



2023 MINNESOTA BASS FEDERATION TOURNAMENT RULES

2023 Official Tournament Rules of the Minnesota Bass Federation (MNBFF) Effective January 1, 2023

The following rules will remain unchanged for 2023. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules is exclusive to the Tournament Director. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Officials may impose such sanctions, as they deem appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decisions of the Tournament Director and Tournament Officials shall be final in all matters.

1. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY: Participation in this tournament is open to anyone 16 years of age or older and who have participated in the appropriate qualifying tournaments if required. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the potential competitor. All participants must have in their possession a valid fishing license covering the waters to be fished. **DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY MNBFF EVENT NO CONTESTANT MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT CONTESTANT HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF A POLICY IN FORCE, THAT COVER THE EVENT DATES, WITH A MINIMUM OF \$300,000 BOATING LIABILITY INSURANCE ON THAT PARTICULAR BOAT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER THE COMPETITOR USING THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED. EACH POLICY MUST SHOW \$300,000.00 LIABILITY AND A VALID EXPIRATION DATE.** NOTE: Statements of "No fixed expiration date" are NOT acceptable. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, is handicapped in such a manner as to unfairly hinder their partner or endanger the safety and well-being of their partner or himself shall not be eligible. **A PROPERLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED OFFICIAL ENTRY DOCUMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE MNBFF BY THE STATED DEADLINE BEFORE THE EVENT(S).** The Tournament Officials reserve the right to discontinue or extend the acceptance of applications prior to or after this deadline. **As a participant in an MNBFF Tournament, you agree, if you qualify and are invited to be a member of the "STATE CHAMPIONSHIP", to be bound by and adhere to, all conditions set out in any "STATE CHAMPIONSHIP CONTRACTS".** And to use while representing the MNBFF any and all official products and equipment so specified and provided by the MNBFF. **LINKING:** It is the responsibility of both anglers to identify their linked boater or non-boater information during the registration process. **ALL TOC ENTRIES MUST BE LINKED.** Boaters may only link with non-boaters and non-boaters may only link with boaters. Boaters and non-boaters who link themselves during the registration process gain a guarantee they will fish in each tournament they enter as a linked entry. **Linked entries guarantees the boater will use their boat during competition and the co-angler will be guaranteed a spot in the tournament. Linked anglers will still be assigned partners via a random computer draw.**

2. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE: There may be an official practice period immediately preceding the first day of the tournament. There may be an official off-limits period immediately preceding the official practice period or the first day of the tournament. The exact dates and times of the practice and off-limits periods must be obtained from the MNBFF tournament officials. **The competitor must know and observe these dates. Beginning at each tournament entry deadline, including during the off-limits, official practice, and tournament, a competitor may not pay for the assistance or advice of anyone for the purposes of locating or catching bass on tournament waters during official practice and the tournament, nor may they enter the tournament waters during official practice and the tournament with anyone who has been on the tournament waters during the Off-Limits or is deemed an "EXPERT" on the tournament waters by tournament officials.** During the official practice and during the tournament, a competitor may not "SKIN DIVE" or "SCUBA DIVE" on the tournament waters. During the tournament a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, a cellular phone, or any other type of communication device for personal use. No tweets, no texts, no hashtags, no Facebook updates, etc. Contestants are permitted to transmit by radio or telephone only in the event of an emergency or to communicate with lockmasters. If so equipped, contestants may listen to the marine band weather info. **EACH CONTESTANT AGREES TO REPORT TO THE TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS ANY VIOLATION OR INFRACTION OF THESE TOURNAMENT RULES. THE FAILURE TO REPORT VIOLATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS TO VIOLATE THESE RULES OR FALSE VERIFICATION OF WEIGH-IN SLIPS WILL BE CAUSE FOR DISQUALIFICATION. EACH COMPETITOR AGREES, BY THEIR SIGNATURE ON THIS DOCUMENT, TO SUBMIT TO A POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO FOR ANY REASON and abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification.** The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the Tournament Director and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Without limiting anything herein, the Tournament Director shall have sole discretion to select the place at which such polygraph test shall be administered, the individual who administers such polygraph test, and the scope of the questions which may be asked during such test. The participant shall be available, at his/her own expense, at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such examination.

2B. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION Beginning 28 days prior to tournament, including during tournament, no contestant may purchase or barter spot specific fishing information including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than commercially available sources) or any other information used to gain a competitive advantage. Sharing of tournament winnings with noncontestants in exchange for information is prohibited. Purchasing or bartering for fishing locations with other contestants is also prohibited.

3. PRE-TOURNAMENT CHECK-IN: Each competitor must check-in in person with official MNBFF staff at the time and place prescribed in the registration materials. Failure to check-in in person during the prescribed times shall result in disqualification unless approved by the Tournament Director. **NO EXCEPTIONS. IT SHALL BE EACH COMPETITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR CHECK-IN TIMES AND LOCATION OR OBTAIN TIMES FROM THE MNBFF.** Contestants are expected to compete in all days that they are qualified; failure to do so may result in ineligibility to compete in future MNBFF events.

4. SAFETY: Safe boat conduct must always be observed by tournament competitors. During the official practice and during the tournament, each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved, Type III, chest-type life preserver. This preserver must be worn anytime the combustion engine is operating. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the competitor reaches their fishing location and the combustion engine is shut off. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification. 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 of the competitors. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. The MNBFF further reserves the right to impose boat speed limits on any or all tournaments. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area covered by the speed limit and/or the actual speed limit imposed shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the Tournament Director.

5. SPORTSMANSHIP: **Competitors in an MNBFF tournament are expected to follow the very highest standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation** Participants will conduct themselves in a true sportsmanlike, courteous, safe and ethical manner at all times maintaining professional demeanor in public and in communication with officials. The "Federation" and MNBFF is the "grassroots ambassadors" of fishing, maximum courtesy must always be practiced, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any unfavorable conduct, speech or action by a participant in our efforts to promote sportsmanship, clean waters and conservation will not be tolerated and could affect eligibility to participate. Each competitor is expected to participate in the marshaling of the field to help maintain the highest integrity of competition. Use of alcohol or any mind-altering drugs (other than those drugs purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the event or use of alcohol until after you have weighed in will not be tolerated. **When tournaments are Boater/Co-Angler format the boater must always permit the co-angler to fish. Any angler that purposely and knowingly conducts themselves in a manner that prevents any competitor from fishing or landing a catch will be disqualified from the tournament as this unacceptable sportsmanship behavior that will not be tolerated.** All competitors are bound by prevailing state statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. Any conduct prior to or during the event reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and/or disqualification. Any disqualification discipline or suspension from any fishing organization may be grounds for rejecting any application for participation or disqualification. **Any violation of these basic sporting principles will be taken seriously.**

6. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT: Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of pork rinds, strips, etc. Only ONE fishing rod (10-foot maximum length from butt of the handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. All other types prohibited. Other rigs as specified may be in the boat ready to use, however, only ONE is permitted in use at any given time. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional and sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day's catch disqualified. When fishing for bass you can see, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked to be counted as a legal fish. No gaffs OR "GRIPPERS" may be used to land bass nor be permitted in boat at any time.

7. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: MAXIMUM HORSEPOWER FOR ALL OUTBOARD MOTORS USED IN OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND IN TOURNAMENT COMPETITION WILL BE 250 HP. EACH BOAT MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH A U.S. COAST GUARD RATING PLATE, WHICH MUST BE ATTACHED TO THE BOAT BY THE MANUFACTURER. IN NO CASE MAY THE HORSEPOWER OF YOUR OUTBOARD EXCEED THE RATING SPECIFIED ON THE RATING PLATE OR THE HP LIMIT SET BY THE MNBFF. Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the official entry form, the boat and motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory-trained personal, if there is any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance to increase the performance of your engine is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor to **INCREASE THE HORSEPOWER OVER THE FACTORY HORSEPOWER RATING IS FORBIDDEN**, and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower rating numbers on the motor or ratings plate also would be cause for immediate disqualification from MNBFF sanctioned events.

8. BOAT AND MOTOR: **For the safety of all contestants, ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH SOME TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH SAFETY DEVICE.** This ignition kill device must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operating and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Fishing boats may be used that are 17 feet in length or longer and must have a rear deck. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. Any type of AUXILIARY gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by an authorized dealer are legal. Boats that do not have factory installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regs. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to all contenders and/or the public. No "barges" or similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. **NO BOAT EQUIPPED WITH "STICK STEERING" SHALL BE PERMITTED TO BE USED DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE OR DURING THE TOURNAMENT BY ANY COMPETITOR.** The definition of "stick steering" shall be made by the Tournament Director. A competitor answering affirmatively the question "Will you bring a boat and motor?" will be expected to make that boat and motor available for tournament use by himself and his daily partner, if so requested by tournament officials. Those answering the same question negatively will be presumed not to have a boat available and will be paired with one who does when possible. It shall be the responsibility of the fishing partners to mutually agree on a meeting location, and the basis for sharing expenses. If partners are unable to agree, the Tournament Officials shall make such determination, which shall be binding upon the partners.

9. BASIC BOAT & SAFETY EQUIPMENT: Every boat must have all the required Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and **livewell space, properly aerated**, to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch by competitors using the boat. **The MNBF recommends the use of livewell additives to promote a healthy release of all fish to their natural habitat. Further the MNBF recommends the use of ICE to cool livewell water and improve oxygen levels during "summer" months.** Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate".

10. BOAT IDENTIFICATION: Each boat **MUST** be given, prior to each day's start, a livewell and **SAFETY INSPECTION** check by a tournament official. Also a boat marker, which **MUST** remain in the boat and turned in during check-in at the end of each day.

11. BOAT OPERATION: Boaters will fish from the front deck of the boat only. Non-boaters will fish from the back deck of the boat only. Boaters will have complete control of boat operation and waters to be fished. Boaters may not request that the non-boater not fish. Any boater who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, operates the boat in a manner that unfairly handicaps their non-boater partner will be disqualified for that day. Boaters paired with other boaters are entitled to equal time in the front of the boat to operate the trolling motor and an equal number of hours to fish their selected waters (number of hours includes travel time to fishing locations)

12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each Tournament. Each participant must obtain this information. Fishing on Tournament waters is permitted anywhere except: within 50 yards of another competitor's boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position **WITH THE TROLLING MOTOR OUT OF THE WATER**. The anchored boat has a responsibility to inform other competitor's boats when they have entered the 50-yard circle claimed by him. No such boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within the 50-yard circle claimed by him, to the exclusion of any other competitor. Any water within these boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" by state or federal agencies will be OFF-LIMITS. No contestant may "Buy" or "Barter" a fishing location. Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to these tournament contestants. All angling must be done from the boat.

13. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN TOGETHER 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 always remain in the boat except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, both competitors may be removed from their boat to: **A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT**. Partners must always remain together, in sight of each other and each other's catch under the conditions cited above, in order for their catch of that day to be counted. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for a restroom break is permitted, however ALL FISHING MUST CEASE, until partners are back together. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions (to use a phone to report an emergency or breakdown) both competitors must cease fishing at this point, and their catch must be verified by a tournament official in order to be counted in the tournament. If after the emergency situation is resolved by tournament officials and enough time is left to resume fishing, a **RESTART** will be allowed and the competitors will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations. Trailering of boats during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of the Tournament Director.

14. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT: There shall be an official checkpoint for checkout in the morning and check-in in the afternoon and this point shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of check-out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all Safety and Tournament rules set forth by the Tournament Director; at check-in all boats shall identify themselves, and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together, through check-in and weigh-in, until weigh-in slips have been signed. **YOU MUST CHECK-IN EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FISH.**

15. SCORING: Tournament standing, auxiliary awards and final standings shall be determined by a method of scoring set forth, and announced in the pre-tournament briefing. Only Largemouth and/or Smallmouth Bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day, unless the prevailing limit for the body of water is less than 5, or a special limit is established for a particular tournament by the tournament director, in which case the body of water limit or special limit shall be the tournament limit. At no time shall competitors have in their livewell more than the tournament limit. The official length for bass shall be decided by Tournament Officials and announced at the tournament briefing. In most cases it will be the LONGEST State limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed-in. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length shall accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each non-legal bass. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. Any bass that appears to have been ganged, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials. After a competitor checks in at the official checkpoint, he **MUST** present all LEGAL fish in his possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a competitor's catch has been measured, counted or verified by a tournament official, that contestant may not return to his boat until his catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. **Culling tags or clips are allowed as long as they are non-piercing type.** Each contestant's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag, which will be furnished by the Tournament Officials.

16. CATCH & RELEASE: For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized **eight (8) ounces** of weight, to be deducted from their daily score. You may not cull dead fish. If a fish dies in your livewell, it must be part of your daily limit and brought to the scales. The Tournament Officials shall have sole authority for accessing penalties.

17. LATE PENALTY: Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in rule 14 at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day, including any "Big Bass Award" for each one minute they are late. Any competitors more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case will a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time". After proper recognition at the check-in point, competitors will be allowed ample time to proceed to the weigh-in site; however, all fishing must stop upon check-in. After the pre-tournament briefing begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the tournament briefing.

18. TIES: In case of a tie, the following tie breakers will be used in this order: 1.) The individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed in during the competition; 2.) The individual with the largest number of legal LIVE fish weighed in during the competition; 3.) The individual with the heaviest single bass weighed in during competition. In the unlikely event that a tie remains after these three tiebreakers are employed; then positions will be resolved by combining and dividing the awards equally among the tied contestants.

19. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS: When not a designated team event, pairing of competitors will be by random draw. Two competitors (one boater and one non-boater) will be assigned to each boat. In the event there are more boaters than non-boaters, anglers will be paired in a boater-boater pairing. Announcement of your first-day fishing partner shall be made at the Tournament Briefing, which must be attended by each competitor. It shall be the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to check out at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. The Tournament Director, at his/her sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off. It is suggested that a minimum of 30 minutes is required for preparation to depart to the check-out point. When two competitors check out at the beginning of the day, they must stay together and within sight of each other and each other's catch throughout the day until the weigh-in is completed except in case of dire emergency (see Rule 13 & 14). A competitor must not allow any bass caught by him/her to be counted on the score of another competitor. In such a case, both competitors shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by MNBF.

20. PATCHES AND/OR SIGNAGE: The MNBF encourages the use of patches, logo and other signage to promote sponsors. Realizing we are entering into a television media/sponsorship field that MAY sometimes restrict the use of such signage, etc. that promote or advertise products, the MNBF reserves the right to **RESTRICT THE USE OF SUCH SIGNAGE**, with as much advance notice as possible.

21. Aquatic Invasive Species: Each boater is recommended to **WASH** their boat and trailer after pre-fishing and tournaments to help prevent the spread of invasive species. All tournament boats must be cleaned all visible aquatic plants from the boat, trailer and drain the motor before leaving any access. Harmful exotic aquatic plants, including Eurasian Watermilfoil, (milfoil), Curly-Leaf Pondweed, Purple Loosestrife, Flowering Rush, Spinand, Spiny Waterflea and zebra mussels prior to entering the tournament waters. **Drain** boat, and live wells. Remove drain plug. Keep drain plugs out. All tournament anglers shall practice **Clean, Drain, Dry**.

22. Boat position draw and Entries: **No entries will be accepted past the Monday prior to the tournament date. No exceptions. Boat Position draw will be conducted on Tuesday prior to the tournament.** This will be a random draw and boat position draw results will be posted on the MNBF internet and social media site. This will be used for team and random draw tournaments.

23. CRR Type Tournaments Scoring of Fish: The minimum size bass will be 12 inches in length or as stated by the MNBF Tournament director for each tournament. Immediately after a catch is made, the bass will be verified as a Legal Keeper by both boater and co-angler. There is no limit to the number of Legal Keepers a Competitors can catch & record. The top 5 scoreable bass count towards total weight. All bass must be recorded within 5 minutes into the APP to count as a scoreable Bass. Bass that are not entered within 5 minutes of being caught will not be counted. Once a bass is caught, placed on the measuring board & determined as a scoreable Legal Keeper, the bass will be attached to the official scale by the competitor (Boater or Co-Angler). Boater or Co-Angler will "call the weight" & the Boater or Co-Angler will immediately confirm or challenge the call. If the call is confirmed by the Boater or Co-Angler, they will immediately record the weight in writing on the Boat Official's "Daily Score Pad" & enter the weight into the Digital Scoring System and confirmed by an initial on the Daily score pad by the angler who caught the bass. After agreement is secured, the Competitors are permitted to physically release the fish into the water & resume fishing. At NO time can MNBF Competitors put a bass in their livewell, unless they have received authorization from tournament director.

24. RELEASING FISH: When releasing any fish that is Scoreable, the angler's hand should be at gunnel level or closer to the water. Avoid flipping or tossing fish back into the water.

25. Media Boater and Co-Anglers must allow media personnel onto the Boater boat to conduct Live stream interviews during the course of the tournament. Competitors need to act professional to the media personnel during the Live feed interviews, profanity will not be tolerated as these live stream videos helps grow our sport and organization.

26. Catch, Record (Picture, Weigh and Record) and Release Tournaments Rules (CRR):
Note: The above baseline rules are applicable to CRR type tournaments except Rules 15 & 16.

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