

OFFICIAL ARKANSAS BASS TEAM TRAIL RULES

Keep Arkansas Fishing Big Bass Rules

1. **Participation and Eligibility:** Participation is open to current ABTT members who are 18 years old and older. Any person entering Keep Arkansas Fishing event under the age of 18 years must be paired with a partner 18 years of age or older and, also, have the signature of their parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the official entry form. KAF reserves the right to refuse membership and participation in any and all events to any individual or team in the discretion of the Tournament Director.
Big Bass: Open event to Amateur's ONLY. Anyone who has fished an Event and paid an entry fee over \$2500 in the prior 12 months to the event is not eligible for participation.
2. **Federal, State, and Local Laws:** All contestants must have valid fishing license and are required to obey all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
3. **Teams:** All team events. Anglers may not fish as individuals. A team consists of two (2) anglers. Everyone must check-in Friday evening or Saturday morning prior to launching for the tournament.
4. **Big Bass:** 3 Participants per boat maximum.
5. **Pre-Tournament Practice:** Team events and Big Bass events do not have an Off-limits period. The day preceding the Tournament anglers must be off the water by 6:00pm central time.
6. **Registration:** Will run from 5-7p.m. the evening before the event. At least one member of each team must register in person at the designated site during the onsite registration hours regardless of pre-registration. Boat numbers and flights will be determined by the time and day you registered. Registrations and payments can be made the morning of the event. Event registration will end 30 minutes prior to take-off times. EVERY PARTICIPANT MUST SIGN A LIABILITY RELEASE AT REGISTRATION.
 - a. If extenuating circumstances prevent on-site registration attendance, it is the sole responsibility of the team to appoint a representative who will be responsible for picking up the team's boat number during on-site registration and communicating all pertinent information to the team.
7. **Contingency Requirements:** Serial numbers are required in order to receive sponsor contingency prize money and must be reported to the KAF registration staff by take off of the first (1st) day of competition in order to be paid.
Contestants must fish KAF events using the boat/motor indicated on the contingency form provided to the tournament staff. If there is a change in the boat or motor being used, it is the contestant's sole responsibility to provide an updated contingency form to the

tournament staff at registration. In the event that a different boat/motor than that stated on the contingency form is used, all contingency money will be forfeited, and contestants may be disqualified to include future KAF events.

8. **Insurance:** A minimum of \$100,000 liability insurance is required of all contestants utilizing their boats in any Arkansas Bass Team Trail tournament, or KAF.
9. **Safety:** Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each Contestant is required to wear a fastened (fully zipped and/or all clips fastened), U.S. Coast Guard approved, personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is in operation from boat check until weigh-in. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition shut-off device, which must be securely attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is in operation. The driver must be seated in the driver's seat any time the combustion engine is in operation. The driver must be seated in the driver's seat anytime the combustion engine is engaged in gear. Tournament days may be shortened or canceled due to unsafe weather or any conditions that would be endanger the safety of the competitors at the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek shelter in bad weather, at which time no fishing may occur.
10. **Permitted Fishing Methods:** Only artificial lures may be used with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Only one fishing rod per angler may be used at any one time. Additional rods may be in the boat and ready for use; however, each cast and retrieve must be completed before another cast is attempted or rod is used. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. Switching or sharing fish with other teams or individuals is a violation of these rules and will result in immediate disqualification. All Bass must be caught alive, in a conventional, sporting manner. When sight fishing for Bass, all fish must be hooked inside the mouth to be counted as a legal fish (this will be a polygraph question). All angling must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a Contestant leave the boat to land a fish, or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters.
11. **Sportsmanship and Conduct:** All contestants are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of a competitor, which reflects unfavorable upon the ABTT's effort to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy, shall be reason for disqualification. Other examples of conduct not complying with these standards include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a) Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any mind-altering substance during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure;
 - b) Any previous conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation for a felony, a crime involving moral turpitude, or a crime related to, arising out of, or involving any fishing tournament or event, except with full, prior written disclosure to the Tournament Director under oath and by

affidavit of all facts and circumstances surrounding such conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation at least ten (10) days before the ABTT event being entered, and thereafter subject to the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion that such conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation does not result in the Contestant's honesty, integrity, character, or qualifications to enter the event being unreasonably questionable.

- c) Actions or words which reflect unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, and fair competition;
- d) Disqualification from ABTT or other fishing organizations that resulted from rule violations that result in a Contestant's honesty, integrity, character, and qualifications for entry into an ABTT event being questionable in the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion

Upon review of the circumstances by ABTT and the Tournament Director, the Tournament Director shall have the right to refuse any application, or to deny a confirmed application, by returning the entry fee of a previously accepted application or disqualifying a Contestant. Arkansas Bass Team Trail reserves the right to place an official observer in a Contestant's boat at any time during competition hours.

12. **Code of Conduct:** Anglers participating in any KAF event shall observe this code of conduct and the applicable rules for the specific event in which they are participating. Anglers and family members of 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 ABTT, its members, officers or representatives, tournaments, or sponsors.

Following are examples of unacceptable behavior by competitors or family members of competitors in ABTT events that will be cause for penalties as outlined in this document.

- a. Heated public disagreements with ABTT officials, other competitors and fans and volunteers during an event.
- b. Public attacks through media, including social media, upon the integrity of ABTT rules or officials.
- c. Public comments that an angler or family member knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of ABTT, ABTT officials, or its sponsors.
- d. 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.
- e. Publicly questioning or criticizing a tournament official or official decision, ruling or a penalty except through the proper channels.
- f. Abuse (physical, verbal, threatening, or slanderous) of tournament officials, volunteers, fellow competitors, or others connected with an ABTT event.
- g. Offensive or slanderous comments with racial, cultural, or sexual overtones regarding event officials, event personnel or fellow anglers.
- h. Intentionally interfering with a fellow 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 of an application for participation in an ABTT tournament.

13. **Assistance:** During the official practice period and extending through the hours of competition, no contestant may follow a non-competitor's boat or participate in the placing of markers by non-competitors, or participate in the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. The use of mobile communication devices such as cellular telephones, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, pagers, or any other electronic device to obtain and use fishing information from anyone during tournament hours is strictly prohibited. In the event of an emergency situation, competitors should call 911 first and then notify the Tournament Direction at (501) 844-5543.
14. **Boat and Horsepower Regulation:** Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated livewell space to maintain alive a limit catch of Bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition may not exceed the horsepower limitations as set by the U.S. Coast Guard in such vessel. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating plate to conceal such limitations will be cause for disqualification from the tournament. No Contestant may have a platform, raised deck, or ladder which is higher than the gunnel of the boat. Standing on the fishing seats or outboard motor will not be allowed in ABTT events. No air or jet drive boats will be permitted during official practice or competition days.(Exception: RUMBLE ON THE RIVER) Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks. Optional remote engine fuel tanks must be factory or factory authorized dealer installed and be strapped or otherwise secured. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle.
15. **Permitted Fishing Locations:** Contestants may fish anywhere on tournament waters accessible by boat, except areas designated as "off limited", "no boats", "keep out", "restricted", or "no fishing" (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a competitor's boat which was first anchored. An anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a weight or by a Power Pole or similar shallow water anchor with the trolling motor in the up position. The act of moving Bass from one area of the lake to another confined area of the same lake at any time, whether or not during official practice days or competition days, is not permitted.
16. **Off-Limits Areas:** Such areas established by federal, state, and local laws and areas announced at registration for each ABTT event. Contestants may not fish inside the established "off-limits" areas. Violation of the rule will result in immediate disqualification.
17. **Trailer:** In the event of severe weather or location limitations, alternate take-off and check-in instructions will be given at the registration site, at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director. A.) In our **Big Bass Event ONLY** our procedure will be to have a set time for the first cast. Contestants will be allowed to launch at various ramps on the lake, but must return to Weigh-in only by water. B.) In our regular **Team Tournaments:** All boats must leave the official check point by boat in the order designated at registration.

Contestants may launch their boat at a ramp other than the designated take-off location, but all Contestants must come through the official check-in by boat. Contestants' boats must remain the tournament waters during the event. In the event of a mechanical breakdown, there are two permitted methods of returning to the check-in. (1) by remaining in boat and being towed by water, or (2) by entering the boat of another competitor. The Contestants must return to the official check-in location by the methods set forth above by their assigned check-in time to avoid late penalty. 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. Any Contestant returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the Tournament Director of his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of Contestants to locate the Tournament Director to request a restart.

18. **Official Checkpoints:** There will be only one official checkpoint for boat inspection in the morning and one official check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check-out in the morning or failure to officially check-in at the check-in point will result in disqualification from such event. It is the sole responsibility of each Contestant to arrive at the designated check-in location on time. Regardless of what you are told or understand, it is the angler's responsibility to verify their provided flight card time. All fishing must cease upon check-in, or upon such other time as may be designated by the Tournament Director.
19. **Scoring:** Will be determined by the official weight of each angler's catch during the tournament. Only Largemouth, Spotted, Red Eye, or Smallmouth Bass (collectively, "Bass") are accepted species. The limit will be five Bass per team. Any Contestant who possesses more than the tournament limit, unless actively culling, will have their catch for that day disqualified. Culling must be done immediately. The minimum official length limit for all species for ABTT events will be 12" unless the lake limit is more than 12", in which case, the lake limit will prevail. Bass presented for weigh-in, which fail to measure the prescribed length limit, will result in loss of that particular fish and a one-pound penalty to the weight of the remaining fish. Each Contestant's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag and verified by the signature of at least one team member. Bass will be measured with mouth closed, tail compressed, and swiped to achieve overall greatest length. A measuring board will be provided at check-in and will serve as the official measuring standard for all ABTT events. It is the contestant's responsibility to ensure all fish presented for weigh-in are of legal length according solely to the ABTT official measuring board.

B. Big Bass 2023:

19-1 All Bass Weighed in become property of the event and will be Released alive.

19-2 No fish can be trailered to the weigh-in.

19-3 No contestant may weigh more than 1 fish per official Bi-hourly weigh in.

19-4 Bass may only be weighed in by the Participant who actually caught the fish.

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20. **Live Fish:** Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated livewell. The use of chemical livewell additives which promote the healthy return

of bass to their natural habitat are recommended. A half pound (0.5) penalty will be deducted for each dead Bass presented for weigh-in. Culling of dead bass is prohibited. If the Big Bass is weighed in deceased (.50 pound) penalty will be assessed to the Big Bass weight. If for any reason a team decides to weigh in early, the entire catch will be weighed, and fishing will cease.

20-1 Big Bass: No Dead fish will be weighed.

21. Late Penalty:

TEAM EVENTS: Contestants who are not at the official check-in point at the appointed time will be assessed a ONE (1) pound per minute penalty from their total weight including any weight to be counted toward a big Bass award. Any Contestant more than 15 minutes late will forfeit that day's catch.

BIG BASS EVENT: Participants must be in line at the bump tanks and declared to the event personnel before the end of the respective weigh period for their fish to be tallied and counted in the results of the event. You may leave the weigh-in tanks and return to your boat if you decide not to weigh in a respective weigh period. Once the fish has been bumped by our tournament staff at the bump tanks, that fish will be officially entered in that weigh-in period. And may not be weighed later.

22. Closing of the Scales: Scales will close 30 minutes after the last flight is due in. Due to certain weigh-in locations this time may be lengthened or shortened at the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion. Any change to the above stated official scale closing time will be announced during registration, during boat check-out, or during weigh-in. It is the angler's responsibility to verify the official scale closing time and to be in the weigh-in line by such time.

22-1 Big Bass Events: Scales close every two hours on the hour, if you are not in line and declared for that hour, you will be moved to the next hour.

23. Ties: In the event of a tie for first place, the Tournament Director shall designate, depending on time and safety conditions, a fish-off period to be held within 24 hours of the closing of the scales. If an angler/team declines to compete in the fish off, the other team involved will be awarded first place. Should a tie still exist following a fish-off period, the tie will be broken by a coin toss. All other ties for cash prizes will be split equally among the teams involved.

23-1 Big Bass Events: Ties will be broken by the Contestant who weighed in first.

24. Polygraph: Polygraph exams will be administered on-site at each event. The first-place team and a team randomly selected will automatically be tested. Each contestant who fishes an ABTT event also agrees to submit to a polygraph examination should it be deemed necessary at a time and location determined by the Tournament Director following the competition. Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification.

25. Protest and Reporting Procedure: All protests must be submitted in writing along with a \$100 cash deposit within fifteen (15) minutes of the last flight check-in to the tournament

director or designated tournament official. The protestor also agrees that if there is a question with regards to verifying the protest charge, he or she may be subject to a polygraph exam and agree to testify in a court of law if necessary. If the Tournament Director, or polygraph, upholds the protest, the cash deposit shall be returned to the contestant submitting the protest.

26. Media Coverage: Contestants are required to comply with all requests (included but not limited to: video, still camera, access to boat and access to fishing area) made by ABTT film crew for the purpose of gathering media coverage throughout ABTT events. Failure to coordinate with and accommodate the ABTT film will be considered grounds for disqualification.