

## Official Rules for Northwest Bass, LLC 2024 Team Circuit

The following rules will remain unchanged throughout the event(s) unless State or local laws are in conflict. Interpretation and enforcement of rules will be left to the Tournament Director. In the event of a rule violation the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate including without limitation: disqualification, forfeiture of prizes, and/or entry fee, and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments.

*Northwest Bass reserves the right to refuse entry.*

**Participation and Eligibility:** Each tournament is open to Northwest Bass members in good standing 18 years or older. In the event a contestant is a minor, at least one team member must be 18 years or older. The minor must have written authorization from a parent or legal guardian.

**Championship Qualification:** Each team must fish all four (4) Washington qualifiers to be eligible for the Championship. Buy-ins will be accepted but **buy-in payments must be received prior to the drivers meeting of the event.**

**Fishing Alone:** In the event that a team member is unable to fish a qualifying tournament the remaining angler may fish alone. For anglers fishing alone the qualifier will still count toward team qualification for the Championship and angler of the year points.

**Team Member Substitution:** Northwest Bass is a team tournament and it is intended that anglers fish with the same team member for the entire circuit. If for some reason one team member must drop out of the circuit, the remaining angler may declare a substitution and qualify for the 2024 Championship providing at least one team member will have fished or bought into all four qualifiers. Points for Anglers of the Year will start over at zero. If one team member drops out after all qualifiers are completed, but prior to the Championship tournament, the remaining team member must fish the Championship alone. Team member substitution is not allowed for the Championship tournament.

Only one team member substitution is allowed per season. Team member substitutions constitute a new team with angler points starting at zero. Northwest Bass reserves the right to allow additional team member substitutions based on individual circumstances at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director. All team member substitutions must be approved by the Tournament Director prior to tournament registration. No team member substitutions will be allowed to any angler that has not observed the official off limits period.

**Registration:** Pre-registration is encouraged. For mailed entries a completed entry form and the entry fee must be received by Northwest Bass no later than the Thursday prior to the tournament. On-site registration will be Friday evening and Saturday morning up until the drivers meeting. On-site registration fees: Twenty (\$20) dollars on Friday and Saturday. Northwest Bass will accept late entries with the exception of tournaments with a full field. No entries will be accepted from any angler that has not observed the official off limits period.

**Off-Limits:** Tournament waters are off limits Monday-Friday the week of the tournament. NO pre fish the week prior to the qualifier tournaments Saturday Blast Off. **One exception Potholes Open...NO Off Limits** CHAMPIONSHIP: Tournament waters off limits Monday-Thursday the week of the championship tournament. Pre-fish ALLOWED Friday prior to the championship from 12am-4pm.

**Permitted Fishing Waters:** No fishing is allowed inside the host marina area. Contestants cannot leave the boat to land a fish. Contestants must be able to navigate boat into fishing area without getting out of the boat. All fishing must be done from an inspected boat. No tube or wade fishing is allowed. Boats **may not** be trailered to and from weigh-in during tournament hours. If you are unable to return to the weigh-in site by boat your catch for the day will not be weighed.

Team partners must fish from the same boat. Only the contestants may be in the boat during tournament hours unless specifically approved by the Tournament Director prior to the tournament. Having a non-contestant sit on a hole for you will be grounds for disqualification.

**Safety:** Boating safety must be observed at all times. During competition a US Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver must be on, fastened and the kill switch attached to the driver any time the combustion engine is operative. Inflatable PFDs are allowed as long as they are US Coast Guard approved and meet all US Coast Guard requirements. Boats must obey all state and local regulations including speed and no-wake zones.

**Blast Off:** Tournament registration will be halted prior to the start of the drivers meeting. Registration may resume after the blast off. Anglers not registered prior to the drivers meeting will automatically be assigned to flight #1 for weigh-in but they will not blast-off until the end of the last flight.

It is imperative that all boats have their live wells checked and be in the water before the start of the drivers meeting. The Tournament Director will not delay blast off due to anglers that have not had their live wells checked or have not safely launched their boats. In the event your boat is not in the water at the time your number is called your blast off will be delayed until the Tournament Official re-calls your number. In most cases your number will be recalled at the end of the last flight and before the first number of the late registrants. Regardless of blast off time you and your partner will be required to return for weigh-in at the time of your originally assigned flight.

**Culling Fish:** It is the responsibility of each team to immediately cull their limit to five (5) fish throughout the tournament. No culling is allowed within the host marina. **NON-PIERCING CULL TAGS ARE REQUIRED.** The use of piercing cull tags are prohibited and will lead to disqualification.

**Relief Rule:** In the event that an angler must leave the boat during competition to use the restroom the other angler must remain in the boat.

**Check in for Weigh-in:** An official timekeeper, wearing an orange vest, will be posted at the entrance to the host marina and will log the time that each team returns for weigh-in. The official return time will be logged at the point that the boat enters the host marina. Each team is responsible for holding up their boat number in clear view of the timekeeper. If the timekeeper determines that a boat is late he/she will signal the boat with an orange flag in order to notify the team that there is a time issue and that they need to see the timekeeper as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the team and the timekeeper to resolve time dispute issues prior to weigh in. If the issue cannot be resolved with the timekeeper the team should weigh in their fish and immediately report to the Tournament Director that there is an unresolved time dispute. All unresolved issues must be reported during weigh-in. It is the Tournament Director's responsibility to assess the situation and make a ruling. The Tournament Director's ruling is final.

**Boat Numbers:** All boat numbers must be turned in at weigh-in. Boat numbers must be returned even if no fish are weighed.

**Scoring:** Each team may weigh in **five (5) fish** with no minimum size limit, unless State or lake limits are more restrictive. A quarter of a pound (0.25 lb) penalty will be assessed for each dead fish. Dead fish are not allowed to be weighed as a big fish. Only largemouth or smallmouth bass will

be weighed. **Failure to check-in by the designated weigh-in time will result in a one pound (1 lb) per minute penalty. After 10 minutes that team will forfeit its weight for that day.** It is the responsibility of each team to make sure they are identified at the check-in site.

**Anglers of the Year and Rookie Team of the Year:** Anglers of the Year and Rookie Team of the Year are determined by points total for the Four (4) 2024 qualifiers. A Rookie Team is defined as a team where neither team member has previously fished more than one qualifying tournament in any one season.

**Ties:** Big fish will be used to break all tournament ties whenever possible. In the event of a big fish tie tournament monies will be added and divided equally. In the unlikely event of a tie in points for Anglers or Rookie Team of the Year the tie will be broken by first using biggest stringer of the season. If a tie still exists, biggest fish of the season will be used.

**Protest:** All protests must be submitted to the Tournament Director in writing within 15 minutes of the weigh-in. Protests will be accepted from registered tournament anglers only.

**Awards:** Out of sportsmanship and respect for other anglers Northwest Bass appreciates those who stay for award presentations. For those unable to attend award ceremonies, Northwest Bass reserves the right to forfeit claim to merchandise; prize money will be available when checking in at the next qualifier.

**Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs:** At no time during tournament hours are any alcoholic beverages or drugs, other than prescription, allowed in the boat or to be consumed.

**Sportsmanship:** Each team is expected to follow a high standard of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any team failing to do so may be disqualified.

**Tournament Protection Rule:** Any act or inflammatory statement by any contestant that, in the opinion of the Tournament Authority, is detrimental to the operation of the tournament, damaging to organized bass fishing, to Northwest Bass or any of its sponsors, or to permitting agencies or their officers (such as rangers, fishery biologists, etc.) during any official practice round or tournament may result in temporary or permanent suspension from all future Northwest Bass tournaments.

**Boats and Motors:** There is no horsepower limit, however; no engine may exceed the BIA horsepower rating. All boats must meet US Coast Guard and State regulations. All boats must have an emergency kill switch attached any time the combustion engine is running and an aerated live well large enough to sustain a tournament limit in releasable condition.

**Tackle and Equipment:** All fish must be caught in a legal and sporting manner by casting, flipping or pitching. Intentional snagging of fish will not be allowed. Using the electric motor only to stroll or troll is permitted as long as the angler maintains contact with his or her fishing rod. Setting the rod down or in a pole holder while moving the boat with the electric motor is not permitted. Only artificial lures may be used. No live bait or prepared bait is permitted with the exception of pork rinds. Liquid fish attractants are allowed. Only (1) rod may be used at one time. Other rods may be in the boat and ready for use, however, every cast and retrieve must be completed before another cast is made. Nets are allowed and Northwest Bass encourages the use of catch and release style nets.

**Conservation:** Adequate live wells are mandatory on each boat and must provide aeration to maintain fish in good condition.

**Equipment Failure or Emergency:** There will be only two permitted methods of returning to the official weigh-in site: (1) by both partners remaining in their boat and being towed by water, or (2) by one or both partners entering the boat of another Northwest Bass tournament contestant and returning to weigh-in site. If one partner remains with the troubled craft, he cannot continue to fish. Under these two conditions, the contestant's catch may be counted without penalty (*except for late or dead fish penalties*). Teams who elect to return to official check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit that day's catch.

In case of a mechanical breakdown that requires a team to swap tournament boats, that team will be eligible to resume competition only under the supervision of a Northwest Bass official. Both team members must be present for a boat inspection before a restart will be granted. It is the sole responsibility of contestants to locate a tournament official to request a restart.

**Insurance:** A minimum of Three Hundred Thousand (\$300,000) liability insurance is required of all contestants utilizing their boats in Northwest Bass tournaments. All contestants must sign a waiver absolving the tournament sponsors, co-sponsors and their employees from any responsibility for any damage or personal injury sustained as a result of their participation in the tournament or related activities. Contestants are required to have proof of insurance at each tournament.

**Information Sharing and Communications:** During the off-limits period and during competition, anglers may not solicit and/or receive fishing information from anyone other than the partner they are fishing with or Northwest Bass competitors. Information gathered through publicly available sources, i.e. Google Earth, published maps, etc. is permissible. Involuntary violation of this rule should be reported to the Tournament Director. Appropriate action will be taken on a case by case basis. The purchasing of or bartering for information or the hiring of services will not be permitted after the start of the off-limits period. The sharing of tournament winnings in exchange for fishing information is strictly prohibited and will lead to disqualification. Further, during competition, the use of electronic communications devices including cell phones, CB radios, VHF radios or any other type of communication device to aid in catching or locating fish is not permitted. Such devices may only be used in an emergency or in addressing safety considerations such as weather, river flow conditions, mechanical malfunctions, and lockmaster communications. Such devices may be used in other situations only as pre-approved by the Tournament Director.

**Polygraph:** To assure sportsmanship and angler confidence polygraph testing will be enforced. All contestants, winners and non-winners, are subject to a polygraph. Failure to submit to or pass a polygraph test will result in immediate disqualification. Challenged Circuit Champions will be tested.

Random tests may be conducted at tournaments without prior notice.

**Rules are subject to change without notice at anytime prior to the start of a tournament.**

Reviewed: 10/19/2023

