



2011 Minnesota Federation of Bass Anglers Open Series

2011 Official Tournament Rules of the Minnesota Federation of Bass Anglers (MFBA) Effective January 1, 2011

The following rules will remain unchanged for 2009. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules is exclusive to the Tournament Director. In the event of a rules violation, the Tournament Officials may impose such sanctions, as they deem appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decisions of the Tournament Director and Tournament Officials shall be final in all matters.

1. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY: Participation in this tournament is open to anyone 16 years of age or older and who have participated in the appropriate qualifying tournaments if required. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the potential competitor. All participants must have in their possession a valid fishing license covering the waters to be fished. **DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND COMPETITION DAYS OF ANY MFBA EVENT NO CONTESTANT MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT CONTESTANT HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF A POLICY IN FORCE, THAT COVER THE EVENT DATES, WITH A MINIMUM OF \$300,000 BOATING LIABILITY INSURANCE ON THAT PARTICULAR BOAT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER THE COMPETITOR USING THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED. EACH POLICY MUST SHOW \$300,000.00 LIABILITY AND A VALID EXPIRATION DATE.** NOTE: Statements of "No fixed expiration date" are NOT acceptable. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, is handicapped in such a manner as to unfairly hinder their partner or endanger the safety and well-being of their partner or himself shall not be eligible. **A PROPERLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED OFFICIAL ENTRY DOCUMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE MFBA BY THE STATED DEADLINE BEFORE THE EVENT(S).** The Tournament Officials reserve the right to discontinue or extend the acceptance of applications prior to or after this deadline. **As a participant in an MFBA Tournament, you agree, if you qualify and are invited to be a member of the "STATE TEAM", to be bound by and adhere to, all conditions set out in any "STATE TEAM CONTRACTS".** And to use while representing the MFBA any and all official products and equipment so specified and provided by the MFBA. **LINKING: It is the responsibility of both anglers to identify their linked boater or non-boater information during the registration process. Boaters may only link with non-boaters and non-boaters may only link with boaters. Boaters and non-boaters who link themselves during the registration process gain a guarantee they will fish in each tournament they enter as a linked entry. Linked entries guarantees the boater will use their boat during competition and the co-angler will be guaranteed a spot in the tournament. Linked anglers will still be assigned partners via a random computer draw. Anglers who do not link during the registration process will be linked by tournament officials in the order the entries are received.**

2. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE: There may be an official practice period immediately preceding the first day of the tournament. There may be an official off-limits period immediately preceding the official practice period or the first day of the tournament. The exact dates and times of the practice and off-limits periods must be obtained from the MFBA tournament officials. The competitor must know and observe these dates. **DURING THE OFF-LIMITS, OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND TOURNAMENT, A COMPETITOR MAY NOT SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OR ADVICE OF ANYONE FOR THE PURPOSES OF LOCATING OR CATCHING BASS ON THE TOURNAMENT WATERS, NOR MAY THEY ENTER THE TOURNAMENT WATERS DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND THE TOURNAMENT WITH ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN ON THE TOURNAMENT WATERS DURING THE OFF-LIMITS OR IS DEEMED AN "EXPERT" ON THE TOURNAMENT WATERS BY TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS, UNLESS HE/SHE IS A CONTESTANT IN THIS TOURNAMENT.** During the official practice and during the tournament, a competitor may not "SKIN DIVE" or "SCUBA DIVE" on the tournament waters. During the tournament a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, a cellular phone, or any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating or catching fish. Contestants are permitted to transmit by radio or telephone only in the event of an emergency or to communicate with lockmasters. If so equipped, contestants may listen to the marine band weather info. **EACH CONTESTANT AGREES TO REPORT TO THE TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS 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 SLIPS WILL BE CAUSE FOR DISQUALIFICATION. EACH COMPETITOR AGREES, BY THEIR SIGNATURE ON THIS DOCUMENT, TO SUBMIT TO A POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO FOR ANY REASON and abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass the examination will result in disqualification.** The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the Tournament Director and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Without limiting anything herein, 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/her own expense, at the location selected by the Tournament Director and shall cooperate in all respects with such

examination.

3. PRE-TOURNAMENT CHECK-IN: Each competitor or their representative (MFBA premium members only) must check-in in person with official MFBA staff at the time and place prescribed in the registration materials. Failure to check-in in person during the prescribed times shall result in disqualification unless approved by the Tournament Director. **NO EXCEPTIONS. IT SHALL BE EACH COMPETITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR CHECK-IN TIMES AND LOCATION OR OBTAIN TIMES FROM THE MFBA. Contestants are expected to compete in all days that they are qualified to, failure to do so may result in ineligibility to compete in future MFBA events.**

4. SAFETY: Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by tournament competitors. During the official practice and during the tournament, each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved, Type III, 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 their 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. The MFBA further reserves the right to impose boat speed limits on any or all tournaments. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area covered by the speed limit and/or the actual speed limit imposed shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the Tournament Director.

5. SPORTSMANSHIP: Competitors in an MFBA tournament are expected to follow the very highest 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 or during the weigh-in will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future MFBA tournaments. The "federation" is the "grassroots ambassadors" of fishing. 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 any competitor which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. All competitors are bound by prevailing state 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 official practice or competition days or when in the weigh-in area. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification. Any disqualification or suspension from, or other disciplinary action regarding, any tournament or fishing organization, shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification.

6. 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 fishing rod (8-foot maximum length from butt of the handle to rod tip) 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.

7. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: MAXIMUM HORSEPOWER FOR ALL OUTBOARD MOTORS USED IN OFFICIAL PRACTICE AND IN TOURNAMENT COMPETITION WILL BE 250 HP. 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 HP LIMIT SET BY THE MFBA. 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 MFBA sanctioned events.

8. BOAT AND MOTOR: For the safety of all contestants, ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH SOME TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH SAFETY DEVICE. This ignition kill device must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operating and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Fishing boats may be used that are 17 feet in length or longer and must have a rear deck. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. Any type of AUXILIARY gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by an authorized dealer are legal. Boats that do not have factory installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regs. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to all contenders and/or the public. No "barges" or similar cumbersome craft will be permitted. **NO BOAT EQUIPPED WITH "STICK STEERING" SHALL BE PERMITTED TO BE USED DURING THE OFFICIAL PRACTICE OR DURING THE TOURNAMENT BY ANY COMPETITOR.** The definition of "stick steering" shall be made by the Tournament Director. A competitor answering affirmatively the question "Will you bring a boat and motor?" will be expected to make that boat and motor available for tournament use by himself and his daily partner, if so requested by tournament officials. Those answering the same question negatively will be presumed not to have a boat available and will be paired with one who does when possible. It shall be the responsibility of the fishing partners to mutually agree on a meeting location, and the basis for sharing expenses. If partners are unable to agree, the Tournament Officials shall make such determination, which shall be binding upon the partners.

9. BASIC BOAT & SAFETY EQUIPMENT: Every boat must have all the required Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and livewell space, properly aerated, to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch by BOTH competitors using the boat. **The MFBA recommends the use of livewell additives to promote a healthy release of all fish to their natural habitat. Further the MFBA recommends the use of ICE to cool livewell water and improve oxygen levels during "summer" months.** Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate".

10. BOAT IDENTIFICATION: Each boat MUST be given, prior to each day's start, a livewell and **SAFETY INSPECTION** check by a tournament official. Also a boat marker, which MUST remain in the boat and turned in during check-in at the end of each day.

11. BOAT OPERATION: Boaters will fish from the front deck of the boat only. Non-boaters will fish from the back deck of the boat only. Boaters will have complete control of boat operation and waters to be fished. Boaters may not request that the non-boater not fish. Any boater who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, operates the boat in a manner that unfairly handicaps their non-boater partner will be disqualified for that day. Boaters paired with other boaters are entitled to equal time in the front of the boat to operate the trolling motor and an equal number of hours to fish their selected waters (number of hours includes travel time to fishing locations).

12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Officials for each Tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the MFBA. Any water within these tournament 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. No contestant may "Buy" or "Barter" a fishing location. Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to the tournament contestants. All angling must be done from the boat.

13. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN TOGETHER IN 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 the 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. Trailing of boats during tournament hours is prohibited, except by the direction of the Tournament Director.

14. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT: There shall be an official checkpoint for checkout in the morning and check-in in the afternoon and this point shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of check-out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all Safety and Tournament rules set forth by the Tournament Director; at check-in all boats shall identify themselves, and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together, through check-in and weigh-in,

until weigh-in slips have been signed. **YOU MUST CHECK-IN EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FISH.**

15. SCORING: Tournament standing, auxiliary awards and final standings shall be determined by a method of scoring set forth, and announced in the pre-tournament briefing. Only Largemouth and/or Smallmouth Bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day, unless the prevailing limit for the body of water is less than 5, or a special limit is established for a particular tournament by the tournament director, in which case the body of water limit or special limit shall be the tournament limit. At no time shall a competitor have in possession more than the tournament limit. Tournament Officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision, and in the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, shall cull, starting with the largest bass first, etc., down to the stated limit. The official length for bass shall be decided by Tournament Officials and announced at the tournament briefing. In most cases it will be the LONGEST State limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed-in. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length shall accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each non-legal bass. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials. After a competitor checks in at the official checkpoint he MUST present all LEGAL fish in his possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a competitor's catch has been measured, counted or verified by a tournament official, that contestant may not return to his boat until his catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. Culling tags or clips are allowed. Each contestant's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag, which will be furnished by the Tournament Officials.

16. CATCH & RELEASE: For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized **eight (8)** ounces of weight, to be deducted from their daily score. The Tournament Officials shall have sole authority for accessing penalty points.

17. LATE PENALTY: Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in rule 14 at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day, including any "Big Bass Award" for each one minute they are late. Any competitors more than 15 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case will a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time". After proper recognition at the check-in point, competitors will be allowed ample time to proceed to the weigh-in site; however, all fishing must stop upon check-in. After the pre-tournament briefing begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during tournament hours. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the tournament briefing.

18. TIES: In case of a tie, the following tie breakers will be used in this order: 1.) The individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed in during the competition; 2.) The individual with the largest number of legal LIVE fish weighed in during the competition; 3.) The individual with the heaviest single bass weighed in during competition. In the unlikely event that a tie remains after these three tiebreakers are employed; then positions will be resolved by combining and dividing the awards equally among the tied contestants.

19. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS: Pairing of competitors will be by computer generated draw. Two competitors (one boater and one non-boater) will be assigned to each boat. In the event there are more boaters than non-boaters, anglers will be paired in a boater-boater pairing. Announcement of your first-day fishing partner shall be made at the Tournament Briefing, which must be attended by each competitor. It shall be the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to check out at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. The Tournament Director, at his/her sole discretion, may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off. It is suggested that a minimum of 30 minutes is required for preparation to depart to the check-out point. When two competitors check out at the beginning of the day, they must stay together and within sight of each other and each other's catch throughout the day until the weigh-in is completed except in case of dire emergency (see Rule 13 & 14). A competitor must not allow any bass caught by him/her to be counted on the score of another competitor. In such a case, both competitors shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by MFBA.

20. PATCHES AND/OR SIGNAGE: The MFBA encourages the use of patches, logo and other signage to promote sponsors. Realizing we are entering into a television media/sponsorship field that MAY sometimes restrict the use of such signage, etc. that promote or advertise products, the MFBA reserves the right to RESTRICT THE USE OF SUCH SIGNAGE, with as much advance notice as possible.

**Minnesota Federation
of Bass Anglers**
19833 W. Ford Brook Dr.
Anoka, MN 55303
www.mnbass.org