



# The American Bass Association

PA & NJ

*The Mid Atlantic Area's Oldest Premiere Team Trail - "Where The Anglers Come 1st"*

## ***2009 Tournament Rules***

All money and prizes will be awarded at the conclusion of the weigh-in.

**The following without exception are required:**

1. A livewell with an aeration system capable of sustaining an eight-(8) fish limit of fish.
2. Approved personal flotation device (PFD Type III) in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard and state boating regulations, to include an approved throw able 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.

All tournament applications **must be post marked no later than 15 days prior to the tournament date to be fished.** The exception is for Online Registration where the cutoff date is 10 days prior to the tournament date to be fished. The American Bass Association PA & NJ **will not** accept any tournament registration applications after the designated cut-off period, **they will be returned.**

**NOTE:** Pre-tournament check-in ends  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour prior to the scheduled start time for any tournament, any teams not checked in by that time will be considered a no show for that tournament. No exception, you will be disqualified.

1. **Rules:** The following rules for these tournaments will remain unchanged. Interpretation of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director and Tournament Officials.

**\*The American Bass Association PA & NJ reserves the right to refuse or accept any tournament registration application.**

2. **Participants and Eligibility:** Participation in **American Bass Associations PA & NJ** is open to members of the **American Bass Association PA & NJ**. Each participant is required to present the following during pre-tournament check-in, a valid fishing license for the state in which the tournament is being held, a current **American Bass Association PA & NJ** membership card and the boat owner must have proof of **Liability Insurance (Rule 20)** for their boat. Those unable to produce the proceeding will not be permitted to participate. Anyone not having a current membership card may join during pre-tournament check-in. There are two bodies of water where multiple licenses will be recognized. The Delaware River, either a Pennsylvania or New Jersey license will be recognized as there is a reciprocal agreement between the states mentioned. The other body of water is the Potomac River as there are several versions of a valid license on that body of water on the main river. Both team members must present their licenses and membership cards. The boat owner must provide a copy of valid proof of **Liability Insurance (Rule 20)** for their boat.

**2a. Points Champion Requirements:** For your team to be eligible to qualify for the **Points Championship**, your team must have participated in all of the 2009 points tournaments.

**2b. Rookie of the Year Requirements:** For your team to be eligible to qualify for the **Rookie Team**, your team must have participated in all of the 2009 points tournaments. At least one member of your team must be a first time member of the **American Bass Association PA & NJ**.

**2c. Wild Card Berth Requirements:** For your team to be eligible to qualify for the **Wild Card Berth**, your team must have participated in all of the 2009 points tournaments. The team to receive the **2009 Wild Card Berth** will be the highest finishing team from the Delaware River tournament that had not already qualified by being in the top twenty-(20) in points. Your team does not have to win the tournament, just be the highest finisher among those teams which have not yet qualified.

**2d. Last Year's Classic Champion Qualification:** The prior year's "Classic Champions" will receive an automatic berth to the current year's "Classic" only if they have participated in a minimum of **five - (5)** of the current season's point's tournaments. The season for 2009 will run from the first tournament April 26<sup>th</sup> thru the last tournament September 27<sup>th</sup>. The season does not include the "Classic".

**2e. Classic Qualification - Top Twenty:** All Classic Qualifiers must fish at least **five**

- (5) of the six point's tournaments throughout the season. The season is split in two halves, each with three tournaments each. The first half in 2009 will consist of the Potomac River, Susquehanna Flats, and Lake Wallenpaupack. The second half will consist of the Hudson River, Lake Hopatcong, and the Delaware River. The top 10 teams in points after the first half of the season will qualify for the Classic based on points. After the first half of the season, the top 10 from the first half will be removed from second half qualification. Anyone that did NOT qualify from the first half, and is in the top 10 in the second half - will qualify for the Classic.

**Note:** All Classic qualifying teams must fish a minimum of five points tournaments.

**It is possible to lose qualification!** As an example, a top 10 team from the first half which does **not** fish at least two of the three remaining tournaments would lose Classic eligibility. If that were to happen, the team in 11<sup>th</sup> position in the first half would qualify (assuming they fished 5 of 6 tournaments).

**It also needs to be noted that in an effort to meet our obligations of a full field to the various Classic tournament sites, we reserve the right to invite teams which may not have fished the required 5 out of 6 point's tournaments to fill the field. Those teams invited in that scenario would be those teams next in the point's standings. This would only come into play if we are contractually obligated to do so.**

3. **Weigh-In:** 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.
  
4. **Sportsmanship:** 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 condition by any participant either from alcohol or drugs during an American Bass Association PA & NJ tournament will not be tolerated, the afore mentioned 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. 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 un-sportsman like conduct and will result in disqualification.**
  
5. **Safety:** Safe boating conduct is to be exhibited at all times by tournament participants. Each participant is required to have a Coast Guard approved PFD, **which must be worn anytime the combustion engine is running; this includes the launching and loading process. The PFD must be zippered, snapped and 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. 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. **There is to be no passing of other competitors in a "No Wake Zone".**

6. **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.
7. **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.** All tournament boats must be a minimum of sixteen-(16') feet in length. **Horsepower of the combustion engine must not exceed the U.S. Coast Guard Horsepower Rating Plate installed by the manufacture.** No stick steering will be allowed. A small gas or electric motor may be used for maneuvering. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. No "Barge" or similar cumbersome type craft will be permitted.
8. **Basic Boat Equipment:** Every boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard equipment. In addition each boat must have an aeration system capable of sustaining an eight-(8) fish limit of fish.
9. **Boat Identification:** 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 will receive an inspection check prior to the tournament by a Tournament Official.**
10. **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, those areas to include any areas Posted; Off Limits/No Fishing by Federal or State Agencies.**
11. **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. All boats will leave from one location in the morning and shall return to that same location for check-in. Weigh-in will commence approximately twenty-(20) minutes after the check-in time. At the time of check-in all participants

and their boats shall be in full compliance with the rules set forth by the Tournament Officials.

- 12. Scoring:** Tournament scores will be based on the total cumulative weight of an eight-(8) fish limit of legal bass caught by each team. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted bass will be weighed. An eight-(8) fish limit, with a twelve-(12") inch minimum (or minimum designated by tournament waters) will be enforced at all tournaments. **Once a team has caught the eighth fish of their eight-(8) fish limit, when the next fish is caught both anglers will cease fishing until they have culled their catch back to their eight-(8) fish limit.** If more than a tournament limit is found in your possession, your boat will be disqualified. 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. **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. Intentional culling of a dead fish will result in automatic disqualification.
- 13. 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 "Lunker" 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.
- 14. Late Penalty:** Any team that has not returned to the designated check-in area at the appointed time shall be penalized at the rate of sixteen-(16) ounces per minute late to be deducted from the cumulative weight for that day, including any weight to be counted towards a "Lunker" award. Any team which is more than fifteen-(15) minutes late shall lose credit for the entire day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in case shall a team be allowed to make up "lost time". All fishing shall cease upon check-in. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced prior to the start of each tournament.
- 15. Ties:** In the case of a tie for any place, 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 coin toss.

- 16. Protests:** Any participant wishing to protest the weight or conduct of a fellow participant must do so in writing within thirty-(30) minutes of the official check-in time for the final flight each day of the tournament. **The accusing party must also be prepared to take a polygraph test to resolve the protest.**
- 17. Polygraph Test:** Team Members may be required to take a polygraph test at the discretion of the Tournament director and/or Tournament officials. 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.
- 18. Substitute:** Each team is permitted only a one member substitute per team per point year, (etc., a substitution is not permitted for each team member). **No substitutions are permitted for the "Classic"; however one team member may fish alone and be permitted to weigh-in a five-(5) fish limit.**
- 19. Insurance:** All boat owners must have a minimum of \$300,000.00 worth of liability insurance on their boats. Proof of valid insurance will be verified during the pre-tournament check-in process.
- 20. Liability:** All participants release the American Bass Association PA & NJ, its volunteers, staff and sponsors from all claims present or future, resulting from or arising out of an occurrence or incident during their participation in an American Bass Association PA & NJ tournament.
- 21. Violations:** Violations of any American Bass Association PA & NJ "Rule" shall be reason for penalty up to and including immediate disqualification. The Tournament Director and/or Tournament officials shall make the final decision.