



## Official Tournament Rules

Effective 10/02/2020

The following rules of this tournament will remain unchanged, except for special tournaments conducted by the Arkansas Youth Fishing Foundation LLC and the Arkansas Youth Federation Team Trail, and herein after AYFF and AYFTT. **Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director.** In the event of a rules violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. **The decisions of the Tournament Director and/or AYFF/AYFTT Tournament Officials shall be final in all matters. No Appeal.**

**1. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:** This tournament series is open only to members of TBF and SAF who are between the ages of 7 years of age and 18 years of age or any High School Senior who has not started their first year of college or entered the full-time work force, and who are active members in good standing of the AYFF and The TBF of Arkansas. Proof of age 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 COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY AYFF/AYFTT EVENT NO CONTESTANT MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT CONTESTANT HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF AN INSURANCE POLICY IN FORCE, THAT COVER THE EVENT DATES WITH A **MINIMUM OF \$100,000 BOATING LIABILITY** COVERAGE ON THAT PARTICULAR BOAT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER THE BOAT CAPTAIN USING THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED. EACH POLICY MUST SHOW \$100,000.00 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 their self shall not be eligible. PROPERLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED OFFICIAL ENTRY DOCUMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY AYFF/AYFTT BEFORE THE EVENT. **During the tournament, a competitor or Boat Captain may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, a cellular phone, or any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish or communicating with other teams.** Contestants and Boat Captains are permitted to transmit by radio or telephone only in an emergency. If so equipped, contestants and Boat Captains may listen to marine band weather information. EACH CONTESTANT AND BOAT CAPTAIN 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 WILL BE CAUSE FOR DISQUALIFICATION. **EACH BOAT CAPTAIN AGREES BY THEIR SIGNATURE ON THE TOURNAMENT WAIVER FORM TO SUBMIT TO A TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST OR POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO FOR ANY REASON** and abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification in that team.

**2. REGISTRATION:** Participants/teams must register and pay entry fee seven (7) days prior to tournament date or there will be a twenty-five (\$25.00) dollar late fee. These entry fees must be received by the AYFF/AYFTT by this time to avoid late penalty. Participants/teams may register and pay entry fees on the A.Y.F.F. website ( [www.aryouthfishing.com](http://www.aryouthfishing.com)) (there will be a 3% credit card processing fee on all online entries). Participants/teams will be responsible bringing all tournament paperwork and SAF/TBF membership cards to the Pre-tournament check-in and rules meeting. Each competitor must register in person with official AYFF/AYFTT tournament staff at the time and place selected for the pretournament meeting.

**Tournament waters will be off limits to all team members, boat captains or any club member/relative beginning midnight the Sunday before the tournament until 5:00 am the day before the tournament on those waters. Tournament waters will go off-limits again at 3:00 pm that afternoon and will remain off-limits until the start of the tournament. Any team or boat captain found on the tournament waters during this period, the team will be disqualified and unable to fish the event.**

**3. SAFETY:** Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by tournament competitors. During the official practice and during the tournament, each competitor and boat captain are 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 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. In the event of a thunderstorm, lightning, severe weather or any unsafe condition, participants should remove themselves from the competition and seek safety or shelter until it is safe to continue fishing. Participants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except in case of emergency. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. The AYFF/AYFFA will announce emergency contact numbers and instructions at the pre-tournament briefing. **ALL ANGLERS MUST REMAIN SEATED IN THE PROPER POSITION ANY TIME THE COMBUSTION ENGINE IS RUNNING**

**4. SPORTSMANSHIP:** Competitors, Parents and boat captains participating in AYFF/AYFTT tournaments are expected to follow the very highest standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any violation of these basic sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those drugs purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the tournament or during the weigh-in will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future AYFF/AYFTT tournaments. Use of any Tobacco products by anglers is prohibited. Any Angler found using any tobacco products during tournament hours, the team will be disqualified. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of none competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of any competitor or boat captain which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. All competitors and boat captains are bound by prevailing state statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants, prescription or otherwise, shall be allowed in the boats during competition days or during the weigh-in. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct 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 for disqualification. Any disqualification or suspension from, or other disciplinary action regarding any tournament or fishing organization, may be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification.

**PARENTS: Parents/Guardians** will be held to the same standards as boat captains and anglers. **ANY UNSPORTSMAN LIKE CONDUCT BY ANY PARENT/GUARDIAN DURING THE TOURNAMENT DAY OR ON ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM THAT CAST A NEGATIVE LIGHT ON THE AYFF/AYFTT WILL BE CAUSE FOR IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION OF THE TEAM.**

**5. 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 (1) fishing rod (8- foot maximum length from butt of the handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional and sporting manner. 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.

**6. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:** Maximum horsepower for all outboard motors used in tournament competition will be 250hp. WHERE REQUIRED, 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 horsepower limit set by AYFF.

**7. 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 engine stop device must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operating, 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. **Boats shorter than 17 feet will be permitted on a case by case basis determined by tournament director one week prior to the tournament.** Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. Any type of AUXILIARY gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. 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 regulations. 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.

**8. 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 live well space, properly aerated, to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch by BOTH competitors using the boat.

**9. BOAT IDENTIFICATION:** Each boat MUST be given, prior to each day's start, a live well and SAFETY INSPECTION CHECK by a tournament official.

**10. BOAT OPERATION:** This is a team event; both anglers will be permitted to fish from any deck of the boat. Anglers may move around the boat as needed to land a fish or retrieve a lure.

**11. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere except water within tournament boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" by state or federal agencies which will be OFF-LIMITS. OFF-LIMITS will be announced at the tournament briefing. Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to tournament contestants. All angling must be done from the boat.

**12. Angler Requirements:** All anglers will be required to have completed the AGFC Boater Safety Education course. All anglers age 16 and above are required by Arkansas law to have in their possession a valid fishing license. These items may be required to be presented at the pre-tournament check-in.

**13. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN TOGETHER IN THE 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, both competitors may be removed from their boat to: A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT. Partners must remain together at all times, in sight of each other and their 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. FAILURE TO RETURN BOAT NUMBER WILL RESULT IN THE TEAM BEING DISQUALIFIED AND NO POINTS AWARDED.**

**15. SCORING:** Tournament standing, awards and final standings shall be determined by a method of scoring set forth and announced in the pre-tournament briefing. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Red Eye or Shoal Bass will be weighed. The limit shall be five (5) of the above species and varieties per day, unless the prevailing state limit is less than five (5), or a special limit is established by the Tournament Director, in which case the state limit, or special limit shall be the tournament limit. At no time shall a competitor have in possession more than the tournament limit. In the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, competitors shall cull, starting with the largest bass first, down to the stated 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 mangled, 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. This restriction includes live well stringer systems used for culling, which are also prohibited. Each contestants catch must be presented in a weigh-in bag provided by the tournament director. No Fish will be accepted if they brought to the weigh-in, in any another Bag.

**16. POINT STANDINGS:** 250 points are awarded to the winner of each tournament, 249 to 2nd, 248 to 3rd, etc... This trend will continue until the last weighable fish is weighed. All participants who do not weigh a fish in the tournament will receive the next place points minus 10 points after the last weighable fish. The total regular season points standings will be the accumulated points of all points tournaments.

**The top 50% of all participants at the conclusion of the regular tournament schedule will be qualified to participate in the AYFF/AYFTT State Championship. As per FLW rules, if there are any qualified anglers that are not able to fish the championship, the field will be opened to the next available angler in line. There will also be 2 academic spots given. (these spots will be given to the no qualifying teams with the Highest GPA submitted. There will also be two lucky dog spots awarded to teams that have fished hard all year but because of circumstances beyond their control did not make the cut. (these spots will be picked by the tournament staff)**

**17. AOY (Team of the Year):** The team who accumulates the highest number of points in the regular tournament season and the 2 or 3-day series Championship will be crowned Team of the Year. There will be a Team of the Year awarded in both the Junior and the High School series.

**The top 5 High School teams at the end of the year will be given automatic birth to the TBF National Championship.**

**18. CATCH AND RELEASE:** For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized four (4) ounces of weight, to be deducted from their daily score. Tournament Officials shall have sole authority for accessing penalty points. No Dead fish will be allowed to be weighed for the Big Bass Award. NO DEAD FISH ARE TO BE CULLED AT ANY TIME. At no time during tournament hours, can any team possess more than 5 fish. The possession of more than 5 fish will be cause for immediate disqualification.

Any fish presented at weigh-in shorter than the legal limit set by tournament rules will be removed from the total catch and a penalty of 1 pound will be assessed to the daily total. The official measuring device used by the AYFF/AYFTT is the **"Golden Rule"** measuring board.

**19. 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". Any competitors more than fifteen (15) minutes late shall lose all credit for that days catch. Equipment problems do not constitute a waiver of this rule. After proper recognition at the check-in point, 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.

**20. PRE-TOURNAMENT OFF-LIMITS:** Tournament waters will be off limits to all one week prior to the tournament date. Tournament waters will be off limits to boat captains without a competitor for (10) days prior to the event.

**21. TIES:** In case of a tie during any tournament event the following tie breakers will be used in this order: 1.) The team with the largest number of legal fish weighed-in during the competition; 2.) The team with the largest number of legal LIVE fish weighed-in during the competition; 3.) The team with the heaviest big bass. (Providing both anglers weighed a fish for big bass). 4) In the event a tie remains after these three tiebreakers are employed; Points will go to both anglers and the prizes for both places will be combined and split. In the event the tie is for the last awarded place, prizes and will be split. Both tying teams will receive the points for that place.

**22. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS:** Team Pairings will consist of two High School Anglers ages 15-19 or two Junior Anglers ages 10-15. Pairings (teams) must remain the same throughout the entire series. No substitutes will be permitted in this team series. If a team member is unable to fish a particular event, the remaining team member must fish alone. If for any reason a team member is unable to complete the season, **the remaining team member will be able to complete the season alone. If an angler is fishing alone there must be an observer in the boat. AT NO TIME CAN THERE BE LESS THAN 3 PEOPLE IN THE BOAT.**

EXCEPTION 1: Competitors 15 years old have the option to fish either the Junior series or the High School Series. These anglers must declare to which series they will fish prior to the first tournament and remain in that series for the duration of the season.

EXCEPTION 2: Competitors 10-15 years of age have the option to move up. Anglers must declare this prior to the first event, and remain in the High School series for the duration of the tournament season. Under no circumstance will the older angler be allowed to move to the Junior tournament series to fish with a younger sibling.

**23. CAPTAINS:** Boat Captains must be 21 years of age or older. If required by law they must have taken and passed the Boaters Education Course given by the AGFC.

Boat captains must be in control of the boat any time the combustion engine is running. It is the boat captain's responsibility to make sure that both anglers are properly wearing their PFD when the combustion engine is running. Failure to do so will result in the disqualification of the participants in that particular boat

**BOAT CAPTAINS OF EITHER DIVISION WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO FISH AT ANY TIME DURING TOURNAMENT HOURS.**

At no time during tournament hours will the boat captain be allowed to put fish of any species in a live well or ice chest. Any instance where the boat captain puts a fish of any species in the live well or ice chest, will result in disqualification of the participants in that boat and the boat captain will be suspended from any AYFF/AYFTT event for the remainder of the tournament season. The boat captain may re-apply the following year, recommended by the representing club, and a unanimous vote from the AYFF Board of Directors.

**AT NO TIME CAN ANY TEAM ACQUIRE/HIRE A BOAT CAPTAIN/GUIDE FROM THE TOURNAMENT WATERS OR AREA. BOAT CAPTAINS MUST BE FROM THE SAME AREA AS THE TEAM. AT NO TIME CAN ANY TEAM USE/HIRE A GUIDE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRE-FISHING.** Boat Captains cannot have paid an entry fee of \$500 or more in the 12 months prior to the tournament or have been a paid guide on the tournament lake within the previous 12 months. An angler can however solicit information from any source available during the practice period. At no time during the tournament hours will an angler/boat captain be permitted to solicit any information. Any violation of this rule will result in immediate disqualification of the team and forfeiture of all points accumulated in the current tournament season.

**24. PROTEST:** Any protest must be made within a reasonable time. Any violation must be submitted in writing to the tournament director. Giving enough time to properly investigate the allegations. Protest made on tournament day must be made prior to the start of the weigh in. This also must be made in writing to the tournament director. Any protest brought after weigh-in will be considered on a case by case bases. All protest may be subject to a truth verification test or polygraph test, should the tournament director deem necessary.