

Century Bassmasters Tournament Rules
(as amended March 2009)

1. Pre-tournament practice: There shall be no “off-limits” period prior to a tournament. During the tournament, a competitor may not communicate with anyone who is a professional guide on those waters, state or federal wildlife agency employee, or any other person deemed an “expert” on these waters by the Tournament Director.
2. Safety: Safe boating will be observed at all times. Each competitor is required to wear a fastened US Coast Guard approved life preserver anytime the combustion engine is operating. All boats must be equipped with a kill switch. The tournament director has the authority to delay or cancel the start of a tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. Specifically, the Tournament Director will not give the signal to begin the tournament until he has determined there is adequate visibility of other boats and hazards to navigation.
3. Sportsmanship: Competitors are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. Any use of alcohol during tournament hours, or use or possession of drugs (other than over-the-counter or properly prescribed medication) during tournament hours will not be tolerated and shall be cause for immediate disqualification. Any person reporting to start a tournament who is intoxicated shall not be permitted to fish the tournament.
4. 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, etc. Only one rod (8-foot maximum length) and reel may be used at one time.
5. Permitted Fishing Methods: All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone intentionally snatching or snagging visible fish will have all their day’s catch disqualified. All fish caught while on the bed must be hooked in the mouth. Any fish hooked otherwise shall immediately be returned to the water. No gaffs or mechanical grippers may be used to boat bass. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited.
6. Boat Operation and Expense: A full discussion must be held between the two partners prior to take-off as to the schedule of boat operation. Each partner is allowed equal time to fish from the front of the boat and to operate the trolling motor, so as to afford each partner the opportunity to fish his selected waters an equal number of hours. Any contestant who, in the judgement of the Tournament Director, operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap his partner shall be disqualified. In view of the large expense involved in operating and maintaining a tournament bass boat, it is suggested that the no-boater partner shares boat and tow vehicle gas and oil expense for competition day.

7. Boat, Insurance, and Horsepower Regulations: All boats must be a minimum of fifteen feet in length, with wheel steering. Each boat must have all required US Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain at least one properly aerated or recirculating livewell space so as to maintain alive a limit catch of bass.
8. Each boat must be covered by liability insurance, in the amount of at least: \$100,000 per person, \$300,000 per accident.

Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard rating plate, and the horsepower of the outboard engine may not exceed the rating specified on the rating plate.

9. Permitted Fishing Locations: Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director, who may declare as “off-limits” any known hazardous or inappropriate areas for boat operation or fishing. Fishing is not permitted within 50 yards of another competitor’s boat first anchored, with the trolling motor out of the water. Any water posted Off-Limits or No Fishing by state or federal agencies will be off-limits. All angling must be done from the boat. Contestants must remain in the boat during the tournament day, except for emergency, or to change locations in the event of a “trailer tournament”. Contestants must remain together at all times. In the case of male and female partners sharing a boat, the momentary condition of being out of sight of each other to use the restroom is permitted.
10. Scoring: Tournaments are team events. In the event a contestant’s partner is unable to fish and the contestant has not been able to find another partner, he may fish alone, but scoring shall be the same as for a two-person team. Scoring will be determined by the pounds and ounces of each team’s catch during the tournament. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, or Spotted bass are accepted. The limit will be five (5) fish. At no time will a team possess more than the tournament limit (Must cull when sixth fish is caught, before resuming fishing). Any team which possesses more than the tournament limit will have its catch for the day disqualified. The official length shall be 14 inches, unless the length limit for the tournament waters is greater, in which case it will apply. Where permitted by state and local regulations, each team may have two fish of at least 12 inches in its catch for each day.

Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the prescribed length limit will not be weighed in, and an additional penalty of one pound per short fish shall be imposed. Fish will be measured flat on a golden rule. The tail may be swung, but not pinched. The Tournament Director shall be the sole judge of the correct length and weight of each fish. Any bass that has been mangled, mashed, mauled or altered in the judgement of the Tournament Director will not be weighed in. For each dead fish presented at the weigh-in, the team will be penalized four ounces. All fish not released at the weigh-in site shall be considered dead.

Points are awarded to both members fishing together, as provided in Section 5 of the By-Laws. The Tournament Director shall note which particular angler catches any fish likely to be a candidate for the Lunker of the Year.

11. **Tournament Director's Catch:** The President of the chapter or, in his absence, the vice-president, the secretary, or the treasurer, in that order, shall weigh-in or supervise the weigh-in of the Tournament Director's team's catch, and shall be responsible for enforcing the scoring regulations therefor.

12. **Late Penalty:** Competitors will be deemed to have arrived at the tournament checkpoint when they are in the general area of the weigh-in site, down off plane, and not fishing. Competitors who arrive after the official end of the tournament as determined by the Tournament Director will be penalized one pound for each minute late, up to fifteen minutes, after which they will be disqualified. Prior to take-off at the beginning of the tournament, the Tournament Director shall announce the official time so that all competitors can hear it. If any competitors are late to begin the tournament and are not present to hear the official time, or in the event of a "trailer tournament", the Late Penalty will still apply.

13. **Courtesy Measurement:** Prior to presenting his catch to the Tournament Director to be weighed, any contestant may, on request and without penalty, measure any or all of his fish himself on the official club measuring rule. Following his own measurement, he shall decide whether or not to present such fish to the Tournament Director for official measurement. The Tournament Director's measurement shall be final.

14. **On-Time Start:** Tournaments will begin at the appointed time, weather conditions permitting. The Tournament Director may delay the blast-off because of fog, activity of other boats in the area, or other reasons of safety. The Tournament Director will keep the official time, and will announce the time clearly before blast-off. Members will then leave the starting location at the Tournament Director's direction, in the order established at the previous meeting. If any boat is not ready to leave when it is their turn, they will blast off at the end of the field. When the Tournament Director has finished starting off all boats that are ready to leave, the Tournament Director's boat will blast off. Any other boats left may blast off when they are ready. In the event the Tournament Director is not at the starting location and ready to leave at the appointed start time, the Vice President, or in his absence another officer, will ensure the competitors leave on time, in a safe and orderly fashion, without waiting for the Tournament Director.