



## 2023-2024 Deep East Texas High School Fishing Series Rules, Guidelines, and Expectations

**V013124 supersedes any previous Rules and Regulations**

The Deep East Texas BASS High School Fishing Series expects strict adherence to the following rules by all contestants. Safety is our first priority. We expect all participants and boat captains to know and apply all boating safety rules and best practices. Courtesy on the water is another priority for our fishing series. It is important that our student anglers learn and display courtesy to everyone encountered. Without judgment or blame it is our practice to disqualify all participants in any display of poor sportsmanship or altercation while fishing a DETX tournament. Anyone reporting inappropriate, unsafe, illegal or breaking of DETX rules will not be disqualified. Un-sportsman like behavior by student anglers, parents and coaches or the use of abusive language towards officials, volunteers or other participants at anytime in person, in writing or posted on social media will not be tolerated and may cause disqualification from the tournament. After the first offense, the team may be subject to disqualification from the DETX tournament series. **In the event of an emergency, please call 911 first, and then notify the DETX Event Director Nellie Miller at 409-670-3828 and DETX at Jackson Hill 936-872-9266 any time prior to the tournament.**

**1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT** • These rules will remain during the 2023/2024 school year but may be updated to address needed changes or clarifications at any time. The version number will be the 6-digit numerical date when the new version took effect and will supersede any previous version. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant and coach agree to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in weight loss (late penalty, dead-fish penalty and short-fish disqualification), the loss of weight up to a particular time in the tournament day, the loss of weight for the entire day, disqualification from the entire tournament or, in an extreme circumstance, ineligibility to participate in future Deep East Texas High School Fishing tournaments. Protests are to be made in writing within 30 minutes of the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day. The term boat coach or captain has the same meaning in this document.

**2. PARTICIPATION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRIZE PAYOUT**• Participation for the DETX series is open to, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8<sup>th</sup> grade (ages 10 through 14) in the Junior Division and 9<sup>th</sup>, 10th, 11th and 12th grade in the high school division providing that the 12<sup>th</sup> grade student does not turn 19 before September 1<sup>st</sup> of their senior year. **The DETX is a high school team series and must have two student anglers per team unless agreed to by the tournament Director.** If both team members are in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and age eligible they can choose to fish in the HS Division at the time they become B.A.S.S. members they must sign up as high school. All student anglers must be a Deep East member and all Clubs and Anglers must be registered with B.A.S.S., B.A.S.S. Nation, and Texas B.A.S.S. Nation for all tournaments. The entry fee for

each qualifier is \$60 a team with no more than two student anglers per team. Contestants must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the liability form and a valid fishing license for the waters they fish. Contestants must be adequately insured (Minimum \$300,000.00 liability) to participate in tournament fishing events and may also have additional coverage through B.A.S.S. Contestants are required to follow all applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws. Any violation of such regulations and laws may result in disqualification from the tournament.

**Each high school team will consist of one or two eligible contestants and one boat captain, maximum of 3 people per boat,** unless there is prior approval from the tournament director. Tournament officials reserve the right to reject any application to fish for any reason whatsoever. We will honor any clubs pass to play decisions for their student anglers, however we do not inspect nor will we ask individual anglers to produce proof of grades for our DETX series. All student anglers who advance to state, regional, or national events will be required to provide proof of grades based upon their individual guidelines. The tournament director will make all final decisions about eligibility or special circumstances as they arise. DETX reserves the right to refuse entry of any team, angler, or captain without explanation.

**Student anglers can only fish with one DETX affiliated team per year. If the school you attend currently has a team that competes within the DETX, you must fish for that team. If the student angler is homeschooled they MUST join the nearest high school or community team that will allow them to participate.**

**3. PRIZE PAYOUTS** • We will have prizes and trophies/medals for participants and boat captains during the tournament season. Overall tournament payout will be 80% of entry fees, and 20% will go toward tournament expenses, and Outdoor Freedom Network programs. Tournament winnings will be paid with checks issued to the registered clubs only. **NO CHECKS WILL BE WRITTEN TO AN INDIVIDUAL.**

**Breakdown:**

- **80% To winnings** = 50% for qualifying tournaments, 20% to Championship Award Fund, 5% to purchased prizes, and 5% to Big Bass
- **20% To OFN** for tournament expenses, insurance, and Outdoor Freedom Network programs

Most prizes will be distributed by random draw of the participants. Prizes may also be awarded to tournament winners or skills competition winners. Payouts for all tournaments will be based on one out of every seven boats.

**4. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION** • The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services, or a paid coach, is not permitted by contestants or coaches within 30 days of any tournament. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification. There may be random polygraphs given to address this.

**5. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE AND COMPETITION** • There is no practice period or off-limits period. You may be on tournament waters anytime until dark the day before the tournament. Once competition is underway, contestants and coaches may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except contestants and coaches confirmed in the tournament and through publicly available sources (quasi-public websites set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are NOT publicly available sources). On competition day, teams may not follow a non-contestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers by non-contestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

**6. REGISTRATION** • Registration deadline will be the Friday at 3:00, 1 day prior to the tournament, when all online registration will close. All registrations will be recorded and boat numbers determined by random selection to be announced as teams check in the morning of the tournament. **REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE FRIDAY 3PM DEADLINE UNTIL THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH TIME WITH A \$25 PENALTY. Late Registration will also result in being the last boat released.**

**7. SAFETY** • Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant and coach are required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard and state approved personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is in operation from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is in operation. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a

manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location when the combustion engine is in operation. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation is not permitted. Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is in operation. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants and coaches. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

At the discretion of the tournament director, the tournament may allow trailering or the tournament days may be shortened, postponed, or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Boat captains are encouraged to teach the student anglers how to safely and efficiently operate from the front of the boat using the trolling motor.

**8. SPORTSMANSHIP** • All contestants and coaches are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, and conservation. They are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, our sponsors, the school being represented, the sport of fishing, and a credit to the Deep East TX High School Fishing Series in efforts to promote the sport. Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violation of or failure to comply with any of the rules for the High School Fishing season.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any kind of mind-altering substance during registration, the pre-tournament meeting or during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- Conviction of a felony within the past 36 months.
- Suspension/disqualification, probation or ban from any tournament or fishing organization.

Any other words, conduct, or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set forth in the first sentence of paragraph 7.

In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, tournament officials have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete, or to disqualify a contestant.

**9. BOAT OPERATION** • Captains must supply and drive boats for their teams. To qualify as a boat captain, the person accompanying a team must be out of high school and have taken and passed a boaters safety course if the captain was born after September 1, 1993. Captains cannot have guided for bass on the tournament waters 30 days from the tournament date unless it has been preapproved by the director.

The contestants in HS Division may operate the trolling motor at the discretion of the boat captain. For safety reasons the boat captain may operate the trolling motor until they feel confident in the student angler's ability, however the boat captain is responsible for teaching each of the student anglers to operate the front of the boat. Advanced B.A.S.S. tournaments require operation by student anglers during their tournament at all times. Captains may provide assistance, including information about locating and catching fish, but are NOT permitted to fish. The use of mobile communication devices may only be used by the boat captains, but not for the purposes of sharing fishing information during the tournament. Boat captains must be in the boat with the students at all times. If a boat captain needs to use the bathroom, take a break for health reasons, or needs to be absent from the boat for any reason whatsoever, all fishing by the student anglers must cease. Student anglers are prohibited from fishing and/or running the trolling motor while the boat captain is not in the boat. Violation of this rule will result in immediate disqualification of the team.

Students may only assist in unloading and loading of the boat however the student must be 13 years or older and completed their boater education course.

**10. BOAT AND HORSEPOWER REGULATION** • All boats should be covered by adequate competitive fishing tournament liability insurance (Minimum \$300,000.00). All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 16 feet in length unless approved by the tournament director. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated live well space to maintain alive a limit catch of bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards is not to exceed the horsepower capacity set forth on the "Maximum Capacities" placard affixed to the boat by the manufacturer. Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks or auxiliary fuel tanks that are securely strapped or otherwise fastened to the boat. 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.

**11. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS** • Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the lure in the water. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner the day of the tournament, on tournament waters. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Only ONE fishing rod per contestant may be used at a time. Students must initiate and complete every cast in order for a catch to be considered legal. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. All bass caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth and immediately shown to the boat captain for verification.

**12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS AND BOUNDARIES** • Teams may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries that is available to the public and accessible by boat, except are as designated as "off-limits," "no boats," "keep out," "restricted," "no trespassing," "no fishing," or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access by tournament officials, local, state or federal officials. Teams may not fish **within 100 feet of another angler's boat (without their permission) or to cast in their direction inside this 100 ft. zone. Without judgment or blame, it is our practice to disqualify all participants in any display of poor sportsmanship or altercation while fishing a DETX tournament. Anyone reporting any activity that is inappropriate, unsafe, illegal, or breaking of DETX rules will not be disqualified for doing so.** All fishing must be conducted from the boat that is registered to their captain unless otherwise authorized by the tournament director. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament. Teams must leave and return to the check-in point by the same boat. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No tournament boat may be loaded on a trailer before the weigh-in except with the permission of the tournament director. In the event of equipment failure or emergency, there are three permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both contestants remaining in their boat and being towed by water, (2) by one contestant entering the boat of another team, or (3) both contestants entering a rescue boat so designated by the tournament director. Under these three conditions the team's catch may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules). Teams that 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 team returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the tournament director or his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of teams to locate the tournament director to request a restart. Teams must remain together at all times and within sight of their coach until check-in. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for restroom breaks is permitted. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

**13. CHECKPOINTS** • Each contestant is required to check-in at Jackson Hill Marina at the designated time, wristbands will be distributed at this time and must be physically worn by contestants throughout the tournament, wristbands must be turned in at the end of the tournament at the official check point. **For Safety purposes all teams must check-in, even if they have zero fish to weigh-in. Teams that do not check-in will receive a score zero for that particular tournament and may not be permitted to fish the next tournament.** Check can be by text or talk to the tournament Coordinator or Director We must ensure all teams are off the water. All fishing ceases at check in.

**14. LATE PENALTY** • Teams that are not at the designated afternoon checkpoint by the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight. Teams more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight. There will be a designated official with the official time at check-in, their time will be official.

**15. FISH CARE** • Every effort must be made to keep bass alive and healthy through the use of a properly aerated live well. Eight ounces (.50 lb) will be deducted from the total weight for each dead bass presented for weigh-in. According to state law, dead fish cannot be culled. Each team's catch must be presented in a good quality weigh-in bag supplied by each team. One team member must check in with the boat number wristband handed to them by the check in official. The team member will be given one of a limited number of mesh bags to control the number of fish we can safely have in line at a time. The team must keep their fish in the live well until a mesh bag becomes available. Once received the fish will be placed from the live well into the official tournament mesh bag, and then placed into the teams weigh bag filled with enough water to keep all fish submerged. When the fish are presented to the bump tank official they are reviewed for health and length. The mesh bag is placed into the oxygenated tanks as the angler waits in line to weigh in. The fish are brought on stage and immediately weighed and pictures taken. Mesh bag is placed in a salt dip tank on the stage that

helps to clean the fish of hand bacteria and restores their natural slime and should not be handled again. Fish are taken off stage where they are put into the team's weigh bag filled with enough water to submerge them and the mesh bag goes to the next waiting team.

**Releasing fish must be done with care. Fish must be released in the area at the back of the Jackson Hill boat slips. Anyone who is caught releasing fish from the shoreline or in a manner that is not in the best interest of the fish as determined by the tournament director will be penalized 0.5 lb for the tournament. FISH MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AFTER EXITING THE STAGE. FISH ARE SALT DIPPED ON STAGE AND MUST NOT BE HANDLED AGAIN FOR ANY REASON. THE WEIGH IN BAG SHOULD BE TURNED OVER NEAR THE WATERS SURFACE ALLOWING THE FISH TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT TOUCHING THEM. THIS GIVES THEM THE VERY BEST OPPORTUNITY TO SURVIVE THEIR ABDUCTION BY ALIENS AND TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.**

**16. CULLING** • Once the team has caught the 6<sup>th</sup> fish all fishing must cease until one fish has been culled. Teams can only have a maximum of 5 fish in the live wells at any time. All culling MUST occur on the water. It is against the law to cull a dead fish.

**17. SCORING** • Scoring is determined by the final weight of each team's catch during each tournament. Only largemouth and spotted bass are accepted at DETX tournaments. The tournament limit is five bass per team. Any team possessing more than 5 fish at weigh in will be disqualified immediately. The minimum length limit for all bass is 14 inches for all Deep East Texas tournaments. Any short fish which does not meet length regulations of 14 inches will not be weighed and the team will be penalized 2 pounds per short fish. Participants may use our courtesy bump station, however, once fish are presented to the "Bump Official" they are being presented as a team's intended creel for weigh-in. The tournament coordinator in charge has final say pertaining to the legal size of a fish. The official measuring board is the "Check-It Stik."

**Measurement Method – The method will be the same method that BASS Nations uses. There will be no pinching of the tail, only a swipe. If the fish does not make the limit the fish will be returned to the angler for release and will not be counted as part of the day's catch.**

**18. TIES** • A tie will be broken by a flip of the coin or split equally among participants if desired.

**19. LOGO DISPLAY AND TELEVISION COVERAGE** • Contestants and captains may wear their own shirts or jerseys during meetings, competition and weigh-ins. Tournament officials reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to prohibit any contestant or captain's shirt or jersey found to be offensive. All decisions are at the Deep East Texas High School Fishing Series director's sole discretion.

**20. ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS AND TOBACCO** • Contestants may not smoke, use illegal drugs or use tobacco products during tournament hours, including weigh-in at any event. Students caught in violation of these rules will be disqualified immediately. During all days of competition, any and all alcohol, illegal drug and tobacco related graphics or logos are prohibited to be worn or displayed.

**21. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST** • Each contestant and coach agree on the tournament entry form, to a polygraph or voice stress analysis examination and to abide by its conclusion. These can be given randomly without notice. Failure to pass an examination for any reason will result in disqualification from the tournament. Truth verification tests will be used at the sole discretion of tournament officials, and the determination of the meaning of the results will be made solely by tournament officials. Any protest must be submitted in writing to the tournament director within 15 minutes of the close of the weigh-in. Anyone protesting the tournament results must be willing to sign a sworn statement regarding their protest and if a polygraph is required will pay a \$350 fee that will be refunded if the protest is upheld and forfeited if it is not.

**22. INSURANCE** • Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required on all boats used in High School Fishing tournaments. Minimum \$300,000.00 liability. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat. Random checks will be conducted. Failure to provide proof of insurance when requested by the tournament director may result in disqualification.

**23. CUMULATIVE SEASON POINTS** • DETX will be based on total points and weight from the team's best 5 tournaments. Points awarded 150 1<sup>st</sup> place and decreases by 1 point per place. The teams competing

and not weighing fish will be awarded 1 point less than last place with fish. (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> = 150, 2<sup>nd</sup> 149, 3<sup>rd</sup> 148 and so on).

**24. CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION CRITERIA** • To qualify for the DETX championship, a team will **count their best 5 performances (points plus weight) from the 7 qualifying tournaments** or win one of the 7 qualifying tournaments and fish a total of at least 5 tournaments. The top 25% of all qualified teams will be eligible for the championship (based on average tournament entries). A team member may fish without their teammate as long as the other is not fishing the event with someone else. This allows for the team as a whole to collect points for that tournament. Teams that split up for any reason will lose points accumulated. Boat captains can be changed as required by teams.

**ANGLERS OF THE YEAR WILL BE BASED ON THE BEST FIVE PERFORMANCES DURING THE SEASON PLUS THE FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS AND BE AWARDED AT THE DETX CHAMPIONSHIP**

**25. RIGHT OF REFUSAL** • The Deep East Texas High School Fishing Series reserves the right to refuse entry into our tournaments to anyone. **The tournament director has final say** in all matters concerning rules interpretation or any extenuating or unforeseen circumstances which may arise during any tournament hosted by the Deep East Texas High School Fishing Series. Any questions or requests that are not clearly covered by the rules will be reviewed by the DETX tournament team for clarification and changes.

**26. CAPTIONS** • The bold captions at the beginning of each paragraph are intended to facilitate convenience in referring to the various rules. The captions are not part of the substance of the paragraph and should not be used in construction of any paragraph or used in the overall interpretation of this set of rules.

**27. PHOTOGRAPHS AND PROMOTION** All DETX participants agree to the use of photographs, quotes and articles for publication and promotion of DETX and BASS taken during DETX events.