CLEAR IT** (SUSPEND ACTIVITIES).” WAIT UNTIL 30 MINUTES AFTER THE LAST OBSERVED LIGHTNING OR THUNDER BEFORE RESUMING ACTIVITIES.

E. If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground, because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. **MINIMIZE**

**YOUR BODY’S SURFACE AREA, AND MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH THE GROUND! DO NOT LIE FLAT!** Stay away from the tallest trees or objects (such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as bleachers or fences), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.

F. All anglers/coaches must leave the water and go to the nearest bus or secure building.