

IBF INVITATIONAL TRAIL

2019 TBF/IBF Official Rules

revised 1/31/19

1. **INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT:** The following rules will remain unchanged for the season, except for special tournaments pre-announced and conducted. Strict adherence is expected by all participants. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left to the on-site Tournament Director. The only appeal is to a Tournament Director and their decision shall be final in all matters and is not subject to appeal. Officials may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate for any infraction including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Each contestant agrees to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations (Pro Angler or Amateur) may be cause for disqualification. Protests should be in writing within 30 minutes of final flight check-in time of each tournament day.
2. **PARTICIPATION:** You must be 16 years of age or older to be eligible. Any person under the age of 18 entering must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian on the entry form/release, proof of age is the responsibility of the participant. Participation by anyone in any TBF/IBF tournament is at the sole discretion of TBF/IBF.
3. **NATIONAL SEMI-FINALS:** Each TBF affiliated federation may advance a maximum of 10% of their annual in state participation to the National Semi-Final.
4. **VALID LICENSE:** All participants must have in their possession a valid fishing license covering the waters and all days to be fished. All state rules regarding fishing will be observed unless more stringent regulations are specified at the rules meeting. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament officials, is not able to safely compete for the entirety of the event without unfairly hindering their daily partner or endanger the safety and well-being of self or anyone shall not be eligible. Properly, fully completed official entry must be received BEFORE the event registration deadline date. Officials specifically reserve the right to refuse participation, including championship or other special event participation, to anyone, for any reason.
5. **ENTRY FEE, REGISTER & FORMAT:** The entry fee for each Angler is \$150 and CO-Angler is \$75. Payout is figured at 70% payback to 10% of the field in each category. The 30% withheld, plus any sponsor monies, are used when conducting the event to cover expenses such as administrative and operational costs with the balance to support the year end classic and banquet (if applicable). No refunds apply at any time. No refunds will be made nor will credit be extended, except in dire cases approved by TBF/IBF.
6. **DISQUALIFICATION:** Disqualification from this or any tournament for any reason could result in forfeiture of entry fee.
7. **EVENTS:** All IBF Invitational Series events shall be one day events. The format will be (Pro/Am) Pro Angler/Amateur (also known as Angler/Co-Angler) paired by computer generated random draw.
8. **PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE, ONSITE CHECK IN, COMPETITION:** Competition waters are closed after Sunday night midnight prior to the event till two days prior to tournament and closed from 3:00 pm EST day of pre-tournament meeting till competition begins tournament day. A competitor may not seek, purchase, barter for information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through publicly available sources) nor may a contestant enter tournament waters with anyone who is deemed "expert" on tournament waters by tournament officials after this date. The hiring of fishing guide

services is not permitted anytime during the 14 days prior to the tournament. On Saturday, the day before the tournament, all participants must be off plane, within site of the boat launch and not fishing by 1 hour prior to announced start of pretournament meeting.

9. **PRETOURNAMENT MEETING:** Each competitor must check in and register on site, in person with officials at the time and place prescribed for check in and rules briefing or send a representative. Failure of an angler or their representative to Check-in/register in person during the prescribed times shall result in a \$20 late fee. In an exceptional situation, Tournament Director may represent an angler at registration if need be, late fees will still apply. The angler being represented gives up all rights to any claims of "unknown" items if they miss the rules briefing for any reason. **NO EXCEPTIONS. IT SHALL BE EACH COMPETITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FACT SHEET.**
10. **FAIR PARTICIPATION:** Contestants are expected to compete in the full day's events; failure to do so may result in ineligibility to compete in the future. During the tournament a competitor may not use a communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish.
11. **LATE BOAT CHECK IN:** Anyone who fails to notify the tournament director and are more than 15 minutes late may be disqualified. Anyone late to the pre-tournament rules briefing pre-announced start time will pay a \$20 late fee as defined above as well.
12. **EMERGENCY:** In case of emergency contact the tournament director or designated contact immediately after calling 911.
13. **SAFETY & TOURNAMENT INTEGRITY:** Safe conduct must always be observed by all participants. Participants must always abide by all local navigation laws and avoid restricted areas. All participants are required and agree to wear a fully zippered fastened or snapped Coast Guard-approved type III or greater chest type personal floatation device anytime the combustion engine is running. Tournament officials have the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day, restrict tournament waters or impose speed limits because of navigation, traffic, bad weather or any other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors or the public. In the event of a storm, lightning, severe weather or any unsafe condition, participants should remove themselves from competition and seek safety or shelter until it is safe to continue. Participants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except in case of emergency. Competitors may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is eminent. They must, however, stay within sight of each other. IBF will announce emergency contact numbers\instructions at the pre-tournament briefing. **ALL the rules of this event, particularly the safety rules are the responsibility of BOTH contestants in the boat to verify and adhere to.**
14. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** Participants will conduct themselves in a true sportsmanlike, courteous, safe and ethical manner always maintaining professional demeanor in public and in communication with officials. Maximum courtesy must always be practiced, especially about 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. 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.

15. **ENTRY/EARLY ENTRY DEADLINE:** Entries are preferred online at www.indianabass.com or can be submitted by mail or phone. Entry for all anglers will open online no less than 21 days prior to event. "Early Entry" is defined as all entries received prior to "Early Entry Deadline" or 10:00pm 5 days prior to tournament day. Example: Tournament Day is June 17; Early Entry Deadline is 10:00pm June 12. Entries after this time will not be counted as "Early Entry" and will not be eligible for guaranteed pairing status. Entry deadline is start of pretournament meeting. All mailed entries with money orders, check or cash must be received 24 hours prior to start of pre-tournament meeting and post marked by MONDAY of tournament week. Tournament Officials reserves the right to discontinue or extend the acceptance of applications prior to or after this deadline. A \$25 processing fee will be applied to all declined transactions. Mailing address is Indiana Bass Federation 4885 McPhillips Rd SE Elizabeth In. 47117 It is your responsibility to confirm receipt of your entry.
16. **GUARANTEED PAIRING STATUS:** It is best that a angler and co-angler enter together however it is not mandated. If angler and co-angler enter together and meet the Early Entry Deadline status, they become "Guaranteed Pairing Status". This assures both anglers the opportunity to participate in this event. Anglers that enter individually will be paired with other anglers in order of entry and qualify for Guaranteed Pairing Status if both meet Early Entry Deadline. However, should an uneven number of boaters to non-boaters enter the following procedure will occur. Once all non-boaters have been paired, boaters will be paired together, and both can share the front of the boat. Should a boater be drawn alone that boater can compete alone if no observer is available. If more co-anglers are entered than anglers, the excess co-anglers may switch to angler status prior to pairings. If there are still co-anglers left with no angler pairing available, the co-anglers's entry shall be moved to another event or reimbursed. Announcement of the pairings will be made at the pre-tournament meeting, which must be attended by each competitor or their substitute. Any competitor who refuses to fish with their drawn partner will be immediately disqualified and their entry fee will be forfeited. It is each angler's responsibility to get checked in and started on time. Each angler will be responsible for understanding their take off position, take off time, return time and designated Off Limits areas. Tournament Officials are not responsible for missing partners. The selection of anglers and co-anglers' will be by guarantee status and then time of entry. All pairings will be by random draw. Should an angler not show or must withdraw, and a Standby Angler/Observer cannot be found, an angler will be dropped from the event based on last registered/first out. All contestants must contact their assigned angler or co-angler following the pretournament meeting.. Partners should advise each other of their respective phone numbers and establish a meeting time and place **AWAY FROM THE RAMP** so you can be launched at least 30 minutes prior to the morning's takeoff. The tournament director, at his sole discretion, may reassign partners at any time. Once you are paired by the draw you must inform Tournament Officials if you cannot fish or fines and penalties will apply. Announcement of your day's partner shall be made at the pre-tournament rules and safety briefing which must be attended by each competitor. Tournament Officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners.
17. **CLASSIC QUALIFICATION:** The Classic will be a two-day cumulative weight event. Classic practice will be under same guidelines as Trail Tournaments. Competition waters are closed after Sunday night midnight prior to the event. Open for practice two days prior to tournament till 3:00 pm EST day of pre-tournament meeting. Waters remain closed till competition begins tournament day. The **TOP 40 ANGLERS AND TOP 40 CO-ANGLERS** in year end point standings will be invited to fish the annual Classic, known as the Forrest L. Wood Classic. The pro-rated entry fee into the classic will be determined by the finishing position in points, not by the invitation position. The finisher in position 1-10 will not pay an entry fee into the Classic. All others will pay the full entry. In addition, the top two finishers of each of the Top-8 Program tournaments conducted by each Zone or District of the State Federation who do not otherwise qualify for the Forrest L. Wood Classic shall be invited to fish the Forrest L. Wood Classic. The top finisher in each Top-8 Program tournament shall be granted an Angler spot in the Forrest L. Wood Classic and would pay the entry fee equal to the 40th Angler spot. The second-place finisher in each Top-8 Program tournament who does not otherwise qualify for the Forrest L. Wood Classic would be granted a Co-Angler spot in the Forrest L. Wood Classic and would pay the entry fee equal to the 40th Co-Angler spot.

18. **BOAT OPERATION:** Angler (Pro) will have complete control of boat operation and waters to be fished. Pros may NOT request that the Co-Anglers not fish. Any Pro that, in the judgment of the officials, operates the boat in such a manner that unfairly handicaps their Co-Anglers and any Co-Anglers who unfairly handicaps their Pro may be disqualified. Co-Anglers are not permitted to fish from the front deck of boat or record GPS waypoints or use any type of handheld GPS during any competition day nor share information of any Boater's location or tactics with another boater. Co-Anglers may assist the Pro on front of boat in an emergency or safety situation but are not permitted to compete during this time. Anglers and Co-Anglers alike may land a fish or assist landing a fish from anywhere in the boat as long as all other rods are not in water.
19. **BOAT EQUIPMENT & SAFETY:** 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 and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer if required. The horsepower rating of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this plate. Changing or altering standard factory motor parts to increase horsepower over factory rated horsepower is forbidden and will result in disqualification. During any official practice or competition day(s) of any TBF/IBF event no contestant may operate a boat unless they have documented proof of an insurance policy with reasonable amounts of watercraft liability coverage on that boat and a valid expiration date. Proof must remain WITH THE BOAT during the entire event RANDOM CHECKS MAY BE CONDUCTED AT ANY TIME. Policy must be in full force covering the competitors in that boat, all dates of the event. NOTE: Statements of "No fixed expiration date" are NOT acceptable. All tournament boats are required to have in their possession all Coast Guard-required safety equipment, including but not limited to approved type III or greater chest type personal flotation devices, a type IV throw cushion, fire extinguisher, distress horn/flag/whistle, and display boat marker (supplied by tournament officials). In addition, each boat must have a functional bilge pump and livewell space, properly aerated, to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch. TBF/IBF recommends the use of livewell additives to promote the healthy release of all fish to their natural habitat. Further TBF/IBF recommends the use of ICE to cool livewell water and improve oxygen levels during "hotter" months. The Tournament Director shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate". Fishing boats may be used that are 16 feet in total length or longer, propeller driven and must have a rear deck, Boater's must make a back seat available to their non-boater if so requested. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. Only gas tanks that are factory installed options or auxiliary tanks installed by a factory 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 properly secured or strapped in a boat, that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. 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. All tournament boats must be cleaned of all harmful exotic aquatic species prior to entering the water and upon departure from infected waters.
20. **BOAT CHECK & ID:** 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 or on the boat and turned in during check-in at the end of each day. TBF/IBF reserves sole discretion to assign boat numbers in any manner. There will be only one checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check and checkout in the morning or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. During call of takeoff order any boat(s) that are not prepared when number is called will be held till all others are released. All fishing must cease upon check-in. At the time of check-out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all safety and tournament rules. Partners must stay together, through check-in and weigh-in until weigh-in slips have been issued. YOU MUST CHECK-IN EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FISH.

21. **TACKLE & EQUIPMENT:** Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" will be permitted. Only ONE (1) fishing rod (8-foot maximum length from butt of the handle to rod tip) and reel may be in use or used at any one time. All other types prohibited. 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. No gaffs or grippers may be used to land bass nor be permitted in the boat at any time. Alabama rigs and other similar type baits will follow the most restrictive state laws covering any part of the tournament waters. Boater will make available storage compartments for the Co-Anglers use. Non-boaters are limited to a maximum of 7 rods as defined above rigged and ready for use in the boat.
22. **PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Tournament waters shall be established by Officials for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the tournament official. Fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere except: Any water within these tournament boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" by state or federal agencies will be OFF-LIMITS. Also, any live fish release area established by Tournament Officials will be Off-limits and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. No contestant may "Buy" or "Barter" a fish or a fishing location. Only water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to all contestants. Contestants may not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The removal of official local, state or federal barricades or barriers at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited. The use of any type of block & tackle, rope, cable or similar type system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is prohibited. On tournament days, participants are prohibited from fishing except during designated tournament fishing hours. Participants should stay off tournament waters before and after tournament hours except to navigate to and from the check-in site and launch facilities, if repairs and/or a test-run are needed contact a tournament official first. Contestants must leave and return to the check-in by boat and all boats must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No boats may be loaded on a trailer before the weigh-in except by direction of the tournament director. In the event of equipment failure or emergency the tournament director must be notified as soon as it is safe to do so. There are only two permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both paired anglers remaining in their boat and being towed by water, or (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one or both paired anglers entering the boat of another tournament contestant, at which point all fishing must cease by all parties. Under these two conditions both contestants' catches may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) provided that all contestants fish are adequately marked to provide clear distinction between their catches to the tournament director. Contestants who elect to return to the check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day's catch to that point in time of the tournament day. Otherwise contestants must always remain together and within sight of each other. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for a restroom break is permitted. However, ALL FISHING MUST CEASE, anytime partners are separated.
23. **LATE PENALTY:** Competitors who are not at the official safety check in point as described above at the appointed check in time shall be late and shall lose 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.." Return time shall be defined as off-plane no longer fishing and plainly visible by the official timekeepers.
24. **SCORING:** Anglers and Co-Anglers will be scored separately. The point system used will have a maximum of 100 points. Each tournament First place will receive 100 points, second place 99, third place 98, etc. on down to 100th place 1 point.. After the six invitational tournaments the Angler accumulating the most points will be Angler of the Year. If there is a tie, the tie breaker will be decided by the angler that weighed the greatest number of legal fishes over the year. Co-Angler of the Year will be determined in the same fashion. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, or Spotted Bass will be weighed. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a bass.

25. **TOURNAMENT/POSSESSION LIMIT:** The limit shall be five (5) of the above species and varieties unless the prevailing state limit is less than five (5), or a special limit is established for a tournament by the Tournament Director. At no time shall a competitor have in possession more than the tournament limit. Tournament Officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision, and in the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, shall cull, starting with the largest fish first, down to the stated limit. The official length shall be announced at the tournament briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters; in no case will it be less than 12 inches. 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 not be weighed and will accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each nonlegal fish. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. Any fish that appears to have been 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 presented to tournament officials, no one may alter nor add to their catch or return to their boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded. Fish must not be "stringered" at any time during the tournament. This would also include any device that would hold more than one fish in the livewell. Balance beams can be used for sorting fish but cannot be left attached to a fish.. Each team catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag, you MAY NOT use you own bag.
26. **CATCH AND RELEASE:** For each legal dead fish presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized eight (8) ounces, to be deducted from the total weight of that fish. Tournament Officials shall have sole authority for accessing penalty points.
27. **TIES:** In the event of a tie the positions that tied will have those monies added together and split evenly between the tied competitors. The competitors will be deemed tournament equals in points/winnings.
28. **PROTESTS & TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS:** Anyone has a right to protest a contestant. Protests should be in writing within 30 minutes of final flight check-in time of each tournament day. IF it is a participant protesting another participant there will be a \$40 protest fee. The fee will be returned if the protest is found valid. Following interviews with concerned parties or truth verification testing if required, a final ruling will be made. In the event rules infractions occurred a penalty of daily and/or tournament weight may be applied, and cash, prizes and awards must be returned if so requested. If a protest is found valid, the disqualified party must pay all investigative costs. **RANDOM and "FOR CAUSE" TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS CAN BE GIVEN AT ANY TIME THROUGHOUT SEASON. EACH COMPETITOR AGREES, BY THEIR SIGNATURE ON ANY ENTRY FORM, WRITTEN OR ELECTRONIC and or by their participation in a TBF/IBF event, TO SUBMIT TO A TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST OR POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO FOR ANY REASON and abide by the conclusion.** Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification. The administration and interpretation of the truth verification test shall be the sole responsibility of TBF/IBF, and their agent(s), and shall be used (or not used) at their discretion. Without limiting anything herein, TBF/IBF shall have sole discretion to select the place at which such a truth verification test shall be administered, the individual who administers such a truth verification test, and the scope of the questions which may be asked during such test and the determination of the meaning of the results. The participant shall be available, at their own expense, at the location stipulated and shall cooperate in all respects.
29. **PARTICIPANT RELEASE OF LIABILITY:** All participants must have signed the TBF/IBF LIABILITY RELEASE form.