

TOP-8 RULES

Top-8 Program

The Top-8 Program is founded on team participation. Each of the four (4) zones conduct their own tournament each year on a site selected by the respective Club representatives. Each zone conducts its Top-8 Qualifying Tournament by the end of June. Each affiliated Club of the Indiana Bass Federation, in good standing, is invited to enter an eight (8) person team in the Zone/District Top-8 Tournament.

Entry is accomplished by returning a properly completed entry form as supplied by the Secretary and the \$250.00 entry fee, providing the club has sold a minimum of 150 raffle tickets, to the Federation Secretary. The above must be post-marked by the published deadline. Entries post-marked after the published deadline will be rejected and the club will not be eligible to fish the Top 8 for that year.

Each zone/district qualifying tournament is a one- or two-day event and determines the anglers who qualify to compete in the Top-8 State Final Tournament; i.e. fourteen (14) clubs participate in the district qualifier, the top fourteen (14) fishermen at the conclusion of the tournament qualify for the State final.

The Top-8 State Final Tournament is also a two (2) day tournament. The site of the State Final is selected and hosted by each Zone on a rotating basis of Zone One, Zone Two, Zone Four and Zone Three. The pairing of partners is accomplished via an open draw where a competitor is paired with a contestant from a different Zone. Only under the most unusual circumstances will any two contestants from the same Zone be paired together. The top twelve (12) anglers, as determined by total weight at the conclusion of the State Final, comprise the Indiana State Team to compete, at the Federation's expense, in the divisional tournament to be held by the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated. The State Team will be competing in a tournament, on an equal basis, with similar teams from other the states.

The (12) members of the State Team will be required to sign a contract with Indiana Bass Federation.

A state team member who advances to the National Championship held by the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated (only) and their Top-8 is being held on those dates, that individual will get a "Boaters Entry" into that year's State Finals. Performance in the divisional tournament determines the anglers that earn a berth on the divisional team that will participate in the National Championship tournament held by the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated. This Northern Division team is made up of the top anglers from each state.

The National Championship is the final step in determining qualifiers from the Federation ranks to a national professional championship if applicable. Each of the divisions fields a team as determined by its respective divisional tournament. Although the divisional teams are competing against each other for cash awards, a team member is only competing against the other members of their divisional team for a berth in the national professional championship if applicable.

Raffle Program

The Federation conducts a yearly raffle program to fund the Top-8 Program, the Federation, and a Bass Related/Youth project.

Historically, the raffle item has been a fully rigged boat and trailer package, and it is anticipated that future raffle items will be on similar magnitude. The raffle item is

awarded the last Sunday of the Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show in February or March.

The tickets and appropriate information are forwarded to each Club in the fall, usually October or November, and are also available at the December General Membership meeting.

Each club must sell a minimum of 150 raffle tickets to be eligible to fish in the Top 8 tournament.

Each club may present a request to their Zone Director's to recover expenses incurred in selling raffle tickets. Each club must submit in writing a request to be reimbursed for expenses, not to exceed 10% of their clubs raffle tickets sales, for the year. Club submissions are due at the same time raffle tickets are due to the Raffle Director. Each Zone will ask the IBF Treasurer to forward funds to cover expenses. Each Zone will reimburse clubs prior to the Top 8 tournament.

Proceeds of the Raffle program are used to fund the following year's raffle program with the balance being distributed by percentage to the following;

65% Top-8 Program

10% Indiana Bass Federation

25% Bass Related/Youth Project

Any additional funds allocated to the programs referenced above shall be at the discretion of the Board.

Top-8 Qualifier and State Finals

Tournament Rules

It is responsibility of each participant to read and understand all the rules pertaining to the tournament. Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. The rules of this tournament will remain unchanged, except for special tournaments conducted by the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated.

Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director may impose such sanctions, as he deems appropriate, including without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the Tournament Director and Tournament Officials shall be final in all matters.

RULE CHANGES

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Interpretations and decisions of the Tournament Director shall be final.

A. SET UP

1. There will be a tournament in each of the four (4) zones of the state.
2. Top 8 Tournaments will have until the end of June to be completed. The paper work will then be sent immediately to the state finals tournament director.

3. Any zone may fish any place in the state except waters selected first by the home zone/district.
4. There shall be a final fish-off tournament known as the State Finals.
5. The tournament site of each of the four (4) zone/district tournaments will be decided upon by the Federation Directors in their respective zones.
6. The lake site of the final fish-off tournament shall be decided on by each zone's director on a rotating basis Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 4 and Zone 3.
7. Each tournament in the different zones shall be run by a Tournament Director.
8. The Tournament Director shall not fish as a contestant.
9. Tournament headquarters, on day of tournament, shall be the same as the take-off and weigh-in site.
10. All persons fishing in the tournament shall be members in good standing of a club in the Indiana Bass Federation.
 - (a) Any member who is not on the club roster before the deadline for the Top-8 entry forms to be turned in will not be eligible to fish Top-8 that year.
11. All persons fishing in the tournaments shall be members in good standing of the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated itself, as determined from time to time by the Board of directors of the Indiana Bass Federation pursuant to its Constitution and Bylaws.
12. All persons fishing in the tournaments shall be members, in good standing, of the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated.
13. There shall be a tournament entry fee, which will be determined by the Indiana Bass Federation Directors.
14. The tournament entry fee, along with a completed entry form, shall be in the hands of Indiana Bass Federation secretary by the date established by the Directors. Incomplete entry form(s) will be returned to the club (s). Only completed forms are acceptable.
15. The fishing hours of the tournaments will be announced at the meeting following registration.
16. The Tournament Director may alter the fishing hours if unsafe conditions warrant.
17. The number of qualifiers from each zone who will be eligible to fish the final fish-off shall be equal to the number of Clubs entered from each zone, i.e., 20 clubs entered qualifying tournaments, the top 20 fishermen from that zone shall be eligible for the final fish-off. In order for a contestant to qualify for the final fish-off, they must weigh in fish. There will be no drawing in order to fill the slots available to a zone-qualifying tournament. If a zone has 20 clubs fishing the qualifying tournament and only 10 contestants weigh in fish, only those contestants will be sent on to the final fish-off.
18. Participants must be sixteen (16) years of age or older.
19. Each club may send no more than one (1) eight-person team and four (4) alternates.
20. Alternate (s) may participate should one or more of the original eight be unable to do so, but only in the order listed on the entry form. An alternate may not substitute for another contestant once the tournament is underway.
 - a.) Only the names on the Top-8 entry form (8 members and 4 alternates) will be eligible to fish the Top-8 Tournament. Once the entry is turned in there will be no substitutions or alternates allowed after the cut-off date for entries to be turned in.
 - (b) If a club presents an unequal number of boaters or non-boaters to Top-8 registration, that club must adjust their Top-8 Roster to reflect an equal ratio of boaters to non-boaters. (i.e. 1 boater - 1 non-boater, 2 boaters – 2 non-boaters, 3 boaters – 3 non-boaters.) This applies both days. This rule may be altered to allow an unequal amount of boaters to non-boaters by a 2/3rds approval vote of clubs present at the respective Zone meeting, for which the Top-8 locations are selected in each zone. The odd number of boater or non-

boater shall be required to have a non-participating observer in the boat during tournament hours and witness the anglers weigh in.

c.) Any person, persons or club that enters the Top-8 Tournament who commits a violation or has knowledge of a violation of the Top-8 Tournament rules and does not report the violation to the Tournament Director then and in the event, said person, persons or club will be disqualified indefinitely from participation in any Federation affiliated event upon the decision of the Board of Directors.

21. In the case of default, or disqualification, the tournament entry fee shall be retained by the Indiana Bass Federation.

22. Fishing is permitted anywhere on the tournament waters as may be governed by lake regulations.

23. Fishing is NOT permitted within 50 yards of another contestant's boat, which is first anchored or tied on a location with trolling motor up.

24. All contestants must remain in their boats except in the case of a dire emergency or if the crew safety is involved.

25. All fishing must be done from an assigned boat.

26. In the event of equipment failure and/or an emergency, there are only three permitted methods of returning to the weigh-in area. A) Both partners remaining in boat and being towed by water B) Both partners entering the boat of another Federation contestant with their fish and returning by water. C) One partner may take both contestants fish to the weigh by a pair of competitors or a Tournament Official, if they are duly marked for separation and if the transport and weighed in are witnessed by the same tournament official or competitor's that carried the person to the weigh-in site and have never been out of site of the same competitors or tournament official.

NOTICE—ALL LAKES WILL BE OFF LIMITS FIVE DAYS BEFORE TOURNAMENT

B. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE

1. The tournament sites are off limits to all participants beginning Sunday evening, midnight, five (5) days before the tournament.
2. There will be no boat put on the water until the day of the tournament.

C. REGISTRATION

1. Each contestant must be registered with the Tournament Director or appointed committee member at the designated time and place.
2. A National Federation Card is no longer needed. We will now use a roster from the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated, updated the last Friday of March. You must be listed on this roster to be able to fish! In case of discrepancies a National Federation Card may be accepted. Each Zone will be sent a copy of the rosters for their zone. A contestant may be registered by another individual at registration.
3. Late registration will result in disqualification.
4. At the Zone/District Tournaments if you are not present when your name is drawn for pairing, you will be disqualified. An eligible alternate may replace a disqualified individual at that time.
5. You are welcome to attend the State Finals pre-draw, but it is not mandatory to attend the drawing.
6. Registration times and dates are at the discretion of the zone directors.
7. Proof of minimum liability insurance is attested to by the completion of Top 8 entry form. Each boater in the Top 8 Tournament, State Finals and Northern Divisional has to

carry the minimum liability insurance as laid out in the bylaws (Article IX, Section 8-1). At present this minimum amount is \$300,000.00 liability coverage.

D. BOAT PARTNERS

1. Boat partners shall be paired by a draw made by the tournament committee; any realignment in the pairing will be done by the tournament committee. Any contestant who refuses to fish the tournament with a contestant he or she is paired with shall be immediately disqualified from the tournament. The disqualified contestant's club shall lose a boater or non-boater to bring said club in compliance with Top 8 Rule A (20)(b).
2. No two contestants shall fish together more than once during the tournament unless otherwise approved by an individual zone and/or district, by at least 2/3 of the eligible voting members at a regularly scheduled zone or district meeting.
3. No two contestants from the same Club shall fish together during the tournament.
4. It is the responsibility of the boat partners to meet in ample time prior to the take-off of each tournament.
5. Boat partners must stay together, in sight of one another, from take-off tie until completion of their weigh-in.
6. Bass caught by a contestant shall be applied to that contestant's weight credit only.
7. During the tournament hours, a competitor may not have the assistance or advice of anyone for the purposes of locating bass unless this other person is a contestant in the tournament. Person or persons violating this rule will be disqualified from the tournament and will be barred from the Top-8 Tournament for a period of three (3) years. Each competitor agrees to report to 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 forms will be cause for disqualification.

E. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSES

1. Non-boaters in each club are responsible for boaters' expenses in their club at the Top-8 Zone Tournaments.
2. Boat partners should discuss and agree to a schedule concerning the operation of the boat, trolling motor, seating arrangements and the selection of fishing locations. Both boat partners are entitled to fishing locations and the operation of the trolling motor for one-half (1/2) of the tournament hours.
3. Any contestant deemed guilty of operating a boat to the disadvantage of their partner shall be disqualified from the tournament and any previous score shall be disallowed.

F. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT

1. Only artificial lures may be used.
2. NO LIVE OR PREPARED BAIT WILL BE PERMITTED, however, pork or pork type strips, rinds, etc., may be used.
3. Only casting, spinning, or spin casting rod and reels, 8 feet maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip may be used.
4. Only one rod may be used at a time. Other rigged rods may be in the boat for substitute purposes.
5. Electronic depth finders, GPS, light meters, oxygen meters, PH meters and temperature gauges may be used; any other electronic devices must be approved by the tournament committee.
6. All bass must be caught in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their days catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before unhooked to be counted as a legal fish.

7. Dip nets may be used to boat bass during the tournament. The use of grippers in landing bass is prohibited.

G. BOATS AND MOTORS

1. All boats must be at least fifteen (15) feet in length.
2. Trolling motors may be used to maneuver the boat in to position while fishing.
3. Trolling as a fishing method is not permitted.
4. All electric start combustion motors must be equipped with a "KILL SWITCH" device; manual start motors need not comply with this ruling.
5. Each boat must be equipped with adequate live well capacity and aeration to keep two limits of fish alive.
6. Each Club shall furnish four (4) boats. It is suggested that an "extra boat" be brought, in the event of trouble with any of the four originally intended boats. NOTE: It is not the responsibility of the tournament committee to provide boats for contestants.
7. Each boat will be given an identification number, which must be displayed, to the check-in boat upon return for weigh-in.

8. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in tournament competition will be 250 HP, not to exceed the horsepower limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard in their ruling of November 1, 1972. 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 rating plate or the horsepower maximum set by the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated. Any boat manufactured prior to November 1, 1972 must adhere to the rating set by the U.S. Coast Guard for similar boats. Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the entry form, the boat and outboard motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory trained personnel, 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 an entry form or altering the horsepower rating numbers on the motor also would be cause for immediate disqualification from Indiana Bass Federation tournaments. Any person found in violation of Section G, Item 9, in any way will result in disqualification of boat and boat operator.

9. It has been determined that boats equipped with "STICK STEERING" PRESENT GREATER THAN NORMAL SAFETY HAZARDS. NO BOAT SO EQUIPPED SHALL BE PERMITTED TO BE USED DURING THE TOURNAMENT HOURS BY ANY COMPETITOR. The definition of "stick steering" shall be made by the Tournament Committee.

H. RECOGNITION

1. The top twelve individual finishers in the final fish-off (State Finals) shall constitute the Indiana Bass Federation team and they shall represent the State Federation at the National Northern Divisional Federation Tournament.
2. Alternates will be selected in the order, which they finish.
3. The top Club in each zone will be appropriately recognized, based on the total Club weight.
4. Top individual and lunker bass catches will be recognized.

I. SAFETY

1. Safety practices and precautions shall be observed at all times.
2. Morning take-off will be controlled by the Tournament Director.
3. A Coast Guard approved vest type life preserver, properly fastened, must be worn by all contestants whenever the combustion motor is in operation.
4. It shall be the contestants' responsibility to familiarize themselves with prevailing lake regulations and Indiana boating laws. Violations of the same will be cause for disqualification.

J. WEIGH-IN PROCEDURE

1. All contestants will be instructed at the pre-tournament meeting on weigh-in Procedures.
2. Each contestant must present his or her own catch to the weigh-in official. No other person shall then handle the fish except the contestant or a weigh-in official.

K. LATE PENALTIES AND NO SHOWS

1. A contestant, who is late at the start of the tournament day, will be penalized 10 percent of the contestant's total weight for that day.
2. A contestant, who is late at the end of the tournament day, will be penalized (1) one pound of the contestant's total weight, including weight toward any Big Bass award for each minute the contestant is late.
3. Any contestant, who is more than ten (10) minutes late at the end of the tournament day, shall loose all weight for that day.
4. Any registered contestant who is not at the tournament take-off site either day, or who does not notify the tournament director one (1) hour before take off time, for that day, shall be barred from fishing in Top-8 tournaments for one (1) year.
5. Any team that does not show up at the tournament site either day that does not notify the tournament director one (1) hour before take off time, for that day shall be barred from fishing in Top-8 tournament for a period of one (1) year.

L. SPORTSMANSHIP, CONSERVATION AND COURTESY

1. Good sportsmanship is expected of all contestants.
 - a.) Any actions and/or words that reflect unfavorably toward the Federation or its member's efforts to promote sportsmanship, fair competitions, compliance with tournament rules, safety, etc. shall not be tolerated.
2. Littering or polluting of any kind will not be tolerated.
3. All possible courtesies will be extended in using the facilities during the tournament.
4. Alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs or a contestant deemed under the influence shall not be allowed during the tournament, weigh-in period, registration and pre-tournament meetings.
 - a.) Violation of any of the above will be cause for disqualification from that tournament and/or any future Federation event, up to two (2) years based on the seriousness of the infraction, with Board approval. Individual must apply for reinstatement for the Board of Directors.

M. SCORING

1. Tournament standing, auxiliary awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound and ounce weight of each competitors catch during the tournament period.
2. Only largemouth, spotted, and smallmouth bass will be weighed.

3. The limit shall be five (5) of the above species and varieties per day.
- a.) Any contestant presenting more than five (5) fish to be weighed will be disqualified.
4. At no time shall a competitor have more than the limits described above in their possession.
5. Tournament officials may conduct checks for violations of the above provisions, and in the event that a competitor has more than the above prescribed in their possession, the largest bass first shall be culled, down to the limit described.
6. All fish caught on state controlled water or property shall meet the state legal limit size of fourteen (14) inches. All fish caught on other bodies of water not having to conform to state legal size of fourteen (14) inches shall meet State Federation rule of a twelve (12) inch minimum requirement.
7. Bass which are presented for weigh-in which do not meet the minimum size requirements as stated above, measured on the longest straight line with mouth closed, shall accrue penalties at the rate of one (1) pound per each such fish.
8. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor.
9. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mauled, mashed or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials.
10. For each legal bass weighed in dead, the competitor shall have 4 ounces (or .25 of a pound if digital scales used) deducted from the weight of that fish. The tournament director and his designated appointees shall have sole authority to determine dead fish. Any fish not being released at the weight-in (trophy) will be counted as a dead fish, with said penalties being enforced.

N. TIES

In case of a tie for team or individual standings, the following tie-breakers will be used in this order.

1. The team or individual with the largest number of legal fish weighed-in during competition.
 2. The team or individual with the largest number of legal live fish weighed-in during competition.
 3. The team or individual with the heaviest single day's catch during competition.
 4. The team or individual with the second-heaviest single day's catch during competition.
- In the event that teams or individuals remain tied after these four tie-breakers are employed, then a flip of a coin will be used to determine the winner(s). And the money, if any, will be equally split. Ties for lesser positions shall be resolved by the above order.
5. There will be no ties sent to the state finals.

O. STATE FINALS Set-up

1. A zone alternate will only be allowed to replace a state finals qualifier from his or her zone.
2. *All Top-8 rules will apply, with the exception of an official practice day, Friday starting at sunrise, before the mandatory meeting.*
3. There shall be a mandatory meeting on Friday night, prior to the tournament, to make official pairings. A map and a copy of a notification letter should be sent out in plenty of time. Lodging phone numbers should be included.
5. The \$5.00 Big Bass Pot will be awarded each day with the overall winner receiving cash and plaque.
6. Pairings for the second day shall be reversed.

7. A tournament pre-drawing will be done with numbers assigned or names (if enough time is allowed) to insure individuals would be paired from different zones.
8. One director from each zone should be in attendance. This tournament is for the people in your respective zones.
9. Non-boater expense money should be \$20.00 per day.
10. Each zone knows one year in advance to have ample time to schedule for this tournament. If a zone is unwilling or unable to secure a site the tournament rotates to the next zone in order. The paperwork will be sent immediately to the State Finals Tournament Director.

P. RIGHTS RESERVED BY THE TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Tournament Chairman shall have the authority to disqualify any individual or Club team for violation of any rules or regulations pertaining to the tournament.
2. None to the aforementioned rules shall prohibit a property designated tournament official from approaching or boarding any competitor's boat at any time during the practice (if any) or tournament day to check for compliance with any of the aforementioned rules.

The contestants who qualify to go to the State Finals will be fishing for the honor of representing the Indiana Bass Federation at the Divisional tournament to be held the national bass organization to which the Federation is affiliated. The top twelve (12) individuals as determined by the State Finals tournament will comprise Indiana's State Team.

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