

ABA of PA & NJ

2018 Tournament Rules

The following rules for tournaments will remain unchanged. Interpretation of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director and the ABA of PA & NJ Board of Directors. The American Bass Association of PA & NJ reserves the right to refuse or accept any tournament registration application.

Participant Liability Release

By willingly participating in ABA of PA & NJ events (as either a boat owner or partner), you hereby release from liability, indemnify, and hold harmless, the ABA of PA & NJ, any members of its Board, staff, volunteers, and sponsors. This release is for any and all liability for personal injuries (including death) and property losses or damage occasioned by, or in connection with any activity or accommodations for these events.

Participant Eligibility

1. Must have a current calendar year ABA of PA & NJ membership card.
2. Must have current and valid fishing license for the tournament water. You are also required to have a current and valid fishing license for any connected water should those licenses be required by law and should you choose to cross regulatory jurisdiction during your fishing day.
3. Proof of liability insurance coverage (\$300,000) for your boat and passengers.
4. **Emergency Substitute:** Each two person team is permitted only **one** member substitute for **one** event per team per season/year. A substitution is **not** permitted for each/both team members. No substitutions are permitted for the "Classic". However one team member may fish alone for two point tournaments and the Classic. Note: a member cannot fish alone for more than 2 points tournaments in a season. The substitute **is not** required to pay to be a member of the ABA of PA & NJ, however, the substitute **will be required** to sign a liability release before participating. Liability releases can be signed during check-in process.

Boat Eligibility (all are required without exception)

1. A live well with an aeration system capable of sustaining a five-(5) fish limit of fish.
2. Approved personal flotation devices (PFD Type III) for each passenger, in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard and state boating regulations. This includes an approved throwable device. **Special Note:** Suspenders' style PFD's only meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations while being worn. Therefore, you must either wear your Suspenders style PFD at all times, or, have available an additional "traditional" wearable style PFD to meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations.
3. A working kill switch to control any combustion engine.
4. Minimum 25 H.P. to B.I.A. rating.

5. Boat with a minimum length of 16'.
6. Compliance with all federal, state and local boating regulations.
7. No stick steering will be allowed. A small gas or electric motor may be used for maneuvering.
8. No "Barge" or similar cumbersome type craft will be permitted.

Tournament Application Requirements

1. Mailed Applications: All printed and mailed tournament applications **must be** postmarked **no later than 10 days prior to** the tournament date to be fished.
2. Online Applications: All online applications **must be** received **no later than** midnight, Seven days **prior to** the tournament date to be fished.

Tournament Morning

1. Pre-tournament check-in ends ½ hour prior to the scheduled start time for all tournaments, any teams not checked in by that time will be considered a no show for that tournament. No exceptions, you will be disqualified.
2. Each boat will be given a launch number prior to the day's start; this will be done during the pre-tournament check-in process. That number will be utilized during both the launch at the start of the tournament, as well during check-in and weigh-in at the conclusion of the tournament. Each boat (live-wells) will receive an inspection check prior to the tournament by a Tournament Official.

Tournament Day - Safety

1. Safe boating conduct is to be exhibited at all times by tournament participants. Each participant is required to have a Coast Guard approved personal floatation device which **must be worn** anytime the combustion **engine is running**. This includes the launching and loading process. The PFD must be zippered, snapped and/or strapped securely and must be maintained in such condition until the participants have reached their fishing area and the combustion engine has been turned off.
2. The boat operator must have the **engine kill switch attached to their person** anytime the combustion engine is running. Boats are to be operated in a safe and courteous manner at all times.
3. There is to be no passing of other competitors in a "No Wake Zone".
4. **Boat and Motor:** All boats must be equipped with some type of ignition kill switch that must be attached to the boat operator anytime the combustion engine is operating. **Kill switches will be checked for proper operation during the launch of each tournament.**

Tournament Day - Sportsmanship

1. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited.

2. **Tackle and Equipment:** Only artificial lures may be used during competition. No live or prepared bait will be permitted, with the exception of pork strips, rinds and etc. Only casting, spin-casting or spinning rod and reel combinations may be used. All other types are prohibited. Only one-(1) rod and reel is permitted in use at any given time; however other rigs as specified may be in the boat and ready for use.
3. Participants competing in any **American Bass Association PA & NJ** tournament are expected to follow the high standards of **Good Sportsmanship**. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. The possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage, illegal drug, or the exhibition of a drunken or impaired condition by any participant either from alcohol or drugs during an American Bass Association PA & NJ tournament will not be tolerated. The aforementioned condition will be cause for automatic disqualification from the entered tournament. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating in the vicinity of non-competitors with whom we are sharing the tournament waters. Any act which reflects unfavorably upon the American Bass Association PA & NJ' s efforts to promote Fisheries Conservation, Clean Water and Sportsmanship shall be reason for immediate disqualification and/or suspension from the organization.
4. **The intentional mishandling** or throwing of fish anytime during the tournament, or after the weigh-in process, or neglecting to immediately return fish to the tournament waters after the weigh-in process will be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct and will result in disqualification. If in the judgment of Tournament Officials any fish presented for weigh-in has been mashed, mauled or mangled, that fish will not be counted in the team's cumulative weight.
5. **Tournament limit:** Once a team has 5 fish in their livewell, when the next fish is caught, both anglers will cease fishing until they have culled their catch back to the five (5) fish limit. If more than a tournament limit is found in your possession, your boat will be disqualified. **Intentional culling of a dead fish will result in automatic disqualification.**
6. **Permitted Fishing Locations:** Fishing is permitted anywhere on tournament waters that are open to the general public. Fishing is not permitted within fifty (50) yards of another competitors anchored boat (trolling motor of the anchored boat must be stowed). No trailering of boats is permitted during tournament hours. "Off Limits Areas" are those areas specified by the Tournament Director or Tournament Officials and referenced in the Pre-Tournament Handout. Off limits areas **are also** any areas that are Posted Off Limits/No Fishing by Federal, State or Local Agencies that may or may have not been mentioned by the Tournament Director prior to the tournament.
7. **Protests:** Any participant wishing to protest the conduct of a fellow participant must do so in writing prior to the commencement of weigh-in. The accusing party must also be prepared to take a polygraph test to resolve the protest.
8. **Polygraph Test:** Team Members may be required to take a polygraph test at the discretion of the Tournament director and/or Board. Any participant/team member not passing the polygraph test will be disqualified, thus forfeiting any awards, cash or otherwise. The Tournament Director must be made aware of any participant taking prescribed medication prior to the polygraph. Participants found to be taking drugs in an effort to pass the polygraph test will automatically be disqualified.

Tournament Day – Weigh In

1. **Official Checkpoint:** There will be only one official location for check-in at the conclusion of the tournament. This location will be designated during the pre-tournament briefing. A tournament official will be there to check you in as you enter the ramp area. Weigh-in will commence approximately twenty (20) minutes after the check-in time.
2. **Both team members must be present** at the scales during the weigh-in. The team's launch number for the tournament will be utilized for the team's identification during the weigh-in process.
3. **Scoring:** Tournament scores will be based on the total cumulative weight of up to a five (5) fish limit of legal bass caught by each team. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted bass will be weighed. A five (5) fish limit, with a twelve (12") inch minimum (or minimum designated by tournament waters) will be enforced at all tournaments. Once a team's catch is placed on the weigh-in table, it becomes the property of the Weigh Master. Fish presented to the Weigh Master for weigh-in, which fail to measure the established minimum length, shall be assessed penalties at the rate of sixteen-(16) ounces for each such fish. Your team will lose that fish and the penalty will be assessed against the remaining catch being weighed.
4. **Protect Your Catch:** Each team is expected to keep their fish alive through all reasonable measures. An eight (8) ounce penalty will be deducted from the cumulative weight for each dead fish presented at weigh-in. If your biggest fish is presented dead for weigh-in, the penalty will be assessed against that fish. If another fish is presented dead, the penalty will be assessed against the total weight of your catch. At the weigh-in, place your fish only in the **weigh-in bag provided by the Weigh Master**, thus ensuring that fish are not being unduly stressed for extended periods of time due to waiting in line to be weighed. Insure that there is an adequate amount of water to cover the fish.
5. **Late Penalty:** Any team that has not returned to the designated check-in area **and** communicated with the tournament official within the appointed end time of the event - shall be penalized at the rate of sixteen-(16) ounces per minute late. This penalty will be deducted from the team's largest fish (lunker) first, then their cumulative weight for that day. Any team which is more than fifteen (15) minutes late shall lose credit for the entire day's catch. All fishing shall cease after you check-in with the tournament official. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced prior to the start of each tournament.
6. **Ties:** In the case of a tie, the team with the greatest number of fish, or if still tied, the greatest number of fish still alive will be awarded the place in question. If the tie is still unbroken, then the largest fish, if known, will be awarded the place in question. The toss of a coin will resolve any yet unbroken ties. The next place will go to the team losing the tie breaker.
7. All money and prizes will be awarded at the conclusion of the weigh-in.

Points Series Champion - Qualification

For your team to be eligible to qualify for the **Points Championship**, your team must have accumulated the highest amount of points among all competitors over the entire season. In the case of a tie, the team with the most combined weight, or if still tied, the greatest number of fish alive will be awarded the Points Championship. If the tie is still unbroken, then the largest fish, if still unbroken a toss of a coin will resolve any yet unbroken ties.

Participation is defined as follows:

1. Being a member in good standing.
2. Submitting your tournament applications with associated entry fees.
3. Being present at check-in.
4. Being present at weigh-in (or in the case of on-water emergency, officially excused by the tournament director) at each event.

CLASSIC Qualification

Classic Qualification points are determined by your best 4 of 5 events. The number of spots open for the classic event will be based on the average number of teams after the 4th event, however it will not be lower than 14 spots as the minimum. The teams with the highest point totals (after the dropped event) will be invited to fish in the 2017 Classic. In addition, you need to have;

1. Been a member in good standing.
2. Submitted your tournament applications with associated entry fees.
3. Been present at check-in
4. Been present at weigh-in (or in the case of on-water emergency, officially excused by the tournament director)

Other Ways to Qualify for the CLASSIC

Wild Card Berth: For your team to be eligible to qualify for the **Wild Card Berth**, your team must have participated in **all 5** of that season's point tournaments. The team to receive the **Wild Card Berth** will be the highest finishing team from the season's last point tournament that had not already qualified for the available classic spots.. That wild card qualifying team does not have to win the last point tournament of the season, just be the highest finisher among those teams which have not yet qualified for the Classic.

Special note: Classic Housing Requirements: All teams which qualify for the Classic are required to stay a minimum of two (2) nights at the designated "Classic Housing Site". It is also mandatory for those qualified teams to attend the pre-tournament meeting the evening prior to the Classic. **There will be NO exceptions made.**