

TOP-8 QUALIFIER AND STATE FINALS RULES.
APPROVED FOR THE 2017 SEASON ON MARCH 13, 2017

A. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- 1. KNOW THE TOURNAMENT RULES:** It is responsibility of each participant to read and understand the Top-8 Qualifier And State Finals Rules (hereinafter referred to as the "Tournament Rules").
- 2. RULE CHANGES:** Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. The INDIANA BASS FEDERATION (hereinafter referred to as "IBF") Board Of Directors may amend or modify these Tournament Rules by a majority vote. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director named to run the Top-8 Qualifier and \or the State Finals Tournaments.
- 3. RULE INTERPRETATION AND ENFORCEMENT:** It shall be the obligation of the Tournament Director to follow these Tournament Rules. In those instances where no specific Tournament Rule exists, the Tournament Director shall use his best judgment in making discretionary determinations. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions, as he deems appropriate, including without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments.
- 4.** A Tournament Committee official shall always have the right to approach or board any competitor's boat at any time during the practice (if any) or tournament day to check for compliance with any of the aforementioned rules.
- 5.** The decision of the Tournament Director and Tournament Officials shall be final in all matters.

B. TOP-8 QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT:

- 1. WHO MAY FISH:** Every IBF club in good standing shall be given an opportunity to fish in a Top-8 Qualifier Tournament if they meet all of the requirements outlined by the IBF Board Of Directors.
- 2.** Club members must be sixteen (16) years or older to compete in the Top-8 Qualifier as well as the State Finals.
- 3.** Any member who is not on the club roster before the deadline for the roster to be turned in will not be eligible to fish Top-8 Qualifier that year.
- 4.** All persons fishing in the Top-8 Qualifier shall be members in good standing of the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated itself, as determined from time to time by the Board of directors of the IBF pursuant to its Constitution and Bylaws.
- 5.** There shall be a tournament entry fee, which shall be determined by the IBF. The tournament entry fee, along with a completed roster, shall be in the hands of IBF Secretary by the date established by the Directors. Incomplete rosters(s) will be returned to the Club(s). Only timely completed forms with proper payment shall be acceptable.
- 6.** A club may send as many eight (8) person teams. *Any person listed on the club roster that was submitted prior to the deadline may participate as an alternate* so long as each team separately meets the requirements set forth herein. Those requirements include that:
 - A. All members are on the roster of their club and are in good standing with the IBF\TBF;
 - B. All members of each additional team have sold the required number of raffle tickets;
 - C. Any additional teams must also pay a separate additional entry fee;
 - D. All members have submitted a roster approved by the Secretary indicating the team as an additional team with a particular club
- 7.** Alternate (s) may participate should one or more of the original eight (8) be unable to do so. Unless authorized by the zone prior to the commencement of their Top-8 Tournament or the State Finals Tournament that they host, an alternate may not substitute for another contestant

once the tournament is underway. In the event that a Zone authorizes substitution of alternates after the tournament has commenced, the substituted alternate's weight shall count toward the alternate's individual and the alternate's team's weight.

8. Only the names on the roster will be eligible to fish the Top-8 Tournament originally scheduled by the Board of Directors. Once the entry is turned in there will be no substitutions or alternates allowed after the cut-off date for entries to be turned in for the originally scheduled tournament. In the event that the date of an originally scheduled tournament is changed, each club may submit an amended Top-8 roster by the date and time determined by each affected District or Zone.

9. Eligibility to fish the Tournaments shall be determined by the Roster from the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated, updated the last Friday of March and the records of the IBF Secretary. You must be listed on these rosters to be eligible to fish in the Tournaments. In case of discrepancies, a National Federation Card may be accepted. Each Zone will be sent a copy of the rosters for their Zone. A contestant may be registered by another individual at registration.

10. Each contestant must be registered with the Tournament Director or appointed committee member at the designated time and place. Late registration will result in disqualification.

11. If a club presents an unequal number of boaters or non-boaters to Top-8 registration, that club must adjust their Top-8 roster to reflect an equal number of boaters to non-boaters. (i.e. 1 boater - 1 non-boater, 2 boaters to 2 non-boaters, 3 boaters - 3 non-boaters.) This applies both days. This rule may be altered to allow an unequal amount of boaters to non-boaters by a 2/3rds approval vote of clubs present at the respective Zone meeting, for which the Top-8 locations are selected in each zone. The odd number of boater or non-boater shall be required to have a non-participating observer in the boat during tournament hours and witness the anglers weigh in.

12. Any person, persons or club that enters the Top-8 Tournament who commits a violation or has knowledge of a violation of the Top-8 Tournament rules and does not report the violation to the Tournament Director then and in the event, said person, persons or club will be disqualified indefinitely from participation in any Federation-affiliated event upon the decision of the Board of Directors.

13. The Tournament Director shall not fish as a contestant.

14. DETERMINATION OF VENUE OF TOURNAMENTS: The Districts and Zones shall determine how many Top-8 Qualifying Tournaments are necessary for their Zone and where their District/Zone tournaments shall be conducted.

15. Any District/Zone may fish any place in the state except on dates on waters selected first by the home District/Zone.

16. Top-8 Qualifying Tournaments shall be completed by the end of June and the paper work shall be immediately sent to the State Finals Tournament Director.

17. ADVANCMENT TO THE STATE FINALS: The number of persons from each District/Zone Top-8 Qualifier who qualify to fish the State Finals shall be equal to **two (2) times** the number of Teams entered in that tournament. However, in the event that an uneven number of teams fish the District/Zone Top-8, the next highest qualifier shall also be sent to fish the State Finals so that all Districts/Zones send an even number of persons to fish the State Finals.

FOR EXAMPLE: If twenty (20) teams are entered in a District/Zone's Top-8 Qualifier; the top **forty (40)** anglers from that District/Zone's Top-8 Qualifier shall be eligible to fish in the State Finals. If ten (10) teams are entered in a District/Zone's Top-8 Qualifier; the top **twenty (20)** anglers from that District/Zone's Top-8 Qualifier shall be eligible to fish in the State Finals.

18. In order for a contestant to qualify for the State Finals, they must weigh in fish. There will be no drawing in order to fill the slots available to a zone-qualifying tournament.

FOR EXAMPLE: If a zone has 20 teams fishing the qualifying tournament and only 10 contestants weigh in fish, only those contestants will be sent on to the final fish-off.

19. The top eight (8) Anglers in points at the end of the IBF Invitational Trail's six tournaments are invited to fish the next year's State Finals as a Boater as long as they are a member of a club that fished the Top-8 program in the prior year. The top eight (8) Co-Anglers in points at the end of the IBF Invitational Trail's six tournaments are invited to fish the next year's State Finals as a non-boater as long as they are a member of a club that participated in the prior year's Top-8 program.

20. OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT: In addition to qualifying to fish the State Finals through the Top-8 Program, the top finisher who does not otherwise qualify for the IBF Tournament Trail Forrest L. Wood Classic, shall be granted an Angler spot in the IBF Tournament Trail Forrest L. Wood Classic and shall pay the entry fee for a 40th Angler spot. The second top finisher of each of the Top-8 tournaments conducted by each District/Zone who does not otherwise qualify for the IBF Tournament Trail Forrest L. Wood Classic, shall be granted a Co-Angler spot in the IBF Tournament Trail Forrest L. Wood Classic and shall pay the entry fee for a 40th Co-Angler spot.

C. STATE FINALS TOURNAMENT:

- 1.** There shall be a final fish-off tournament known as the State Finals.
- 2.** The Tournament Rules below apply to the State Finals; with the exception that there shall be a practice day on the Friday before the State Finals tournament. Participants may be on the water starting ½ hour before sunrise on Friday, the day before the State Finals starts. Participants must be off the water prior to the start of the meeting.
- 3.** Zone's shall equally rotate hosting the State Finals starting with Zone 1, then Zone 2, then Zone 4 and then Zone 3.
- 4.** The lake site of the State Finals shall be determined by the host Zone's Directors and the host Zone's Directors shall name a Tournament Director.
- 5.** A tournament pre-drawing will be done with numbers assigned or names (if enough time is allowed) to insure individuals would be paired from different zones. One Director from each Zone should be in attendance. This tournament is for the people in your respective Zone.
- 6.** If a qualifier does not show up at the pairings meeting, their position shall be filled by the person in attendance who is the highest finisher from the missing qualifier's Zone who caught at least one (1) fish in the missing qualifier's Zone's Top-8. If there is no such person in attendance, then anyone from any Zone who caught at least one (1) fish in their respective Top-8 may be picked to fill that vacancy by a random draw.
- 7.** Non-boater's shall pay their Boater partner no less than \$20.00 per day for gas and oil expenses. Each partner shall also equally share in all launch, parking, administrative or any other such Tournament-related fees.
- 8.** Each Zone knows one (1) year in advance to have ample time to schedule for this tournament. If a Zone is unwilling or unable to secure a site the tournament rotates to the next Zone in order. The paperwork will be sent immediately to the State Finals Tournament Director.
- 9.** There shall be a mandatory meeting on Friday night, prior to the State Finals Tournament, to make official pairings and conduct any other necessary business. A map and a copy of a notification letter should be sent out in plenty of time. Lodging phone numbers should be included.
- 10.** The \$5.00 Big Bass Pot will be awarded each day with the overall winner receiving cash and a plaque.
- 11.** *The Top 10% of boaters and top 10% of co-anglers will advance to the National Semi Finals in the same capacity as boater and co-angler.*
- 12.** The contestants who qualify to go to the State Finals will be fishing for the honor of representing the Indiana Bass Federation *as the elite "Sweet 16". The top eight (8) individual*

boaters and top eight (8) individual co-anglers as determined by the State Finals tournament will be designated as the "Sweet 16".

D. TOURNAMENT RULES:

- 1. APPLICATION, ENFORCEMENT AND DISCRETION:** These Tournament Rules apply to both the Top-8 Qualifier and the State Finals Tournaments unless otherwise indicated above.
- 2.** The Tournament Director shall establish administrative rules that are not otherwise contrary to any of the written rules herein as he deems necessary to efficiently run the tournament.
- 3.** Each competitor agrees to report to 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 forms will be cause for disqualification.
- 4. OFF LIMITS PERIOD:** The Tournament sites are off limits to all participants beginning on the Sunday evening at midnight prior to the Tournament and shall continue until the start of the Tournament. Off Limits means no contestant shall be on or in the water in any manner or in any craft.
- 5. REGISTRATION FOR THE TOURNAMENT:** Registration times and dates shall be determined by the District/Zone Directors and/or the Tournament Director.
- 6.** Proof of minimum liability insurance is attested to by the completion of Top 8 entry form. Each boater in the Top 8 Tournament, State Finals and Northern Divisional has to carry the minimum liability insurance as laid out in the By-Laws. At present, this minimum amount is \$300,000.00 in total liability coverage. **Contestants also must provide proof of insurance when they register for the Top-8 or State Finals event.**
- 7. PAIRINGS:** Boat partners shall be paired by a draw made by the Tournament Committee and any realignment in the pairings that is necessary for any reason shall be done by the Tournament Committee. Any contestant who refuses to fish the tournament with a contestant he or she is paired with shall be immediately disqualified from the tournament. The disqualified contestant's club shall lose a boater or non-boater to bring said club in compliance with these Rules.
- 8.** The Tournament Director shall determine if two (2) contestants shall fish together more than once during the tournament.
- 9.** No two (2) contestants from the same Club shall fish together during the tournament.
- 10.** If you are not present when your name is drawn for a pairing conducted in which your attendance is required, you shall be disqualified. An eligible alternate may replace a disqualified individual at that time.
- 11. MEETINGS AND TOURNAMENT HOURS:** The Tournament Director shall establish meeting places, launching sites and weigh-in sites which shall remain the same on both days; unless same becomes impracticable.
- 12.** The fishing hours of the tournaments will be announced at the meeting following registration.
- 13.** The Tournament Director may alter the fishing hours if unsafe conditions warrant.
- 14.** In the case of default, or disqualification, the tournament entry fee shall be retained by the IBF.
- 15.** The morning take-off shall be controlled by the Tournament Director.
- 16. WHERE YOU MAY FISH OR NOT FISH:** Fishing is permitted anywhere on the tournament waters as may be governed by lake regulations; unless the Tournament Director determines "Off Limits" areas in which fishing will not be permitted during the Tournament.
- 17.** Fishing is NOT permitted within 50 yards of another contestant's boat, which is first anchored or tied on a location with trolling motor up.

18. INFORMATION: Commencing when the lake becomes off limits for the Tournament, and concluding after the final day's weigh-in, no competitor shall have the assistance or advice of anyone for the purposes of locating or catching bass unless this other person is a contestant in the tournament. Person or persons violating this rule will be disqualified from the tournament and will be barred from the Top-8 Tournament for a period of three (3) years."

19. BOAT PROBLEMS: In the event of equipment failure and/or an emergency:

- i. Both partners in a disabled boat may remain in the disabled boat and be towed on the water by any other boat back to the weigh-in area; or
- ii. Both partners may enter the boat of another IBF Tournament contestant with their fish maintained separately identifiable between all contestants and return to the weigh-in by water; or
- iii. One partner from the disabled boat may stay with the disabled boat and one partner from the disabled boat may take both contestants' fish from the disabled boat to the weigh-in by a pair of competitors or a Tournament Official in a different (rescue) boat. In that case, all fish must be duly-marked for separation and transport and weigh-in of all such fish must be witnessed at all times by the same tournament official or competitors that carried the person and the disabled boat's fish to the weigh-in. Once a contestant enters a rescue boat, he/she may not continue fishing or assist the rescue team in any way while they fish.

20. Non-boaters in each club are responsible for boaters' expenses in their club at the Top-8 Zone Tournaments.

21. CONDUCT DURING TOURNAMENT: All contestants must remain in their boats except in the case of a dire emergency, the need to go to the bathroom, or if the crew's safety is jeopardy.

22. All fishing must be done from within an assigned boat.

23. It is the responsibility of the boat partners to meet in ample time prior to the take-off of each tournament.

24. Boat partners must stay together, in sight of one another, from take-off until completion of their weigh-in.

25. Bass caught by a contestant shall be applied to that contestant's weight credit only.

26. Boat partners should discuss and agree to a schedule concerning the operation of the boat, trolling motor, seating arrangements and the selection of fishing locations. Both boat partners are entitled to fishing locations and the operation of the trolling motor for one-half (1/2) of the tournament *hours during Top 8 Tournaments. This does not apply to the State Finals since it is an angler/co/angler event and co-anglers are only fishing against other co-anglers.*

27. Any contestant deemed guilty of operating a boat to the disadvantage of their partner shall be disqualified from the tournament and any previous score shall be disallowed.

28. Good sportsmanship is expected of all contestants. Any actions and/or words that reflect unfavorably toward the Federation or its member's efforts to promote sportsmanship, fair competitions, compliance with tournament rules, safety, etc. shall not be tolerated.

29. The Tournament Director and his Tournament Committee shall be treated with respect and dignity at all times. Unruly behavior at any meeting or at any other time will not be tolerated and shall be subject to discretionary sanctions by the Tournament Director.

30. Littering or polluting of any kind will not be tolerated.

31. All possible courtesies shall be extended in using the facilities during the tournament.

32. Alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs or a contestant deemed under the influence shall not be allowed during the tournament, weigh-in period, registration and pre-tournament meetings.

33. Violation of any of the above will be cause for disqualification from that tournament and/or any future Federation event, up to two (2) years based on the seriousness of the infraction, with Board approval. Individual must apply for reinstatement for the Board of Directors.

- 34. FISHING EQUIPEMENT:** Only artificial lures may be used. no live or prepared bait will be permitted, however, pork or pork type strips, rinds, etc., may be used.
- 35.** Only casting, spinning, or spin casting rods no longer than eight (8) feet in length from butt of handle to rod tip may be used.
- 36.** Only one rod may be used at a time. Other rigged rods may be in the boat for substitute purposes.
- 37.** Electronic depth finders, GPS, light meters, oxygen meters, PH meters and temperature gauges may be used; any other electronic devices must be approved by the Tournament Committee.
- 38. BOAT REQUIRMENTS/REGULATIONS:** All boats must be at least fifteen (15) feet in length.
- 39.** Trolling motors may be used to maneuver the boat in to position while fishing.
- 40.** Trolling by using the outboard motor as a fishing method is not permitted.
- 41.** All electric start combustion motors must be equipped with a "Kill Switch" device; manual start motors need not comply with this ruling.
- 42.** Each boat must be equipped with adequate live well capacity and aeration to keep two limits of fish alive.
- 43.** Each Club shall furnish four (4) boats. It is suggested that an "extra boat" be brought, in the event of trouble with any of the four originally intended boats. It is not the responsibility of the Tournament Committee to provide boats for contestants.
- 44.** Each boat will be given an identification number, which must be displayed, to the check-in boat upon return for weigh-in.
- 45.** Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in tournament competition will be 250 HP, not to exceed the horsepower limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard in their ruling of November 1, 1972. Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard horsepower rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this rating plate or the horsepower maximum set by the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated. Any boat manufactured prior to November 1, 1972 must adhere to the rating set by the U.S. Coast Guard for similar boats. Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the entry form, the boat and outboard motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory trained personnel, if there is any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating.
- 46.** 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 an entry form or altering the horsepower rating numbers on the motor also would be cause for immediate disqualification from Indiana Bass Federation tournaments. Any person found in violation of the rules regarding horsepower shall result in disqualification of the boat and boat operator.
- 47.** No boats may be used that use stick steering. The determination of what is "stick steering" shall be made by the Tournament Committee after inspection of any suspected boat.
- 48.** Safety practices and precautions shall be observed at all times.
- 49.** A Coast Guard approved life preserver, properly fastened, must be worn by all contestants whenever the combustion motor is in operation.
- 50.** It shall be the contestants' responsibility to familiarize themselves with prevailing lake regulations and Indiana boating laws. Violations of the same will be cause for disqualification.
- 51.** All contestants will be instructed at the pre-tournament meeting on weigh-in Procedures.
- 52.** Each contestant must present his or her own catch to the weigh-in official. No other person shall then handle the fish except the contestant or a weigh-in official.
- 53. CATCHING OF FISH:** All bass must be caught in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day's catch disqualified.

When visually fishing for bedding bass, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before unhooked to be counted as a legal fish.

54. MANAGING YOUR FISH: Contestants' must agree upon a system prior to the tournament blast off to separately identify their fish from those of their partner. At a minimum, BOTH PARTNERS MUST pin all of their fish in a manner that will allow the identification of the contestant who caught the fish at all times until the fish are presented for weigh-in.

55. Dip nets may be used to boat bass during the tournament. The use of grippers in landing bass is prohibited.

56. SCORING: Tournament standing, auxiliary awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound and ounce weight of each competitors catch during the tournament period.

57. Only largemouth, spotted, and smallmouth bass will be weighed.

58. The limit shall be five (5) of the above species and varieties per day.

59. Any contestant presenting more than five (5) fish to be weighed will be penalized by forfeiting his two (2) heaviest fish of the six (6) presented and only the lightest four (4) will be weighed and counted toward his or her weight for the day.

60. At no time shall a competitor have more than the limits described above in their possession.

61. In circumstances where a contestant's boat has divided livewells, the contestants must use separate livewells to keep their fish unless one of the livewells is not working.

62. Tournament officials may conduct checks for violations of the above provisions, and in the event that a competitor has more than the above prescribed in their possession, the largest bass first shall be culled, down to the limit described.

63. All fish caught on state controlled water or property shall meet the state legal limit size of fourteen (14) inches. All fish caught on other bodies of water not having to conform to state legal size of fourteen (14) inches shall meet State Federation rule of a twelve (12) inch minimum requirement.

64. Bass which are presented for weigh-in which do not meet the minimum size requirements as stated above, measured on the longest straight line with mouth closed and the tail pinched, shall accrue penalties at the rate of one (1) pound per each such fish. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor.

65. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mauled, mashed or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of Tournament Committee.

66. For each legal bass weighed in dead, the competitor shall have 4 ounces (or .25 of a pound if digital scales used) deducted from the weight of that fish. The tournament director and his designated appointees shall have sole authority to determine dead fish. Any fish not being released at the weight-in (trophy) will be counted as a dead fish, with said penalties being enforced.

67. LATE PENALTIES: A contestant who is late either at the start or at the end of each tournament day will be penalized 10 percent of the contestant's total weight for each minute the contestant is late.

68. Any contestant who is more than ten (10) minutes late at the beginning or at the end of each tournament day shall lose all weight credit for the entire day.

69. Any registered contestant who is not at the tournament take-off site either day, or who does not notify the tournament director one (1) hour before take off time, for that day, shall be barred from fishing in Top-8 tournaments for one (1) year.

70. Any team that does not show up at the tournament site either day that does not notify the tournament director one (1) hour before take off time, for that day shall be barred from fishing in Top-8 tournament for a period of one (1) year.

71. In the event that a competitor believes that another competitor has committed a violation of any Tournament Rule, the competitor shall bring it to the attention of the Tournament Director or a member of the Tournament Committee in writing prior to the conclusion of the weigh-in for that day. The Tournament Director shall review the facts supporting the written protest with the

competitor filing the protest and with all competitors alleged to have been in violation, as well as any other persons he deems necessary. The Tournament Director will announce the details of the protest and his decision regarding the protest to all competitors.

72. TIES: In case of a tie for team or individual standings, the following tie-breakers will be used in this order:

- i. The team or individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed-in during competition.
- ii. The team or individual with the largest number of legal live fish weighed-in during competition.
- iii. The team or individual with the heaviest single day's catch during competition.
- iv. The team or individual with the second-heaviest single day's catch during competition.
- v. In the event that teams or individuals remain tied after these four tie-breakers are employed, then a flip of a coin will be used to determine the winner(s). And the money, if any, will be equally split. Ties for lesser positions shall be resolved by the above order.
- vi. There shall be no ties sent to the State Finals.

73. DETERMINATION OF THE “Sweet 16: *The top eight (8) individual boaters and the top eight (8) individual co-anglers shall be designated as “Sweet 16”. They will be recognized and identified as Indiana’s elite in the National Semi-Final event as well as all subsequent qualifying events through the Forrest L Wood Cup tournament.*

74. The top Club in each zone will be appropriately recognized, based on the total Club weight.

75. Top individual and lunker bass catches will be recognized.

76. In the event that a *Sweet 16* member advances to the National Championship and their Top-8 is being held on those dates, that individual shall be awarded “Boaters Entry” into that year’s State Finals.