



# **Michigan B.A.S.S. Nation Bassmaster Team Championship Series Tournament Rules**

2017 Season

**1. RULES:** Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left to the discretion of the Tournament Director / Tournament Committee. The final enforcement of these rules is at the discretion of the M.B.N. Board. All decisions shall be final in all matters. In the event of a rule violation, the M.B.N. Board may impose such sanctions as deemed appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes, entry fee and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments.

Note: The Tournament Committee shall include three people, consisting of the Bassmaster Team Championship Series Tournament Chairman, Co-Chairman and the Michigan BASS Nation President or designee), Board Member or member at large as deemed necessary. Tournament officials may be appointed as appropriate for tournaments and will be identified as such. A tournament official will act as an agent of the Tournament Committee with the power to enforce these rules short of imposing any sanctions which will be the responsibility of the Tournament Committee upon being informed of a rule violation.

Each competitor agrees to report to a Tournament Official 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. Reporting of a rule violation or protests must be made in writing to a Tournament Official within 15 minutes of the end of the day's weigh-in. EACH CONTESTANT AGREES TO SUBMIT, BY HIS/HER SIGNATURE ON THE ENTRY FORM, TO A POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD HE/SHE BE ACCUSED OF ANY RULE VIOLATION. This administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the polygraph operator, and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the Michigan BASS Nation Board of Directors. Without limiting the foregoing, the Board of Directors 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/her expense, at the location selected by the Board of Directors and shall cooperate in all respects with such examination. The cost (in advance) of the Polygraph Exam will be the responsibility of the contestant(s). The cost will be refunded if they pass the exam.

## **2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY: The MICHIGAN B.A.S.S. NATION – BASSMASTER TEAM**

**CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM SERIES** is open to Members of the Michigan B.A.S.S. Nation only. You must be a member of a M.B.N. Club or a M.B.N. Member at Large by May 1, of the same year as the Tournament Series. At least one of the Team members must be at least 18 years old. Only participants 16 years of age or older are eligible to advance to the National Level. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the potential contestant. Persons 16 years of age but not having reached the age of consent must also have a signed authorization slip from a parent or legal guardian. **During any competition at any Bassmaster Team Championship Series tournament, no contestant may operate a boat unless that contestant has documented proof of a minimum of \$300,000 boating liability insurance to a Tournament Official. The documented proof must show effective date and expiration date and must be available to any tournament official upon request.**

**Mailed entries must be properly completed, signed and submitted with the proper entry fee and received at the designated address, at least one week prior to the tournament date or they may be assessed a late fee.** The Tournament Committee reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to the deadline date, or extend the deadline date. Refund of the entry fee will be made only if proper notification is made to M.B.N. tournament committee prior to the tournament day. Refunds are made at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. Late entries will be charged a late fee of \$25.00 per Team at the ramp.

**3. LEGAL FISH:** Largemouth and Smallmouth bass minimum length of 14 inches in the longest straight line, with the mouth closed. A flat, straight rule will be used to determine the 14 inch length. All bass

must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day's catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth.

**4. SCORING:** The tournaments shall be Team Tournaments. Tournament standings, auxiliary awards, the final winners shall be determined by the weight of each team's catch during the tournament. The limit shall be five (5) of the above species and varieties per day per team. You may not cull within 50 yards of the launch area. In the event a team is found to have more than the above described limits at check in, the tournament official shall cull the largest bass first, down to the limit described. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure 14 inches shall accrue penalties at a rate of one pound for each bass as well as the loss of the short fish. The penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the team. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered will be weighed only at the discretion of tournament officials. After a team checks in at the official checkpoint they **MUST** present all fish in their possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Their catch must be certified by one of the team members.

**5. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:** Artificial lures only shall be used. Only one casting, spin casting, or spinning rod may be used at any one time. No trolling will be allowed, however, an electric motor may be used for slow maneuvering. (Trolling is considered to be "dragging" or moving any lure with either the trolling motor or combustion motor). The maximum length for any rod will be 10 feet, butt to tip. During the tournament a contestant may not use a CB radio, a VHF radio, cellular phone, or any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish. Contestants may listen to the marine band weather information. **No underwater cameras, viewing devices, cones or homemade devices may be used to locate fish during the tournament.** 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. Traditional twin arm spinnerbaits or buzz baits are allowed. Trailer hooks and plastic trailers 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 spinnerbaits or buzz baits, no more than two wires, with a maximum length of 6 inches, may extend off the main arm or body of the lure. The "head and hook" portion of the lure must trail behind the blade or blades.

**6. OFFICIAL CHECK-IN AND FISHING LOCATIONS:** Official check-in is at least 15 minutes prior to start of pre-tournament meeting, for at least one of the team members. If neither of the team members is present, the team will be penalized three pounds. Tournament blast-off and weigh-in times will be announced at the pre-tournament meeting. All contestants must start from the designated start area. No competitor's boat may not block a narrow waterway. . Fishing is not permitted within 50 feet of operational marina gasoline pumps, or within any waters posted off limits by state or federal agencies. Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Contestants must leave and return to the official checkpoint by boat. Both contestants must remain in the boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such emergency, contestants may be removed from their boat to a boat operated by other contestants or a rescue boat. If a contestant must violate any of the above conditions to contact a tournament official by phone or other means or to report an emergency or breakdown, both contestants must cease fishing at this point and their catch must be in possession of at least one of the team members at all times in order to be counted in the tournament. If the emergency situation is resolved by tournament officials and enough time is left for the contestants to resume fishing, a restart will be allowed and the contestants will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations. Trailering of boats during the tournament is prohibited, except at the direction of tournament officials. **When in doubt about any rule or its interpretation, call the Tournament Director before you do anything that might result in disqualification of your team.**

**7. SAFETY:** Safe boating must be observed at all times by all tournament competitors. Each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved personal floatation device. This life preserver must be properly worn any time combustion engine is running. Violation of the rule shall be grounds for immediate disqualification. All boats must be equipped a **WORKING KILL SWITCH**, which must be attached to the driver when the combustion engine is running. Any time the combustion engine operating and in gear there must be a driver at the driver's seat in full control of the boat. The Tournament Committee has 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 contestants. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. **A minimum of 4 hours of fishing may be considered an official day if the start was delayed due to bad weather.** Use prefabricated ladders or other elevated platforms are not allowed. Only factory stock equipment is allowed. **Anglers may never stand on any other sections (i.e. seats/consols) or motors for the purpose of locating fish during any tournament hours.**

**8. BOAT AND MOTOR:** Fishing boats may be used that are at least 16 (sixteen) feet in length (larger waters may require minimum 18 ft boat). No barges or similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. Every boat must have all State and Coast Guard required equipment. In addition, it must have live well space to adequately maintain a limit of fish alive. Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in a Michigan BASS Nation tournament shall not exceed the horsepower limitation set by the B.I.A./U.S. Coast Guard horsepower rating plate attached by the manufacturer. Each competitor agrees that the boat and motor used in the tournament may be inspected by factory trained personnel and/or tournament officials if there is any reason to suspect that 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 engine to increase the horsepower over the factory horsepower rating is forbidden. Falsifying information on entry form, or altering the horsepower rating numbers on the motor or boat would be grounds for immediate disqualification from M.B.N. tournaments.

**9. BOAT IDENTIFICATION:** Each boat must be given an inspection check by a tournament official prior to the start of each tournament. A numbered device will be given to each boat and it will remain in the boat until turned in at each days weigh-in.

**10. COMPETITORS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT:** During the competition days, competitors must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing 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 keeping the majority of weight in the boat anglers are allowed for boat protection to push or shove off objects while landing a fish to be counted as legal. 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 days. Competitors must leave from and return to official checkpoints by boat. Both anglers must remain in the boat at all times, except in case of dire emergency, or with permission from the Tournament Director. Exceptions spelled out in rules 5, 15, and 18. In such an emergency, or with permission of the Tournament Director, competitors may be removed from their boat, either to a boat operated by other competitors, or a rescue boat designated by the Tournament Director. 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 scored in the tournament. In the event of a needed restroom break or refueling situation at a marina gas pump, contestants are allowed to leave the boat, at which time all fishing must cease until partners are back together in the boat. If a competitor violates any of the above conditions (to contact a tournament official by phone or other means, or 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 for the competitors to resume fishing, a restart will be allowed, the competitors will continue, and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations as determined by the Tournament Director or his/her designee. Towing boats on trailers during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of tournament officials.

**11. SPORTSMANSHIP:** Competitors in M.B.N. 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 tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and possibly all future M.B.N. 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 the M.B.N.'s effort to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, or other crimes involving moral turpitude or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon the M.B.N.'s efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification or suspension from, or any other disciplinary action regarding any tournament or fishing organization, shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification. Our Michigan BASS Nation Code of Conduct will be enforced during these tournaments.

**12. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:** There shall be only one official point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon. It will be announced at the pre-tournament meeting.

**13. DON'T KILL YOUR CATCH:** Each team is expected to keep their bass alive by use of a properly aerated live well. All fish must be transported to the scales in designated fish weigh-in bags.

**14. DEAD FISH:** Each competitor is expected to keep their bass alive by use of a proper live well. All fish must be transported to the scales in designated fish weigh-in bags. It is the full intention of this organization to ensure that all bass are released alive and with their best chance of survivability. Every effort will be made by all competitors and Tournament Officials to ensure the live release of all fish caught during the tournament. Only designated Tournament Officials will be allowed to handle fish once the fish are turned over for the weigh-in. The final decision on the "Live" status of the fish is at the discretion of the designated Tournament Official. For each legal bass weighed in dead, the competitor shall be penalized 4 (four) ounces of weight (or 0.25 pounds depending on the scales used). The Official weight for a Big Fish that is dead will be the weight after the penalty has been assessed (i.e. a 4 pound 12 ounce big fish would be a 4 pound 8 ounce fish if it is dead at weigh in).

**15. TIES:** If a tie of the total weight of more than one team occurs, the tie breaker will be the weight of the team's big fish for the day for the competitors involved. The Second tie breaker will be a coin toss. In the event of a final tie for any of the money winners, the monies shall be added and split evenly. Duplicate trophies, where applicable, will also be awarded. Example – first place tie: money from first and second place will be added and equally divided. Duplicate first place trophies will be awarded. The next award will be third place. Ties occur when both total weight and big bass weights are the same. In the case of a tie for first place in the Classic – Bassmaster Team Championship Series Tournament there will be a sudden death fish-off between the tied teams under the direction of the Tournament Officials. Special rules for the sudden death fish-off will be established by the Tournament Officials. Ties in the final Anglers of the Year Team standings will be broken first by the cumulative weight of the team for the series tournaments fished, then by the heaviest sack out of those same tournaments, then by a coin toss.

**16. BASSMASTER TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES TEAMS:** Participants may be allowed to fish alone at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Each Team will be allowed only ONE substitution during the Tournament Series. Fishing alone and a substitution count as the same and only one is allowed. No Substitutes will be allowed at the MBTC Championship Tournament. Only Teams members who are in MBN Clubs are allowed to fish the Championship Tournament. Only members who are at least 16 years old may advance on to the National Level.

**17. POST-TOURNAMENT CHECK-IN:** Each team MUST check in after the tournaments completion, even if no fish were caught. Failure to check in will result in a search for your team on the tournament waters. **A one pound penalty will be assessed for each minute late up to 15 minutes. After 15 minutes total catch is disqualified.**

**18. CHEATING:** Anyone accused of cheating will be brought before the Board of Directors of the Michigan BASS Nation within thirty (30) days for a hearing and, if found guilty, may be suspended from M.B.N. for life and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. This decision will be reported to other tournament and fishing organizations.

**19. TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS:** None of the above rules shall prohibit a properly designated tournament official from approaching or boarding any contestant's boat at any time.

**20. PRACTICE/COMPETITION:** All practice fishing shall cease at 6:00 p.m. the evening prior to the tournament day. No tournament contestant shall be allowed on the tournament waters for the purpose of locating fish once competition has begun, outside of competition, or official practice hours. However, this rule shall not be interpreted to prevent contestants from proceeding by water to and from launch or docking facilities during the mornings prior to the start of competition or at the conclusion of each day's competition, or from entering tournament waters for reasons approved by the Tournament Committee such as releasing bass or for publicity photos, etc. **If an off-limits period is announced for a period prior to any tournament, during the official practice, and during the tournament, a competitor may not have the assistance or advice of anyone for the purpose of locating or catching bass, nor enter the tournament waters with anyone who has been on the tournament waters during the off-limits period, a professional guide, state or federal wildlife/fisheries agency employee or any other person deemed an "expert" on the tournament waters by the Tournament Committee, unless he is a contestant in the tournament. In no case should a contestant have bass in possession in the boat during the tournament any time other than competition hours unless approved by the Tournament Committee for reasons such as those already stated.**

**21. ENTRY FEES AND LATE ENTRIES:** Every team who wishes to compete for the Mi BASS AOY and have a chance to advance to fish the BTC must pay the required BTC Team Fee prior to the tournament series. The Michigan BASS Nation entry fee for each BTC Series tournament day will be \$150 per Team, and \$100 entry fee for the Championship tournament, when they are received prior to the tournament date. Late entries will be accepted up until 15 minutes prior to the start of the pre-tournament meeting. There will be a late fee of \$25.00 fee per Team, imposed on all late BTC Series entries. Late entries must be filed with the Tournament Director. It is the responsibility of the anglers to ensure the entry forms are received by M.B.N.

**Inquiries should be directed to: Larry Gargus, (810) 664-5895, lgargus@michiganbass.net**

Entry Forms should be mailed to: **Michigan Bass Nation, Larry Gargus, 3695 Hunt Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446**

**22. BASSMASTER TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT:** Only fully qualifying club members are eligible to fish for a Championship title at the last tournament of the year. To qualify to fish for the title, teams must pay for the entire 4 tournament series. Only the teams that both members are members of Michigan BASS Nation clubs are eligible to fish for the Championship title. This championship tournament will be held as a separate tournament.