**Official 2023 WSBF TBF Qualifier Event Rules**

**Rule Changes**: The following rules of this tournament will remain unchanged. Interpretation of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director may impose sanctions as he deems appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification.

**Participants & Eligibility**: All entrees *must* be done in boater non-boater pairs***.* Only anglers who are members of a Washington State Bass Federation affiliated chapter and TBF/MLF National Federation rosters for 2023 are eligible for the qualifier. All State, National and MLF dues must be current.** The Official Entry Form must be properly completed and signed no later than March 31st 3PM Pacific standard time. Application for entry can be found at WWW.Wabass.org

**Entry Fees**: ***Entry*** fees are $200 per angler which covers the entry into the TBF qualifier event and Big Bass Open tournament. ***All boaters must provide proof of valid and current insurance with a minimum of $300,000 liability***. This insurance must be in effect at the time of the event.

**Big Fish Open**: All TBF qualifier entries are automatically entered into the Big Bass Open. One (1) $10,000\* grand prize will be awarded to the person weighing in the biggest eligible fish caught during this qualifying event. An eligible fish is defined as any living largemouth or smallmouth bass caught in competition waters and must remain alive as determined by tournament director at time of weigh in.

**Off Limits Period**: There will be a practice period one day prior to the first day of the tournament (Friday March 31, 2023 safe light to 3pm). The tournament waters will be **OFF-LIMITS** to all competitors Monday through Thursdayprior to the official Friday practice day. During the official practice, and during the tournament, a competitor may not have the assistance or advice of anyone for the purposes of locating or catching bass, nor enter the tournament waters with a professional guide, state or federal wildlife agency employee, or any other person deemed an “expert” on these tournament waters by the Tournament Director. Each competitor agrees to report to the Tournament Director any violation or infraction of these Tournament Rules. The failure to report violations or suggestions to violate these Rules, or false verification of weigh-in forms will be cause for disqualification.

**Registration**: Each competitor must check-in in person with official tournament staff between 4:00 am and 6:00am Saturday morning. All boaters are required to sign the WDFW AIS form and provide proof of insurance as stated above. All boaters will receive their boat number for blast off order at this time. A random draw at the boaters meeting will determine the starting boat number. Failure to check in will result in disqualification from the event.

**Draw & Drivers Meeting**: The draw for boat blast off order will be held at the Driver’s Meeting held immediately following the close of check-in. Flights may be assigned at the discretion of the tournament director due to safety concerns and number of entries.

**Penalties:**

* A 1 pound per minute late penalty will be imposed for each minute an angler is late to the official weigh-in site.
* A ½ pound will be deducted from any competitor for each Dead Fish brought to the scales.
* A dead fish is automatically disqualified to be weighed for the Big Bass prize.
* 1 pound will be deducted from any competitor for each fish that does not measure 12 inches brought to the scales.
* If more than 5 fish are brought to the scales the largest fish will be removed until the 5 fish limit is reached.

**Boat Check**: Boat checks will be done by drive-by inspection at blast off. Boat check will consist of open live-well check, kill switch attached, all life jackets on fully zipped up or buckled. Note: Current flares, horn, fire extinguisher and any other coast guard required equipment are required to be on board.

**Horsepower Regulations:** **MAXIMUM HORSEPOWER** FOR ALL OUTBOARD MOTORS USED IN OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND IN TOURNAMENT COMPETITION WILL **BE 250 HORSEPOWER**. WHERE REQUIRED, EACH BOAT MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH A U.S. COAST GUARD RATING PLATE, WHICH MUST BE ATTACHED TO THE BOAT BY THE MANUFACTURER. IN NO CASE MAY THE HORSEPOWER OF YOUR OUTBOARD EXCEED THE RATING SPECIFIED ON THE RATING PLATE OR THE HORSEPOWER LIMIT SET BY TBF. Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the official entry form, the boat and motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory-trained personal, if there is any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating. Normal maintenance to increase the performance of your engine is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor to INCREASE THE HORSEPOWER OVER THE FACTORY HORSEPOWER RATING IS FORBIDDEN, and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower rating numbers on the motor or ratings plate also would be cause for immediate disqualification from WSBF Sanctioned Events.

**BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE:** *A full discussion MUST be held between the two anglers prior to a morning departure as to the schedule of boat operations.* This schedule MUST permit each partner equal time to fish from the front of the boat and to operate the trolling motor, so as to afford each partner the opportunity to fish his selected waters an equal number of hours. Distance traveled to fishing locations must be considered in order not to deprive either partner fishing time while traveling to and from fishing waters. If a contestant waives the above rights, he shall retain the right to select the fishing waters for one-half the tournament day. Any contestant who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap his partner shall be subject to disqualification.

**Boat Control:** Each boater will have full control of the boat for the duration of the tournament. Control is defined as operating main engine and running of electric motor from bow of boat, if so equipped. Waters to be fished must be agreed upon before the start of the tournament. Boaters must give equal time in a co-anglers preferred water as agreed upon prior to start of the tournament. The time of day in each preferred waters must be determined by the contestants before the start of the tournament.

**Tackle and Equipment:** Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of pork rinds, strips, etc. Only ONE (1) fishing rod and reel may be used at any one time. All other types prohibited. Other rigs as specified may be in the boat ready to use, however, only ONE is permitted in use at any given time. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional and sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day’s catch disqualified. When fishing for bass you can see, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and *must be verified* by your partner before being unhooked to be counted as a legal fish. No gaffs OR “GRIPPERS” may be used to land bass nor be permitted in boat at any time.

**Tournament Waters**: shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the WSBF Federation Department. When anchors are used there are no distance or area restrictions on other anglers. Competitors are expected to extend professional courtesy and use good judgment when entering an area that is being fished by another angler's). Any water within these boundaries posted Off-Limits or No Fishing by state or federal agencies will be **OFF-LIMITS.** Also, the live-bass release area established by the Tournament Director will be **OFF LIMITS** and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. Only that water open to **ALL** public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any waters closed to public fishing will be closed to this tournament’s contestants. All angling must be done from the boat.

**Safety**: Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by tournament competitors. During the official practice and the tournament, each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard-approved chest-type life preserver. This preserver must be worn anytime the combustion engine is operating. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the competitor reaches his fishing location and the combustion engine is shut off. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification. Tournament officials have the right to delay or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather.

**Contestants Must Remain Together in The Boat:** Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Contestants must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, both competitors may be removed from their boat to: A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT. Partners must remain together at all times, in sight of each other and each other's catch under the conditions cited above, in order for their catch of that day to be counted. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for a restroom break is permitted, however ALL FISHING MUST CEASE, until partners are back together. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions (to use a phone to report an emergency or breakdown) both competitors must cease fishing at this point, and their catch must be verified by a Tournament Official in order to be counted in the tournament. If after the emergency situation is resolved by Tournament Officials and enough time is left to resume fishing, a RESTART will be allowed and the competitors will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations. Trailering of boats during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of the Tournament Director.

**Sportsmanship**: Competitors in WSBF tournaments are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the official practice or during the tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future WSBF tournaments. 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 unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants, prescription or otherwise, shall be allowed in the boats during the official practice or competition days or when in the weigh-in area. Chemical-substance use and or drunkenness shall be grounds for disqualification. EACH COMPETITOR AGREES TO SUBMIT, BY HIS SIGNATURE ON THIS DOCUMENT, TO A POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD HE BE ACCUSED OF ANY RULE VIOLATION. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the Tournament Director and his agents, and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Without limiting the foregoing, the Tournament Director shall have sole discretion to select the place at which such polygraph test shall be administered, the individual who administers such polygraph test, and the scope of the questions which may be asked during such test. The Participant shall be available, at his expense, at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such examination if deemed necessary.

**Disputes**: All disputes or to contest the results must be submitted in writing to the tournament director no later than 30 minutes following the closing of the scales.

***Ignorance is no excuse!***

***Read and Know These Rules!***

\*$10,000 prize is based on a 30-boat field. Prize money will be adjusted according to an 80% payout equivalent to number of participants. Continuous places paid out are based on participation, up to as many as twenty-two (22) $1000 prizes with a full 100-boat field.