

## **Official Rules**

### **Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series**

**Effective July 22, 2025**

#### **P1. COMPLIANCE**

This Angler Participation Agreement and the 2025 Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series Tournament Rules, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference, (the Participation Agreement and Official Rules collectively referred to herein as the "Agreement") sets forth the terms and conditions upon which I will be permitted to participate in any or all Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series Tournament Events (the "Tournament Series") during the 2025 calendar year. By signing this Agreement, the undersigned (referred to as "I", "Competitor" or "Angler"), hereby agree to be bound by and comply with the provisions thereof. I also agree to abide by and comply with the B.A.S.S. Angler Code of Conduct, and all other guidelines, regulations, payment schedules and instructions communicated to me in writing by B.A.S.S. I affirm that I am a member in good standing with B.A.S.S. and that I am physically fit and that there are no health-related reasons or problems which preclude my participation in the Tournament Series.

#### **P2. RELEASE OF LIABILITY; INDEMNIFICATION**

2.1. I expressly assume all risks associated with my participation in the Tournament Series and for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, next of kin, successors and assigns, I hereby waive, release and discharge B.A.S.S., LLC, its agents, employees, owners, its affiliates and subsidiaries (collectively "B.A.S.S."), the hosts, sponsors and Tournament Series officials (collectively "Released Parties") from any and all losses, liabilities, claims, damages and expenses (including without limitation, attorney's fees and related costs), of any kind (hereinafter "Claims") arising out of or in connection with my participation in the Tournament Series, including but not limited to Claims involving, death, disability, personal injury and/or property damage. I hereby INDEMNIFY, DEFEND, HOLD HARMLESS, AND PROMISE NOT TO SUE the Released Parties for any and all Claims arising as a result of my participation in this Tournament whether brought by me or my agents/legal representatives or by third parties, relating to my participation in this Tournament. I acknowledge that this Tournament may carry with it the potential for death, serious injury, illness and/or possible exposure to COVID-19 or other communicable diseases and personal loss. The risks may include, but are not limited to, those caused by water conditions, temperature, weather, equipment, actions of other people including, but not limited to, participants, volunteers, and spectators. This release of liability shall be construed broadly to provide a release and waiver to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

2.2. I shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Released Parties against all Claims, whether or not a lawsuit or other proceeding is filed, to the extent that they arise out of : (1) my breach of the terms of this Agreement, (2) gross negligence, or willful misconduct by me, my agents or those acting on my behalf; (3) my violation of any applicable law, ordinance, rule, or regulation, including but not limited to all rules and guidelines applicable to Tournament Series events; (4) breach of any warranty provided by me to Released Parties hereunder. I shall provide B.A.S.S. with prompt notice of any claim and give complete control of its defense and settlement to B.A.S.S. I shall also cooperate in all reasonable respects with B.A.S.S. its insurance company, the Released Parties (as applicable) and their legal counsel in the defense of such claim. If I fail to promptly indemnify and defend a covered claim, the Released Parties shall have the right to defend themselves, and in such case, I shall promptly reimburse the Released Parties, for all of their associated costs and expenses.

#### **P3. GRANT OF RIGHTS**

3.1. For good and valuable consideration, including but not limited to B.A.S.S. allowing the angler participation in the Tournament, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, I hereby irrevocably grant permission to B.A.S.S., the successors and assigns of each of the foregoing, and each of their respective agents, licensees, designees, and assigns and those other parties acting under such parties' permission or upon their authority (collectively, with B.A.S.S., the "Licensees"), in perpetuity, a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, fully paid-up license and non-revocable right to reproduce, display, exhibit, publish, broadcast, distribute, and otherwise use, and permit others to use, my name, image, nickname, initials, symbols, likeness, signature, photograph, voice, statements, performances, actions, biographical material, and any and all attributes of my personality and appearance (collectively, my "Identity") in materials created in connection with my participation in the Tournament Series and related events and activities of B.A.S.S. (collectively, the "Materials"), alone or in combination with any other materials, in connection with any B.A.S.S.-authorized production, collectibles, merchandise or publication, including, but not limited to, in connection with the promotion of B.A.S.S., the Tournament Series and any other events or programs staged by B.A.S.S., in any and all manner and media now known or hereafter devised, including without limitation, in print, within television programs, motion pictures, websites, social media channels, including without limitation, physical or digital trading cards or other collectible merchandise, public relations materials and for any other lawful purpose in B.A.S.S.'s sole discretion. For clarity, the foregoing shall also include the right to use my Identity in connection with the publicity, advertising, promotion, exhibition or other exploitation of the Materials, including, but not limited to, my appearance at and / or performance during the Tournament Series and related events and activities and my inclusion within any of the Materials. I agree to promptly and fully comply with all filming, camera location and other rules, guidelines and instructions of B.A.S.S. during each Tournament Series.

3.2. I hereby represent and warrant that I have the right to grant these rights and that my granting these rights will not infringe upon the rights of any third party. I represent and warrant that I have or shall obtain all necessary rights and permissions from all applicable third parties (i.e., those sponsoring or affiliated with me or my team and boat) to effectuate the grant of rights set forth in this paragraph 3 (collectively, the "Third Party Rights"). I will ensure that these Third Party Rights grant (or otherwise authorize or permit) B.A.S.S. and the other Licensees the right to utilize such third-party logos, insignia, trade dress or other intellectual property (collectively "Third Party IP") shown in any Materials featuring me, or otherwise in connection with B.A.S.S.'s use of my Identity as set forth in paragraph 3.1 (for example, on apparel worn by me or on items used by me), and neither B.A.S.S. nor any other Licensee shall be required to seek approvals from such Third Parties for such uses of the Third-Party IP. I agree to defend, hold harmless and indemnify B.A.S.S. and each of the Licensees from and against, any and all third-party claims, damages, costs (including reasonable attorneys' fees) arising out of claims alleging that I do not have the right to grant the foregoing license and permission with respect to Third Party IP.

3.3. I acknowledge that the Licensees have no obligation to use any or all of the Materials or my Identity. I hereby waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve any finished product or the use to which it is applied and I agree no further approval is required for the Licensees to use any Materials or my Identity and that the Licensees will not be liable to me for any distortion or illusionary effect resulting from the exhibition, publication or broadcast of the Materials or my Identity. I acknowledge and agree that no further payment or consideration will be due to me for any of the Licensees' use of the Materials or my Identity as authorized herein.

3.4. I acknowledge that all right, title, and interest in and to the Materials, including without limitation all copyrights and trademark rights, shall be the sole and exclusive property of B.A.S.S. and that

B.A.S.S. has the unlimited right in perpetuity and throughout the universe to edit, modify, distribute and otherwise use such Materials. With regard to the Licensees' exploitation of the rights granted hereunder, I, on behalf of myself and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby irrevocably (a) release, discharge and waive all claims, demands, losses and liabilities of any nature against the Licensees that I, my personal representatives, agents, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns had, now have, or hereafter may have, including, but not limited to, claims in the nature of copyright or other intellectual property infringement, defamation, disparagement, slander, false light, violation of the right of privacy or publicity, or the like, and (b) covenant not to make any claims against any of the Licensees with respect to the rights granted hereunder.

3.5. During the Tournament Series, and subject to compliance with B.A.S.S. guidelines, B.A.S.S. hereby grants to the undersigned Angler, the right to create, use and publish Angler created materials ("Angler Materials") such as still photos and video shot by Angler, solely on Angler's website and social media channels. Angler may also live stream during a tournament, except when Bassmaster LIVE has a camera in Angler's boat. B.A.S.S. reserves the right to revoke this permission at any time if B.A.S.S. in its discretion believes the content is inappropriate or in any way violates any B.A.S.S. rules or any applicable law. In such event, Angler shall promptly cease from live streaming and/or remove any related content from all applicable accounts and platforms (and in any event, no later than within two (2) hours of notification).

#### **P4. INSURANCE**

I represent and warrant that I now have or will obtain prior to the Tournament Series, boat owners liability insurance (including coverage for third party property damage and bodily injury) with no "tournament exclusion," having a minimum limit of \$300,000 per occurrence. The insurance will be primary and noncontributory to any insurance procured by B.A.S.S. Additionally, the insurance must be issued by a reputable insurer rated A or better by A.M. Best and Company. Policy must include international waters, or a separate policy for international waters must be obtained if I choose to fish international waters during applicable B.A.S.S. events. I shall provide B.A.S.S. with a certificate of insurance covering the term of the Tournament series prior to my participation in any Tournament Series event or at any time requested by B.A.S.S.

#### **P5. MISCELLANEOUS**

5.1 Contingency Programs. Contingency programs are sponsor-funded programs developed to reward Anglers based on a predefined set of criteria. Participation in contingency programs is at the Angler's discretion.

5.2 No Competing Logos. No competing tournament trail logos other than B.A.S.S. will be allowed on jerseys, rain suits, PFDs, or complete boat packages, etc. Tow vehicles bearing emblems or logos of competing tournament trails will not be permitted in drive-through weigh-ins.

5.3 Other Events. If Angler elects to participate in other B.A.S.S. sanctioned tournaments, Angler will be required to execute a Participation Agreement containing the applicable rules and regulations, code of conduct and Tournament Series specific content such as wrapped boat and jersey guidelines.

5.4 Additional Requirements. Angler agrees to participate in programs recommended or developed by B.A.S.S. that promote the growth of the sport and to fully support programs intended to raise awareness of my individual angler brand and identity.

#### **P6. LEGAL**

6.1 Credibility assessment administered via Polygraph. By registering and signing the Participation Agreement, Angler agrees to submit to a credibility assessment at any time during the Tournament series and abide by its conclusion and hereby waives any expectation of privacy relation to his participation in the Tournament series.

6.2 Communication. Angler must provide B.A.S.S. with a current e-mail address. Angler agrees that delivery of any notice, communication, guideline or instruction to Angler via email shall constitute notice to Angler and shall comply with any notice requirements set forth herein. Angler must also provide a United States provider personal cell number capable of receiving text messages from B.A.S.S.

6.3. Governing Law, Venue, and Jurisdiction. This Agreement shall be governed by and interpreted in all respects in accordance with the substantive laws of the state of Alabama, without regard to its choice of law and/or conflicts of law principles.

6.4. Miscellaneous. If any provision of this Agreement is determined to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such determination shall in no way affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision herein. This Agreement along with the Code of Ethics, Official Rules, etc. sets forth the entire agreement of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes any and all prior or contemporaneous oral and/or written representations, discussions, negotiations, understandings, and/or agreements relating to the subject matter hereof. This Agreement may not be modified except by an instrument in writing signed by both parties. In signing this document, I am not relying on any promises, representations or other statements that are not contained in this Agreement.

6.5. Electronic Signature. The execution of this document by electronic mail or by any other electronic or digital means shall be deemed to constitute effective execution of this document. Any signature transmitted by facsimile, email or other electronic or digital means shall be deemed an original signature for all purposes.

6.6. Arbitration. Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to this Agreement, or the breach, invalidity, enforceability, arbitrability, or interpretation thereof, shall be settled by arbitration administered by the American Arbitration Association in accordance with its Commercial Arbitration Rules, and judgment on the award, which shall be rendered by a single arbitrator, may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof. B.A.S.S. and the Angler agree that no arbitrator shall have authority to conduct a class or collective proceeding, or to join or consolidate any claim with the claim of another person. To the extent permitted by applicable law, all claims must be brought solely in B.A.S.S.'s or the Angler's individual capacity, and not as a plaintiff or class member in any purported class or collective proceeding. All mediations arising under this provision shall take place in Birmingham, Alabama, and the Angler consents to that forum and waives all objections to the propriety or convenience of that arbitration forum.

I UNDERSTAND I MUST SIGN AND DATE THIS AGREEMENT PRIOR TO PARTICIPATING IN THIS EVENT. MY REGISTRATION IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL B.A.S.S. ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIPT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THIS AGREEMENT AND ALL OTHER NECESSARY DOCUMENTS. THE TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY MY PARTICIPATION IN THE TOURNAMENT SERIES OR ANY COMPONENT THEREOF FOR ANY REASON AND, UPON SUCH DENIAL, TO REFUND THE DEPOSIT OR ENTRY FEE.

I ATTEST THAT I HAVE READ AND HAVE UNDERSTOOD THIS THE PROVISIONS OF THIS AGREEMENT AND THE TOURNAMENT OFFICIAL RULES. I UNDERSTAND THAT BY SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT, WHICH CONTAINS LIABILITY AND OTHER RELEASE LANGUAGE, I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS. I

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PRIOR TO SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT WITH AN ATTORNEY TO REVIEW THE TERMS CONTAINED HEREIN. I REPRESENT AND WARRANT THAT I AM AT LEAST EIGHTEEN (18) YEARS OF AGE, FULLY COMPETENT, AND HAVE THE FULL RIGHT, POWER, AND AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO THIS AGREEMENT. I HAVE VOLUNTARILY SIGNED THIS AGREEMENT.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type Legal Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State & Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Content Usage Guidelines**

#### **C1. RULES AND PENALTIES:**

The following rules shall apply to all Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series events except that (i) rules for special tournaments may differ from those contained herein and (ii) these rules may be changed by B.A.S.S. immediately upon notice by B.A.S.S. to its members, which notice may be published on the B.A.S.S. internet site at Bassmaster.com. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Officials or their designee at a tournament. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Officials or rules committee may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate by them, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and entry fees and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Subject to the appeal process set forth in rule 24, below, the decision of the Tournament Officials, their designee or the rules committee shall be final in all matters.

**Except for very serious rules violations, as determined by B.A.S.S., and any rules that might lead to disqualification of an angler from participation in the Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series or other B.A.S.S. circuits, rules violations must be reported to tournament officials within 24 hours of the final flight check-in on the day of the alleged violation.**

Official protest must be filed in writing and presented to tournaments officials. All parties of interest will be provided a copy.

Penalties for rules violations may include the following:

- (a) Reduction of practice hours or competition hours for current and/or future tournaments as determined by the Tournament Officials.
- (b) Loss of one or more fish caught in potential violation of rules or regulations. All bass under question must be marked and verified by your partner/camera operator or documented on POV camera. If not verified the entire catch may be disqualified.
- (c) Loss of catch for the day of the violation.
- (d) Disqualification from the tournament in question.

- (e) Disqualification from future B.A.S.S. events, which may be from a specific number of events or for a specific period of time up to or including a lifetime disqualification.
- (f) Any different or additional penalties determined by the Tournament Officials including, but not limited to monetary fines and/or reduction of Angler of the Year points.

## **C2. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:**

(i) Elite Qualifier Series tournaments are open only to current members of B.A.S.S. who are 16 years of age or older. However, employees, officers and directors of B.A.S.S. or its parent, subsidiary, and affiliated companies and members of their immediate families (spouse, parents, children and siblings, regardless of where they live) are ineligible. Officially registered competitors must compete all eligible competition day(s). Absences must be approved by Tournament Officials.

(ii) DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY B.A.S.S. TOURNAMENT, NO COMPETITOR MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT CONTESTANT HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF A MINIMUM OF \$300,000, PER OCCURRENCE, IN BOAT OWNERS' LIABILITY INSURANCE (see Angler Participation Agreement for full details) COVERING THE BOAT BEING USED IN THE TOURNAMENT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER ALL PASSENGERS IN THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED AND ANY COMPETITOR WHO DOES NOT HAVE PROOF OF IN-FORCE INSURANCE meeting all requirements listed in Angler Participation Agreement may be disqualified. EACH POLICY MUST SHOW AN EFFECTIVE START AND EXPIRATION DATE. Tournament officials have sole authority to determine if insurance policies meet B.A.S.S. requirements.

(iii) Each calendar year prior to competing in a B.A.S.S. event, all competitors must complete a W-9 and when required a Form 590, or W-8 BEN provided by B.A.S.S. If tax status or address changes occur, new forms must be submitted prior to participation in the next B.A.S.S. event. Tournament entry fees must be received by the B.A.S.S. Tournament Department on or before the balance due date. **BALANCE DUE DATE WILL BE 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE FIRST COMPETITION DAY.** Any balances or new entries received after the balance due date will be subject to a \$100 late fee. The Tournament Officials reserve the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to deadline and also the right to extend the acceptance date. **DEPOSITS ARE NONREFUNDABLE AND NONTRANSFERABLE REGARDLESS OF DATE OF CANCELLATION ONCE YOU HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED IN A TOURNAMENT. ANY BALANCE OF THE ENTRY FEE PAID IN EXCESS OF THE DEPOSIT WILL ONLY BE REFUNDED IF PROPER NOTIFICATION IS MADE TO THE B.A.S.S. TOURNAMENT DEPARTMENT PRIOR TO THE BALANCE DUE DATE. Anglers who are on the waiting list will be refunded deposits if you have not been confirmed in the tournaments for which you registered.** While a sponsor may pay the entry fee, competitors agree to use any and all official products provided by B.A.S.S. in Elite Qualifier Series events and the Bassmaster Classic.

(iv) The preferred method for tournament registration is online at Bassmaster.com.

## **C3 PRACTICE AND COMPETITION**

i. Off-limits and practice periods for the Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series will be announced by B.A.S.S. Off-limits periods for the Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Events will start on a Sunday, 12:01 am local time of each event site as posted by B.A.S.S. There will be a three-day official practice period four days prior to the first competition day for Elite Qualifier Series tournaments. Off-limits for Elite Qualifier events begins on the Sunday closest to 28 days prior to the first practice day. Practice for events not ending on Saturday may start on a different day to be announced by B.A.S.S. Restrictions a – f listed below apply. Competitors recognize that operating conditions (weather, etc.) are not monitored during Official Practice and are the sole responsibility of Competitor.

ii. Once the Elite Qualifier Series Schedule is officially announced or a competitor becomes definitively aware of a tournament location, whichever date is earliest, eligible Elite Qualifier anglers, regardless of the event date, will fall under restrictions a – f below:

a. Elite Qualifier anglers cannot gather waypoints or specific fishing locations i.e. creek, river, area of the lake, etc. from any source that is not publicly available. Social media is generally considered publicly available with the exception of private messages within the platforms, however, competitors may not intentionally gather specific fishing locations or techniques for Tournament locations. For example, if an Angler's feed displays videos, pictures or comments of Tournament locations they should not study those for a competitive advantage. Anglers may participate in general discussions with fans and others about fishing, especially including boat shows, seminars and the like; however, they must not use such conversations to intentionally gain a competitive edge for fishing a future Elite Qualifier event. To be safe in such situations, the angler should discontinue conversations that focus on specific locations or other information that might result in a competitive advantage. Elite Qualifier anglers cannot solicit, gather or intentionally receive any information to gain a competitive advantage from anyone other than another Elite Qualifier series competitor in the tournament. Elite Qualifier anglers cannot buy or barter, any information to gain a competitive advantage.

b. Elite Qualifier anglers may recreationally fish and/or compete in other tournaments on tournament waters outside the official off-limits period. This includes fishing with other anglers—non-competitors or otherwise—provided they do not solicit or gather waypoints, fishing locations, or specific techniques for use at any Elite Qualifier event from a non-competitor.

c. Photo shoots, media events, and other outings on tournament waters are allowed outside the 28-day tournament water off-limits period as long as competitors are not in the boat with non-competitors for the purpose of acquiring waypoints or locations, for gaining a competitive advantage on tournament waters.

d. In emergency situations, i.e., floods, etc., anglers, with notification of tournament officials, are allowed to be on tournament waters for rescue operations during off-limits periods.

e. Participating Elite Qualifier anglers are only allowed to talk to other fellow competitors regarding fishing on tournament waters subject to the restrictions of C3(vii).

f. During the 28-day tournament waters off limits period Elite Qualifier Anglers must continue to adhere to the no information rules and are prohibited from being on tournament waters unless approved by tournament officials. For a first offense of an intentional violation of the off limits period or no information rule (at any time), the competitor may be disqualified from the tournament and assessed up to a \$5,000 fine. For a second offense, the competitor may lose their eligibility for the following year's Elite Qualifier Series events and could be assessed up to a \$12,500 fine. A self-reported, unintentional violation of off limits may result in disqualification and/or a fine. Any contestant accused in writing of violating the off-limits or no information rule to tournament officials may be subject to a credibility assessment relevant to the charges. Accusers may also be required to take a credibility assessment. Failure to pass the credibility assessment may result in disqualification from the tournament.

(iii) Bassmaster Classic off limits will begin at 12:01 am January 1, 2025 and practice periods will be announced by B.A.S.S.

(iv) During official practice there will be no practicing at night, defined as beginning at 30 minutes after local sunset and ending 30 minutes before local sunrise, to include running to and from a fishing location. In practice and competition, when running in low light conditions, running lights should be in operation and angler should use best judgment in determining safe operating speed.

(iv) Competitors eliminated from competition are not allowed to fish on tournament waters until all competition is complete. Photo and video shoots, including those involving fishing, and other sponsor obligations may be allowed in the tournament off-limits live release area or other off-limits areas upon approval from tournament officials. Elite Qualifier anglers are not allowed to have anyone in their boats during official practice, with the exception of a media observer, first responder, or military veteran approved in advance by B.A.S.S. All media observers, first responders and military veterans must sign a waiver form provided by B.A.S.S. Communications in advance of getting into the competitors boat. Only first responders, military veterans and approved media will be permitted to ride along during practice. It is the responsibility of the angler to determine whether a media representative has been approved for ride-alongs during practice. B.A.S.S. reserves the right to assign practice riders.

(v) No competitors will be allowed on tournament waters the day of registration and/or the day preceding the start of the competition, except under rule C3(vi). Unless otherwise specified, all official times are specific to local host community. The competitor must know and observe these dates and times. During both the official practice and the tournament, a competitor may not solicit or intentionally receive the assistance or advice of anyone for the purposes of locating or catching bass, nor enter the tournament waters with anyone who has been on the tournament waters during the off-limits period, including, but not limited to, a professional guide, state or federal wildlife agency employee or any other person deemed an "expert" on these tournament waters by the Tournament Officials, unless they are a competitor in the tournament. Partners are not allowed to share information with Elite Qualifier anglers and are subject to credibility assessments should they be accused of rules violations. NO EXCEPTIONS. Flying over tournament waters, other than on a ticketed commercial airline, is prohibited during off-limits, official practice and competition unless approved by the Tournament Officials. The use of drones for the purposes of locating or catching fish or otherwise gaining a competitive advantage is prohibited in both official practice and competition. Viewing drone footage is prohibited until the competitor is eliminated from competition. During the official practice, competitors are not allowed to livewell or keep any bass unless they have permission from tournament officials.

(vi) Competitors renting boat slips may launch boats and proceed immediately to the slip location the day before practice begins. Testing of engines during the 28-day off-limits period is not permitted on tournament waters. Testing of engines after the weigh-in is only allowed with permission from the Tournament Officials. No Exceptions. During the official practice and during the tournament, a competitor may not snorkel, "skin dive" or "scuba dive" in the tournament waters.

(vii) No competitor may buy or barter a fishing location from any other competitor for use during any competition day. Competitors not making a cut are no longer considered in the tournament and as such may no longer discuss fishing on tournament waters with other anglers who did make the cut.

(viii) During the official competition days of the tournament, a competitor may not make or receive cell calls for the purpose of locating or catching fish on tournament waters or to gain any competitive advantage. Cell phones may be used for emergency situations. Only under the direction of B.A.S.S. officials, competitors may use smart phones for BASSTrakk purposes to enter the angler's unofficial weight during the tournament day. Competitors are allowed to call lockmasters for locking purposes only. Competitors are allowed to use smart phones for global maps, weather, power generation, tidal



charts, notes. During the days of competition (at any time) anglers may not view or visit websites or participate in social media with the intent of determining other angler's location or fishing techniques/tactics, including but not limited to Bassmaster.com. Any violations or suspected violations may result in a credibility assessment. The result of a confirmed violation will be disqualification from the relevant tournament/s in question.

(ix) A designated tournament official must be granted access to a competitor's boat at any time during the official practice or competition days. Failure to grant such access may result in immediate disqualification.

(x) During competition, Elite Qualifier Anglers will be required to provide, mount and maintain their own personal camera (POV) in their boat. The POV camera must be mounted so that it's recording at all times with a full view of the angler and livewells while fishing. Each day's recording should be saved until the first day of competition for the next Elite Qualifier event and at the request of B.A.S.S., all footage must be submitted within 24 hours.

(xi) Each competitor agrees to immediately report to the Tournament Officials any violation or infraction of any tournament rules. Failure to report violations or suggestions to another competitor that they violate these rules or false verification of weigh-in forms may be cause for disqualification. Official protests must be filed in accordance with Rule C1.

By signature on the Elite Qualifier participation agreement and rules, each competitor agrees to submit to a credibility assessment should they be accused of any rule violation. Failure to pass a credibility assessment is appealable. The appeals process including any retest will be case dependent and at the sole discretion of B.A.S.S. The B.A.S.S. Tournament Officials or their designee shall be responsible for selecting and training qualified examiners to administer and interpret the results, perform an independent quality control review and establishing, in consultation with the examiners, the questions asked during the tests. The B.A.S.S. Tournament Officials or their designee shall have sole responsibility selecting the location, date, and time of the test. The competitor shall make themselves available at the location selected by the Tournament Officials and shall cooperate in all respects with such test. Prior to any exam, competitors must discuss any information received unintentionally per rule C3(i). Anglers taking a credibility assessment may be responsible for any and all costs incurred. Random credibility assessments will be administered on site during the course of an Elite Qualifier Event.

#### **C4. REGISTRATION/Check-In:**

Each competitor must register/check-in in person with official B.A.S.S. staff at the time and place designated in the schedule of events. Failure to register/check-in in person during the prescribed hours may result in a \$100 fine. Any competitor, who has not contacted the B.A.S.S. Tournament Staff by the closing of the posted onsite registration period, may be disqualified from participating in the tournament. **It shall be each competitor's responsibility to either check the schedule of events for registration/check-in time and location or obtain times from the B.A.S.S. Tournament Department.**

#### **C5. SAFETY:**

**(i) Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by competitors. During the official practice and competition, each boat passenger must wear a Coast Guard-approved chest-type life preserver anytime the combustion engine is running.** This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely, worn outside the outermost clothing and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. Inflatable life vest indicators should be checked daily. Violation of this rule may be reason for disqualification. Inflatable PFDs are allowed as long as U.S. Coast Guard regulations are met.

The Coast Guard requires that inflatable PFDs must be worn at all times unless there is an equal number of non-inflatable Coast Guard approved PFDs on board. Anglers must carry two Coast Guard approved chest-type life preservers per boat.

It is required that each contestant successfully complete a boating safety course, boating safety certification, or possess a USCG Captain's license. Boating safety courses are available online and should carry an endorsement by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators or NASBLA.

**It is suggested the competitor have a safety check with non- competitor passenger each day prior to launch to familiarize the location of all safety equipment.**

(ii) When boating in low-visibility situations i.e. fog, heavy rain, during both practice and competition, competitors must operate their boats at a safe speed and in a safe manner, not to exceed any restrictions determined by tournament officials.

(iii) Radar units permanently mounted in the boat, subject to approval by B.A.S.S., may be approved for competition.

(iv) Tournament officials may delay, shorten or cancel any part of a competition day, official practice day or restrict any tournament waters because of weather or other factors. Competitors recognize that operating conditions (weather, etc.) are not monitored during Official Practice and are the sole responsibility of the Competitor. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. Delays on full field days resulting in half of the tournament day being lost (first flight take-off and check in) may result in cancellation. Full fields may be carried over to cut days.

(v) B.A.S.S. reserves the right to impose boat speed limits during any or all tournaments. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area covered by the speed limit, and/or the actual speed limit imposed, shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the Tournament Officials. This will never result in speed limits in excess of those posted on local waters. Additionally, a safe operating speed is impacted by a number of factors and should be maintained at all times and is the sole responsibility of the Competitor.

(vi) IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, COMPETITORS SHOULD CALL 911 FIRST AND THEN NOTIFY TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

(vii) COMPETITORS ARE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE BOAT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY OR WHEN DANGER MAY BE IMMINENT. COMPETITORS SHOULD ALWAYS USE THEIR BEST JUDGMENT IN THESE SITUATIONS.

## **C6. SPORTSMANSHIP:**

Competitors in B.A.S.S. tournaments are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, fair play, safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification.

(i) Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over-the-counter or prescribed by a licensed physician – as long as such prescribed drug does not impede the ability to operate a vehicle) by any competitor during official practice or the tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification at B.A.S.S. officials' sole discretion. No alcoholic beverages or prohibited drugs shall be allowed in the boats during the official practice or competition days or when in the weigh-in area.

(ii) Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling on tournament waters. Any act of a competitor that reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters and courtesy may be reason for disqualification.

(iii) All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. Some regulations may differ from these rules resulting in fines, citations or other penalties at the discretion of law enforcement and may or may not result in tournament penalties. Competitors are responsible for research of fishing and boating regulations.

(iv) In both official practice and competition, competitors are required to have all licenses and permits required on the tournament waters in which they fish.

## **C7. ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT:**

Anglers participating in any B.A.S.S.-sanctioned event shall observe this code of conduct and the applicable rules for the specific event in which they are participating. Anglers shall, at all times, conduct themselves in a professional manner that demonstrates integrity, honor and respect toward fellow competitors, tournament staff and the general public and does not reflect unfavorably on B.A.S.S., its members, officers or representatives, tournaments or sponsors. Any angler's immediate family members or other agent representing their behalf who violate any of the provisions of the Angler Code of Conduct may result in fines, reduction of points, forfeiture of tournament winnings, suspension from competing in individual B.A.S.S. sanctioned events, permanent ban from competition, or any combination thereof deemed appropriate by B.A.S.S.

Anglers are frequently in the public eye and are considered role models by young people; therefore, it is imperative that tournament competitors demonstrate good sportsmanship in fishing. Sportsmanship is defined as fair play, respect for opponents and polite behavior while competing in the sport.

(i) Following are examples of unacceptable behavior by competitors or by others on behalf of competitors in B.A.S.S. events that will be cause for penalties as outlined in this document.

- Heated public disagreements with B.A.S.S. officials, other competitors and fans and volunteers during an event.
- Public attacks through media, including social media, upon the integrity of B.A.S.S. rules, B.A.S.S. officials or fellow competitors (including any protests).
- Public comments that an angler knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation (i.e., slander or libel) of B.A.S.S., B.A.S.S. officials, sponsors or fellow competitors (including by not limited to competitors filing protests).
- Displays of anger and displeasure for reasons related to fishing competition where members of the public, including other anglers, spectators and the media, are present.
- Publicly questioning or criticizing a tournament official or official decision, ruling or penalty except through the proper channels.
- Any sharing of non-public information marked as confidential or private communications with B.A.S.S.
- Abuse (physical, verbal, threatening or slanderous) of tournament officials, volunteers, fellow competitors or others connected with a B.A.S.S. event, including comments on social media.
- Offensive or slanderous comments with racial, cultural or sexual overtones regarding event officials, event personnel or fellow anglers.

Intentionally interfering with an angler's ability to compete.

Any disqualification, suspension or other disciplinary action imposed by any tournament or fishing organization may result in disqualification from competition and rejection from participation in a B.A.S.S. tournament(s).

(ii.) Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or crimes involving moral turpitude, may be grounds for disqualification from competition and for rejecting any application for participation.

### **Angler Code of Conduct Penalty Guidelines**

When an Elite Qualifier Series angler or a person representing the angler (as defined above) is found to have violated the Angler Code of Conduct, the following potential fines will be imposed at B.A.S.S.'s sole discretion, in addition to any other penalties that may be deemed appropriate by B.A.S.S. The level of a penalty imposed will be determined based on not just the type of violation, but also the severity of the outcomes related to the incident, as well as the number of previous similar violations. Code of Conduct violations of Level 1 and Level 2 offenses are not appealable and the resulting penalty is final.

- Level 1 offense: Not less than \$250 nor more than \$500
- Level 2 offense: Not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$2,500
- Level 3 offense: Not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000
- Level 4 offense: Possible suspension or ban from the Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series and other levels of B.A.S.S. competition.

### **C8. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:**

Use of landing nets and grippers for landing bass is prohibited during tournament competition. During official practice and competition no more than one artificial or biodegradable artificial lure may be attached to a line at one time. One lure is defined as a single manmade device designed to attract and/or catch one fish at a time. Adding trailer hooks, plastic trailers, blades, etc., to a single lure is acceptable. The use of braid or other line to attach one stinger hook (single or treble) is allowed but the line cannot be over two inches in length. If multiple fish are caught on a single manmade lure, on a single cast, all fish are considered legal and may be added to the daily catch subject to scoring rules (18). No "live bait," "dead bait," or "prepared bait" will be permitted during official practice and competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds.

Any umbrella-type rigging, harness or other device designed to hold more than one lure at a time – with or without hooks – is not allowed. Such rigging, harness or device cannot be added to a single lure as described above.

Twin arm spinnerbaits, twin arm underspins and twin arm buzzbaits are allowed. Trailer hooks and plastic trailers of twin arm baits must be on the main hook of the bait; only spinner blades can be affixed to the arms. The head on the main stem may be hinged. On these twin arm baits, no more than two wires, with a maximum length of 6 inches, may extend off the main arm or body of the lure at the head or line tie point. The bend of the main hook must be even with or trail behind where blades attach to the wires. B.A.S.S. officials have the sole authority to determine whether a lure is considered a single lure as defined above.

Only ONE casting, spin casting or spinning rod (10-foot maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. A hung or snagged lure that is not in or on the water is not considered in use and may be set aside while another is in use. Other rigs, as specified above, may be in the boat ready for use; however, only ONE is permitted in use at any given time. If a competitor breaks their line while setting the hook or retrieving a fish, they are allowed to make an attempt with the rod being used or with his hands to secure the visible line and land the fish for it to be counted as legal. You may NOT hook the line with another lure, rod and reel or other device. If a fish in your possession exits the boat, you are allowed to make an attempt to grab it with your hands. Once you resume fishing, that fish must be caught in a legal and sporting manner.

No competitor may intentionally snag or foul-hook a bass to be counted in their daily catch. Anyone guilty of intentionally snatching or snagging visible fish will have his catch disqualified. When knowingly fishing for bedding bass using any means (whether visually, blind-casting, using forward facing live sonar or any other method), to be counted as a legal fish, each bass must be hooked inside the mouth. With the fish's mouth closed naturally, you must not be able to see where the hook point enters the fish for it to be considered hooked inside the mouth. Anglers must verify the fish is hooked in the mouth with another person in the boat or their POV camera. Otherwise in such type events credibility assessment exams may ask this question. Any fish hooked in the mouth where the hook did not enter through the mouth, but entered through the gills must be released.

Competitors, including those who have been "cut" from competition in an event, are allowed to share baits and tackle with one another at any time.

#### **C9. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:**

Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in official tournament practice and in tournament competition will be 250 horsepower. Horsepower cannot exceed the limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard. When required, 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 plate nor the horsepower maximum set by B.A.S.S. Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the official entry form, the boat, electronics data and outboard motor used in the tournament, to an inspection by factory-trained personnel if there is reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance of engines is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of a competitor's engine to increase the horsepower over the factory horsepower rating, is forbidden and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms, or altering the horsepower-rating numbers on the engine is also cause for immediate disqualification from B.A.S.S. tournaments. Posted speed limits and those imposed by B.A.S.S. must be observed and all boats must be operated in a safe manner. Violations of speed limits may result in penalties listed under Rule 1 above.

**10. BOAT AND MOTOR:** These restrictions apply during official practice and competition. For the safety of all competitors, all boats must be equipped with an approved type of operable ignition kill switch and lanyard. Only one manufacturer's lanyard may be used and must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating and in gear. Any time the combustion engine is operating and in gear there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Fishing boats that are 16 feet or more in length may be used and must be equipped with wheel steering. No other steering device will be permitted. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat.

Each competitor's boat shall be restricted to one (1) electric motor to be mounted at the bow of the

boat. Electric motor(s) mounted at the stern of the boat are prohibited. Each competitor may keep a spare trolling motor in the boat in case one malfunctions. Trolling motor brackets and electronics are not considered “raised platforms.” Platforms mounted to the trolling motor bracket are allowed, but must be no more than 1 inch thick. Standing on the outboard engine or seats while fishing is not allowed. An electric trolling motor may be used for slow maneuvering. However, trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. The “Long-Lining” or “Strolling” technique is NOT allowed in either practice or competition and defined as intentionally using a trolling motor or outboard to mechanically extend a cast. No exceptions. Only gas tanks that are installed by the boat manufacturer are allowed. No portable gas tanks or containers capable of holding gasoline can be placed anywhere on the tournament waters or shoreline for use by any tournament competitor. No “barges” or similar craft will be permitted. Jet drive engines, surface drive engines and tunnel hull boats are not allowed during both official practice and competition. Any boat/hull designs other than standard mass-produced units are only allowed with the written approval of tournament officials.

#### **C11. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT:**

**During official practice and competition**, every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment and a functional bilge pump. **During official competition**, every boat must have livewell space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass by both competitors using the boat. B.A.S.S. recommends livewells be maintained at full level and aerators/re-circulators on manual. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is proper and adequate.

Anglers must make a back seat available for AmBASSadors or other media passenger (partner) each competition day. Competitors are required to make one dry storage compartment available and to provide ample space for ice, food and drink. During competition, regardless if you have a partner or not, pets are not allowed in the boat.

#### **C12. Electronics**

The following rules apply to both official practice and competition.

Boats are restricted to no more than 55 inches of screen size. Inches are measured per the (diagonal) display screen size listed on each manufacturer's website rounded to the nearest inch. Tablets, iPad or the like, are included within the boat screen size measurement. Cell phones and back-up units are not included in the boat screen size measurement.

Each competitor's boat is limited to one (1) live transducer and this transducer must be mounted on the trolling motor shaft at the bow area of the boat. Turrets are allowed as long as they are attached to the trolling motor. B.A.S.S. will maintain a list of approved and not approved live transducers at <https://www.bassmaster.com/2025-approved-technology-list/> and only products on that list may be used. Products not on the list must be submitted for review by December 1, 2024.

Competitors found to be using not approved live transducers and/or more than one (1) live transducer or more than 55 inches of screen will be disqualified from the event.

All electronics must be mounted in a way not to obstruct the competitor's line of sight while piloting the boat on plane. It is recommended that console electronics be mounted in a manner where the tops of graphs are no higher than 26 inches from the steering column where it exits the console, and bow electronics be mounted in a manner where the tops of graphs are no higher than 18 inches from the front deck.

Competitors will be required to allow B.A.S.S. to access their electronics for media purposes. Failure to allow access may result in a penalty. If B.A.S.S. is unable to access the unit in the bow of the boat, the angler will be required to mirror through console electronics with an unobstructed view.

### **C13. BOAT IDENTIFICATION:**

Prior to each day's start, each boat **must** be given an inspection check by a tournament official. Each day, each boat may be given a number, which **must** remain with the boat. This number must be displayed upon the request of tournament officials, and at each check-in.

### **C14. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE:**

During competition, anglers are allowed to fish from anywhere inside the boat. Partners should make every reasonable effort to not get in way of Elite Qualifier anglers while they are fishing or landing fish. Partners are not allowed to help competitors in any way for the purpose of locating or catching fish on tournament waters. Partners are allowed to drive boats only in cases of emergency or with permission from tournament officials with exception of loading and unloading boats from trailers. All cost of boat operation is the responsibility of Elite anglers. When idling in shallow areas, anglers are allowed to ask Partners to move their sitting position as long as the partner can place their feet in the bottom of the boat.

#### **Partner Obligations:**

Partners are required to have knowledge of BASSTrakk operation. BASSTrakk operation will be explained in the tournament briefing by tournament officials. Pros and partners are to be honest and timely with catch and weight reports. Any competitor who, in the judgment of tournament officials, advises partners to neglect or falsely report catches or weights may be penalized. Partners are not allowed to carry GPS systems or use cell phones during competition unless directed by tournament officials. Partners are allowed to carry still cameras, personal smart phones, or tablets. Partner photos/videos should be discussed with pro partners regarding backgrounds, landmarks, etc. Registered partners are required to bring a personal PFD to each event. Partners, at their acceptance, may be asked to text catch reports to tournament officials from their personal cell phones. Partners are not allowed to text information to anyone other than B.A.S.S. media or tournament officials unless in an emergency situation.

If the partner is comfortable doing so, they may assist the angler with their personal POV camera. Note: If B.A.S.S. asks to mount a POV camera or similar camera in an angler's boat, the B.A.S.S. camera has priority, in terms of placement and access to power, over the angler's personal camera. Immediate family members (spouse/significant other, father, mother or children) of an Elite Qualifier angler are not allowed to enter as a Partner (AmBASSadors – formerly known as Marshals, camera operators, media members, volunteer, or any other approved boat passenger) Any candidate for partner who, in the judgment of the Tournament Officials, is compromised in such a manner as to unfairly hinder their partner or endanger the safety and well-being of their partner or themselves may not be eligible. All partners must be an active B.A.S.S. member.

The preferred method for partner registration is online at [www.bassmaster.com](http://www.bassmaster.com). Bassmaster Elite Series Partners must provide a properly completed and signed participation agreement, and the

total fee must be received by the B.A.S.S. Tournament Department on or before the event fee deadline date.

#### **C15. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:**

Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Officials for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the B.A.S.S. Tournament Department. Any waters within these boundaries that are legally and obviously posted “Off-Limits” or “No Fishing,” as well as the live-bass-release area established by the Tournament Officials, will be off-limits to tournament competitors and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. Only that water open to all public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Waters deemed off-limits by authorities or tournament officials should be treated like a wall. No boats or casting behind that boundary while fishing. All angling must be done from the boat. In states where landowners have the legal authority to claim private property, these areas must be posted or they will be considered tournament waters unless instructed otherwise by tournament officials at any time during the event. If forced to leave, a competitor must report the incident to tournament officials as soon as possible. Any water to which a competitor is barred access becomes off-limits to all competitors.

Prior to 8 am local time the day before the tournament is scheduled to begin, any questionable areas must be brought to the attention of tournament officials to be considered tournament waters. Questionable areas will be off limits until a determination can be made with local authorities and may be announced in the briefing or via text for all to know unless determined otherwise by tournament officials. Tournament officials reserve the right to restrict or enhance tournament waters based on conversations with local authorities. During off limits, official practice, and competition, competitors may not place brush, or other physical attractors, including chum of any kind, in tournament waters nor may they have someone do so on their behalf. Competitors are not allowed to cut, remove, displace, or engage in any type of structure removal from private property during off limits, official practice or competition. The cutting of trees, bushes, and/or logs after the off-limits date and/or the removal of official commercial, local, and state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat or gain access for fishing is prohibited. No competitor may place any object that may impede or cause danger to boaters.

#### **C16. COMPETITORS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT:**

During the official practice and competition days, competitors must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. You are not allowed to use a winch, pulley, come along, cable, rope, or similar device/tools to gain access to tournament waters. **Competitors may not shift a majority of their weight outside the boat and onto a dock or other object outside the boat for the purpose of landing a bass or accessing a fishing spot.** A bass that cannot be landed without the angler leaving the boat or shifting his weight outside the boat must be released immediately. While landing a fish, an angler is allowed to protect their boat by shoving it away from an obstacle as long as a majority of the angler’s weight is inside the boat. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat to retrieve a lure. All fishing by that competitor must cease until the competitor is back in the boat. Only then may another cast be made.

Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament hours. Competitors must leave from and return to official checkpoints by boat. Towing boats on trailers during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of tournament officials. Anglers must remain in the boat at all times except in case of emergency or when danger may be imminent or with permission from the Tournament Officials. In the event of a needed restroom break or refueling station at a marina gas pump, anglers are allowed



to leave the boat. Other exceptions are spelled out in rules 5, 15, and 18. In such an emergency or with permission from the Tournament Officials, competitors may move from their boat to a boat operated by other competitors or a rescue boat. Partners must remain together at all times, in sight of their catch, under the conditions cited above, in order for their catch of that day to be scored in the tournament with the following exception. In breakdown situations anglers may transfer their fish to another competitor's boat, or a tournament official-designated rescue boat, and ride to check in, and they may leave their partners with the disabled boat at the partner's discretion. In such cases, anglers must stay with their catches at all times. Any Elite Qualifier angler whose boat is disabled and rides with another competitor or rescue boat to weigh-in is not allowed to fish from the time they leave the disabled boat.

If a competitor violates any of the above conditions without contacting a tournament official by phone or other means or to report an emergency or breakdown may be penalized. In emergency or breakdown situations competitors must cease fishing, 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 for the competitor to resume fishing, a restart will be allowed, and the competitor will continue and their subsequent catch will be counted. This applies to emergency and breakdowns situations as determined by the Tournament Officials or their designee.

#### **C17. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINTS:**

Unless specified by tournament officials, there shall be only one official checkpoint for check-out in the morning, and one official check-in point in the afternoon, which points shall be designated at the tournament briefing. Failure to go through boat check and check-out in the morning or failure to check-in at the check-in point in the afternoon may result in disqualification. At the time of check-out, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformity with all rules set forth by the Tournament Officials. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves to designated tournament officials by means of the numbers described in Rule 13 and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together, through the weigh-in process if both competitors are weighing bass. Once bass are bagged for weigh-in, anglers that are not weighing bass do not need to accompany their partner through the weigh-in process.

#### **C18. SCORING:**

Tournament standings, contingency awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound-and-ounce weight of each competitor's catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, redeye or shoal bass will be weighed. The Pro limit shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day, unless otherwise specified by tournament officials (example – hot weather/fish care concerns). At no time shall a competitor have in his or her possession more than the tournament limit. If a competitor determines they have over the limit they must immediately reduce their catch to the tournament limit with a live bass of their choice from their catch. Each returned bass will result in a 2-pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. In this case, competitors must attempt to notify tournament officials and, if unsuccessful, must notify officials at check in. Once a competitor checks in they must present all legal bass to tournament officials at the verification table. If competitors at the verification table have more than the tournament limit, the competitor will reduce with live bass to the tournament limit and each returned bass will result in a 2-pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. If, after a competitor has their fish verified and weighed, then discovers additional fish over the tournament limit that were not presented to officials, they must notify tournament officials within one hour of final flight check in. A 2-pound penalty for each bass discovered

with be imposed. Failure to notify officials after one hour of final flight check-in time will result in loss of day's catch.

**Anglers who present fish at the verification table with fin clips attached will be assessed a 4-ounce penalty per clip.** Manmade or foreign object(s) connected to a bass, outside of natural causes, will not be weighed and shall be removed by tournament officials. Competitors are not allowed to replace anything attached to a bass or regurgitated by a bass to be included as part of their catch.

The official length for bass shall be determined by the Tournament Officials and announced at the Tournament Briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed. Bass presented for weigh-in, which fail to measure the official length, shall result in a penalty of 1 pound for each such bass, which 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 competitors check in at the official checkpoint, they **MUST** present all **LEGAL** fish in their possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a competitor's catch is measured, counted and verified by a tournament official, that competitor may not return to the boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be placed on a stringer at any time during the tournament. Specially designed bags which increase survival rate will be furnished by the Tournament Officials and must be used for the weigh-in.

#### **C19. CATCH AND RELEASE:**

**CULLING OF DEAD BASS IS PROHIBITED.** For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized 4 ounces to be deducted from their daily score. Competitors are allowed to ice a dead fish that is part of their daily catch. The Tournament Officials or their designees shall have sole authority for assessing penalty points. It is suggested in warm weather tournament anglers keep extra ice for fish care. Contestants are allowed to obtain ice and other items for fish care from competitors and/or non-competitors. For fish-care concerns, the verification table will open one hour before first flight check-in time. Anglers may be allowed to weigh-in early with permission from the Tournament Director. Small dip nets for culling purposes are encouraged. Dip nets cannot be used for landing bass. It is recommended competitors keep all bass in livewells during the culling process. Placing bass on the boat carpet during culling is not advised. **Only nonpenetrating culling clips are allowed for use. Any clip or device that penetrates the skin or mouth of a fish is not allowed.** Proper fizzing technique is suggested when needed. For instructions on acceptable fizzing practices please contact tournament officials.

The verification table will open one hour prior to check in time of the first flight.

#### **C20. LATE PENALTY:**

Competitors who are not at the official check-in point, as described in Rule 17, at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of 1 pound per minute late to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day, including any weight to be counted toward a "big bass award". Any competitor more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch, including "points" credit under Rule 21. There shall be no excuse for tardiness, and in no case, shall a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time." After proper recognition by tournament officials at the check-in point, competitors will be allowed ample time to proceed to the weigh-in site; however, all fishing must cease upon check-in. After

the tournament begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. It is each competitor's responsibility to confirm check-in times each day on the daily pairings.

#### **C21. Bassmaster Elite Qualifier Series POINT SYSTEM:**

Bassmaster Elite Qualifier events will be based on the number of eligible EQ anglers at the beginning of the season. For example, if the field of eligible EQ competitors is 130, the winner of each event will receive 130 points, second 129 points, until points run out.

##### **Only non-qualified Elite Series anglers will earn points in Elite Qualifier events.**

If a qualified Elite Series angler finishes in a point-earning position (e.g., third place), the points for that position will instead be awarded to the next highest-finishing non-qualified angler.

Competitors must weigh a legal bass during competition to receive points. In the case where one or more competitors do not weigh a legal bass, points will end at the place of competitors weighing legal bass.

**Year end points tiebreakers will be broken by total weight from full-field days for the season. In the event these tiebreakers do not determine AOY Championship tournament officials shall schedule a fish off between the tied anglers.**

#### **C22. TIES:**

In case of a tie for first place weight in the Pro division at the end of the tournament, there will be a sudden-death fish-off between the tied competitors, under the direction and special rules established by tournament officials. Ties for standard cuts and places below first at the end of the tournament will be resolved in the following order: (1) individual with heaviest single day catch during competition; (2) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual with the second heaviest single day catch during competition; (3) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed during competition; (4) if the tie is not broken, the next tiebreaker will be the individual with the largest number of legal live fish weighed during competition. If the tie is not broken by applying the foregoing procedures, the tie will remain a tie, and monetary prizes for each competitor will be awarded in an equal amount between the tied competitors. Angler of the Year points will be awarded for the place of the tied position and each competitor will be awarded equal points. In the instance where merchandise is involved, it will be awarded as determined by tournament officials. Ties for any cut in will be resolved in the same order explained above and if the tie is not broken, will be awarded as determined by tournament officials.

#### **C23. PAIRING OF COMPETITORS:**

Two competitors will be assigned to each boat. Announcement of your first-day fishing partner will be made at the Tournament Briefing, which **must be attended, except with permission from the Tournament Officials**, by each competitor. It shall be the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to check out at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. The Tournament Officials, at their sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off. It is suggested that a minimum of 30 minutes is required for preparation to depart to the check-out point. When two competitors check out at the beginning of the day, they must stay together and within sight of each other and each other's catch, throughout the day, until the fish are bagged for weigh-in, except in case of dire emergency or exceptions (see Rule 16, 17 & 19). A competitor must not allow any bass

caught by them to be counted on the score of another competitor. In such a case, both competitors shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by B.A.S.S.

#### **C24. RULES VIOLATIONS AND APPEALS COMMITTEE:**

Appeals for penalties assessed under Rule 1 (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f) must be presented in writing to the Tournament Officials within 48 hours from the time of the ruling being appealed. An appeals committee will be established by B.A.S.S., which shall be comprised of one B.A.S.S. employee not affiliated with the Tournament Department, and two current or recently retired Bassmaster anglers who were not competitors in the event in question. Appeals hearings shall take place within fourteen (14) business days, if possible, from the date of receipt of the written appeal. All parties must make themselves available at prescribed time of hearing. If competitors admit to a rules violation, they may not file an appeal of either the finding that they have violated the rules or the penalty imposed for the violation. Decisions of the appeals committee shall be final.

Names of the ruling committee members are to remain confidential and must not be disclosed to the public.

Competitors are allowed to compete while under appeal. Should an angler fishing under appeal make a cut, the next angler below the cut will be invited to compete on the cut day with the clear understanding that any prize money and points they might earn will be contingent upon the outcome of the appeal. If the appealing angler wins their appeal, the additional angler below the cut will revert to the points and prize money they were due at the end of fishing prior to the cut day. Final standings will not be official until all appeals hearings are final and ruled upon. However, all standings above that of any appealing angler, as well as any adjusted final standings may be declared official. Standings, including AOY points and monetary awards, may be adjusted after appeals final ruling and all affected anglers shall comply with all details of the final ruling.

#### **C25. PATCHES AND/OR SIGNAGE:**

Anglers are encouraged to wear their own clothing which may bear patches, logos and other signage promoting the angler's sponsors. No competing tournament trail logos other than B.A.S.S. will be allowed on jerseys, rain suits, PFDs, or complete boat packages, etc. B.A.S.S. may, however, restrict the use of patches, logos, signage, etc. that promote or advertise products which are, in B.A.S.S.' sole judgment, in competition with the products or services of official B.A.S.S. sponsors, or which are, in B.A.S.S.' sole judgment, in poor taste. B.A.S.S. will provide as much advance notice as possible to the competitors in such instances. By signing this document, each pro agrees to wear an official B.A.S.S. shield (minimum 2 1/4" X 2 3/4") on either left/right chest, with the top of the shield hitting the left/right collarbone during competition, including the weigh-in. This B.A.S.S. shield must be printed or embroidered.. In addition, if B.A.S.S. provides any ancillary clothing or products (such as life vests) bearing the logos of B.A.S.S. or the official sponsors of B.A.S.S., each competitor shall wear such clothing or utilize such products in a manner requested by B.A.S.S.

#### **C26. B.A.S.S. SPONSOR BOATS:**

When using B.A.S.S.-supplied boats, anglers are responsible for the physical care of the boat. Damage to the boat which is determined by the Tournament Officials to be caused by the angler will result in the angler being responsible for all costs of repair.

**C27. TAXES:**

Where and when state laws require income taxes be paid on cash awards to non-residents, the taxes will be automatically deducted prior to the awards being presented to the winners. Participants are responsible for all applicable taxes, execution of all tax forms, and rules on both cash and merchandise awards. Various states require withholding tax on merchandise be paid upon the awarding of certificates; anglers awarded merchandise certificates in these various states are responsible for remitting this tax to B.A.S.S. A failure to meet those obligations may result in reduction of points, fines, and/or disqualification from all future B.A.S.S. events.

**C28. WAIVER AND RELEASE:**

As a condition of participation in each tournament, each competitor must execute a waiver and release of liability, and a name and likeness release.

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**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type Legal Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_