

St Joe Valley Bass Masters



*P.O. Box 1052
Mishawaka, Indiana 46546*

OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES

Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. Changes and interpretation of these rules shall be left exclusively up to the executive committee. The decision of the executive committee shall be final in all matters.

Horsepower Regulations: Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in tournament competition cannot exceed the horsepower limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard in their ruling of Nov. 1, 1972, 250 hp maximum. 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. 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 or altering the rating numbers on the motor also would be cause for disqualification.

Boat Insurance; All boats used in a club tournament or function, must have a minimum of \$300,000 liability insurance. The boat owner is required to have a certificate of insurance on file with the club Tournament Director. This document must have the boat description, coverage amount and the effective dates. A copy of the certificate of insurance along with boat registration must be in the boat at all times.

Boat and Motor: For safety of all contestants, all boats must be equipped with an ignition kill switch. This ignition kill device must be attached to the driver's body (P.F.D.) anytime the combustion engine is operating. A small electric motor may be used for slow maneuvering. Trolling (baits pulled behind a powered boat) as a method of fishing is prohibited. Boats must be 14 feet or more in length. It has been determined that boats with stick steering present greater than normal safety hazards and boat so equipped shall not be permitted to be used in the tournaments.

Basic Boat Equipment: Every boat must have required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. It must have a functional bilge pump. In addition, it must have properly aerated live well space, to adequately maintain a live limit of bass for both anglers

Safety: Safe boat operation must be observed at all times by tournament competitors. Each competitor is required to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device. The P.F.D. must be worn anytime the combustion engine is operating. The P.F.D. must be strapped, snapped or zipped securely and maintained in that condition until the competitor reaches the destination and the combustion engine is shut off. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification.

State and Local Laws: It is the responsibility of each tournament member to know and obey all regulations governing the tournament body of water. Any infraction of these resulting fines is the responsibility of the offending tournament member. As a practice the Tournament Director should announce official sunrise at each tournament to help members avoid running violations.

Sportsmanship: Competitors in St. Joe Valley Bass Masters (S.J.V.B.M.) tournaments are expected to follow highest standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be cause for disqualification. Drunkenness by any competitor during the fishing time of the tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification for this and all future S.J.V.B.M. tournaments. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs shall be allowed in the boats. 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 S.J.V.B. M.'s effort to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification.

Tackle and Equipment: Only artificial lures may be used. No “live bait” or “prepared bait” will be permitted, with the exception of pork strips, rinds, and etc. Only one rod (8 foot maximum) and reel may be used at a time by each angler. Other rods and reels may be in boat ready for use. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. Members will be permitted to use a landing net during S.J.V.B.M. tournaments.

Boat Operation and Expense: A discussion must be held between the two anglers prior to morning departure as to the schedule of boat operation. This schedule must permit each angler equal time to fish from the front of the boat and to operate the trolling motor, so as to afford each angler the opportunity to fish his/her selected waters and equal number of hours. Distance traveled to fishing locations must be considered in order not to deprive either angler 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 water for one-half the tournament day. Any contestant who, in the judgment of the officials, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap his partner, (if protested) shall be disqualified. In view of the large expense involved in operating and maintaining a tournament bass boat, the non-boater partner is expected pay the boater at least \$20 per day for gas and oil.

Distant Multi-day Tournament Expense: Travel expense for distant multi-day tournaments are at least divided equally between the boater and the non boater paired for the first day regardless of who the non boater travels with to the tournament. The Executive Board will calculate the amount of travel reimbursement, to be paid by the non-boater, based on distance and the price of gas prior to the tournament and announced at the club meeting before the tournament. If because of the draw, a boater is left without a non-boater to share expense club members may pitch in to help with travel expense. Expense sharing on practice days will be negotiated each day between boater and non-boater.

New Tournament Member: Any person making it known, to a club officer, that he wants to become a tournament member and has not yet meet the fishing requirements, as defined in the Bi-Laws, may count points toward total standing earned from only two club tournaments fished immediately preceding the acceptance vote of club members and dues payment.

Pairing of Contestants; If at all possible, two contestants are assigned to each boat. Fishing partners will be drawn at the club meetings. All members wishing to be a boater or non-boater will make it known to the Tournament Director before the drawing begins. The drawing will assign starting order and pairings until all non boaters are paired with boaters. If the number of non boaters is less than the number of boaters, blank tags will be added to the non-boater tags to equal the number of boaters to insure random pairings result. The unpaired boaters reserve the option to fish alone or pair up with remaining unpaired boaters as a non-boater. As the season progresses an effort will be made to avoid repeated pairings of the same persons. The members that are present at the meeting will have the right to use their boat, before members that are not present. Any changes in the pairings must be approved by the Tournament Director.

Pairings for away tournaments will be for all members and at most should result in only one boater without a non-boater (for safety on large bodies of water). Random drawing will be done for the pairings for second and third days at away tournaments, with the option of the members to draw again if they have already fished together.

It is the non-boaters responsibility to contact the boater at least 72 hours prior to the tournament day to make travel arrangements. Contestants will be boater or non-boater for the entire tournament day, except in the case of a break down or emergency.

Off Limits New for the 2011 season, there is a 24 hour off limits immediately prior to each of the single day local tournaments. Members are on their honor here as we will not have an off limits enforcement person.

Permitted Fishing Locations: Fishing on the tournament waters is permitted anywhere except; within 50 yards of another competitor's boat which was anchored first (trolling motor up, motor off, anchor over side). No such anchored boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within the 50 yard circle claimed by him, to the exclusion of any other competitor. All angling must be done from the boat. Competitors wishing to change fish habitat by placing any object in the tournament waters may do so if such action doesn't violate the state or federal laws or regulations. Contestants must not leave the boat to land fish. Boats must remain in tournament waters during competition. Contestants must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. A contestant must not allow any bass caught by him to be counted on the score of another contestant. In such a case, both contestants shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future S.J.V.B.M. tournaments of that season.

Both competitors must remain in boats at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, competitors may leave their boat to: a boat operated by other competitors; or to 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 to be scored. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions, you must contact Tournament Director if possible to report emergency or breakdown. An exception to this rule is for one of the persons requiring a restroom break. Both competitors must cease fishing. If after the emergency situation is resolved, and enough time remains, competitors can resume fishing.

Don't kill your catch: Each competitor is expected to keep their bass alive by use of a properly aerated live-well. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament and bass thus handled will be disqualified. Specially designed bags which increase survival rate will be furnished by tournament officials, and these bags must be used for weigh in.

Official Checkpoint: There shall be one official point for check-out in the morning, and check-in in the afternoon. At the time of checkout, all competitors and their boats shall be in full compliance with all rules. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves.

Weigh in: All S.J.V.B.M. tournament weigh-ins will be conducted by the club officers as follows;
Measuring of fish - President
Weighing of fish - Vice President / Tournament Director
Recording of weight - Secretary

In the event one of the above mentioned individuals are unable to attend the tournament, the treasurer will take their place. No officer will be permitted to measure or weigh their own fish and will be performed by another available tournament member.

In the event a tournament member must leave the tournament early, for any reason, he must contact the Tournament Director while on the water. At the discretion of the Tournament Director the member may have his catch weighed. If it is decided to weigh the catch the scale used must be used for all weightings' for that tournament.

Scoring: The total weight of each competitors catch during the tournament shall determine tournament standing and final winners as well as points toward total standings. Only largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass will be weighed. The limit shall be five of the above species, unless the prevailing state limit is less, or a special limit is established by tournament officials, not to exceed state limit. Only bass, as described above, shall be weighed that measure at least the legal length on a straight line with the mouth closed and the tail (optional) pinched together. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

Penalties: For each dead legal length bass presented to weigh in officials, the competitor shall be penalized 0.50 pound which is deducted from the total weight of his daily catch. Competitors who are not in the official check point area, as described in the rules, at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of the anglers catch that day, including any weight to be counted toward a "big bass award". Any competitor more that fifteen minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness, and in no case shall a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time". After proper check in, competitors will be allowed ample time to proceed to the weigh in site; however, all fishing must cease upon check in. The Tournament (Director, Committee) shall have sole authority for accessing penalties.

At no time shall a competitor have in their possession more than the limits described above. In the event a competitor has more than the above described limit in possession at weigh-in, tournament officials shall cull the largest fish first, down to the limit. Each competitor must present his/her catch to the weigh-in officials, and the weight of the angler's catch is verified by the angler's partner of that day.

Ties: The heaviest fish of competitor's daily catch will be used to break ties for any position. It is the responsibility of the angler to pick a big fish to be weighed for the tiebreaker.

Protests: All protests must be submitted in writing and presented to the Tournament Director no later than 5 minutes after the weigh-in ends. All protests shall be as definitive as possible and reasonably exact with respect to the circumstances of incident being cited. All protests must be signed and dated by the individual filing the protest.

Throw-outs: Each tournament member is allowed one throw-out per year. At the end of the regular season, the Tournament Director will throw out the lowest scoring tournament for each member. This does not include the classic. The

member only loses the points awarded for the tournament. The member still gets the show points and any trophies that have been won for the tournament. For the determination of **Angler of the Year** and **Co-Angler of the Year** the tournament standing is to be calculated without throw out.

Eligibility: To be eligible for the Classic, Top 8, and Angler of the Year and Co-Angler of the Year, the member must fish at least 4 regular tournaments and must also work at the club's 2 functions (smoker and the youth tournament). If the member cannot work, he/she must replace with another worker. New members are exempt from the smoker and youth tournament, if they were held before the member joined the club. You must also be a paid up member.

Awards: A plaque will be awarded to the top 3 places in all regular tournaments and the classic. The **Angler of the Year** title is awarded to the individual who earned the most tournament points for the year. A plaque and a \$25 certificate will be awarded to the person who catches the largest bass for the year. A new **Co-Angler of the Year** award will be awarded to the non-boater that earns the most points and fishes more than 50% of the tournaments as a non-boater.

Angler of the Year and **Co-Angler of the Year** of the prior year will receive a paid entry to the Federation Tournament of Champions and \$100 (if overnight) for expenses. If either **Angler of the Year** or **Co-Angler of the Year** cannot make the tournament, then the next two place person of the year prior will be eligible, and so on down the line.

The winner of the classic will receive a prize of \$50. A plaque will be awarded for the largest bass caught at the classic, unless it's the largest for the year. In order to receive your point monies, you must attend the classic.

The Top 8 will receive awards and be eligible to fish the Top 8 Federation Tournament. The Top 8 team will receive \$50.00 per man for expenses. Any monies won by the Top 8 team will be split equally between the Top 8 team. The club will pay for any ramp fees.

Members of the Top 8 that advance to the regional will receive \$100.00 per man for expenses. Members will keep all monies won.

None of the above rules shall prohibit a tournament official from approaching or boarding any competitors' boat at any time during the tournament day.

John Law, President

Revised: 1/14/2011