



Student Angler Tournament Trail Official Rules

Effective June 1, 2019

1. INTERPRETATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF RULES

Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal.

- A. **Reporting Rule Violations** – Each contestant, coach, and boat captain agree to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification.
- B. **Penalties** – The violation of any tournament rule may result in, but is not limited to, weight loss, the loss of weight up to a particular time in the tournament day, the loss of weight for the entire day, the loss of the heaviest one-day catch, the loss of the heaviest fish for the day, disqualification from the entire tournament, or ineligibility to participate in future tournaments.
- C. **Protests** – Protests are to be made in writing within 24 hours of the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day.

2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Participation is open to all high school students in grades 9 through 12.

A student is considered in the next immediate grade once they have completed the academic requirements and final exams in the current grade. **Graduated seniors are permitted to compete in the summer months immediately following their senior year but must not yet have started the first semester of their freshman year of college. Graduated seniors will not be eligible to qualify for any events that occur during the next calendar school year.**

- A. **Team Designation** – Each team will consist of two student contestants. **Contestants must have the signature of a parent or legal guardian before participating, this signature will only be required once for the year.**
- B. **Membership** – Contestants must be Student Angler Federation (SAF) members. At their discretion, tournament officials may determine that additional entry fee is required for some tournaments.
- C. **Laws and Regulations** – Contestants must have in their possession a valid fishing license for the waters they fish if required by law. Random checks may be conducted at each tournament. Failure to provide proof of a valid fishing license within a reasonable amount of time when requested by the tournament director will result in disqualification for that day and any preceding days in which the license was required for the tournament. Contestants are required to follow all applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws. Any violation of such regulations and laws may result in disqualification from the tournament.
- D. **Number of Teams** – Each tournament may have a maximum number of teams resulting from applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws, or by designation of the tournament director. Tournament entries will be determined on a first-come, first-serve basis based on receipt of tournament applications.
 - 1) There is no limit to the number of teams accepted into a tournament from each school or club.
 - 2) Accepted teams will be confirmed and notified via e-mail prior to each tournament.
 - 3) Tournament officials reserve the right to reject any application to compete for any reason whatsoever.

3. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION

The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted by contestants, coaches, boat captains, or anyone working on a team's behalf within 10 days of the start of any tournament. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

4. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE, AND COMPETITION

- A. **Off-Limits Time Period** – Each tournament may have an off-limits time period as designated by the tournament director. Off-limits time periods will be communicated to tournament applicants prior to the beginning of any such time period.
- B. **Off-Limits Locations** – Each tournament may have off-limits locations as designated by the tournament director or in rule 12.
- C. **Practice Time Period** – Each tournament may have a practice time period as designated by the tournament director. Practice time period will be communicated to tournament applicants prior to the beginning of any such time period.
- D. **Registration Time Period and Location** – Each tournament may have an onsite or remote registration time period as designated by the tournament director or in rule 5.
- E. **Equipment Operation after Registration** – Testing or operation of equipment on tournament waters after the start of onsite or remote registration is permitted only with prior approval from the tournament director.
- F. **Competition Time Period** – Each tournament will have an official starting time and ending time as designated by the tournament director. Contestants will compete only during the specified time period and must adhere to any “break” periods as designated by the tournament director.
 - 1) **Break Periods** – The tournament director may designate one or more mandatory break periods, each containing a starting time and ending time. Contestants will not fish during the break periods. Violation of this rule may result in loss of fish or disqualification.
- G. **Coaches and Boat Captains** – During practice and competition, the contestants must be accompanied by one coach or boat captain. A coach or boat captain must be at least 19 years old. The tournament director may provide additional rules to coaches and boat captains. All the rules in this document and coach/boat captain rules must be followed.
- H. **Contestant Team** – During competition, a student angler is not allowed to fish without his/her partner unless the boat captain is a parent/guardian/relative, or a parent/guardian/relative is accompanying in the boat as an observer.
- I. **Participation by Coaches and Boat Captains** – During practice, coaches and boat captains may fish, net fish, tie knots, and otherwise provide advice and assistance to contestants as needed. During competition, coaches and boat captains may assist with netting fish. During competition, coaches and boat captains may not fish or tie knots. The tournament director will determine the amount of other advice and assistance that is permitted by coaches and boat captains during competition.
- J. **Soliciting and/or Receiving Information** – During practice or competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not purchase information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters. During competition contestants may consult with each other on the water, but may not use electronic devices such as phones, tablets, marine band radios... to do so.
- K. **Placing of Fish Attractors** – During practice and competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not place brush or other physical fish attractors, including chum of any kind, in tournament waters.
- L. **Flying over Tournament Waters** – During practice and competition, flights over tournament waters (other than a ticketed commercial airline), including drones, are not permitted.
- M. **Withdrawing from Competition** – If a special circumstance arises that inhibits a contestant's ability to compete, the tournament director may allow the contestant to withdraw from competition and maintain the weight caught to that point.

- N. Equipment Failure or Emergency During Competition** – In the event of equipment failure or emergency during competition, the tournament director must be notified as soon as it is safe to do so.
- 1) Check-in** – If arrangements can be made for backup equipment the team may be allowed to continue if tournament Director is notified and agrees. If they are unable to continue their current weight registered with the tournament App will be counted at that time. Arrangements must still be made to drop scale, board and weigh slips in at designated spots.
- O. Underwater Cameras and Viewing Devices** – During competition, no underwater cameras, viewing devices, cones, or homemade devices may be used to locate or observe fish during the tournament.

5. PRE-TOURNAMENT MANDATORY MEETING

For each contestant team, it is **mandatory** that at least one of the contestants and their coach or boat captain attend the **entire** pre-tournament meeting at the time and place set forth in the tournament confirmation unless prior approval is received from the tournament director. Contestants and/or coaches or boat captains not present for the pre-tournament meeting may be removed from the tournament.

6. Take-Off and Return

- A. Take-Off** - Boats will be allowed to launch from any ramp on the designated waters and proceed to their fishing location before the 7am start time. Teams must register in the morning before 7am with the tournament App, this notifies the tournament staff you are on the water. At 7am the boat captain will notify the anglers it is time to start fishing.
- B. Return** – Contestants must stop fishing at the designated time. Teams must check in with the tournament App showing they have arrived safely on shore within 30 minutes of the time designated at the end of the tournament. Example if tournament ends at 2pm teams will have until 2:30pm to check in or their weights may not be counted. If this is not feasible they must call the tournament director or designated numbers provided at the rules meeting.

7. SAFETY

Safe boating and safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants, coaches and boat captains.

- A. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)** – Each contestant, coach and boat captain on the water is required to wear a fastened, U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running from morning boat launch until check-in each day of the tournament. Inflatable PFD's **will not** be allowed as an acceptable flotation device for Student Anglers participating in **any** of the Student Angler Tournament Trail events. Students are only allowed to wear a US Coast Guard-approved chest type flotation device. Boat captains will be allowed to wear either an inflatable, or chest type PFD.
- B. Ignition Shutoff** – All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is running.
- C. Seating** – All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location with a driver behind the steering wheel or at the tiller in full control of the boat whenever it is on plane or the combustion engine is running and in gear. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation and in gear is not permitted.
- D. Driving** – Only coaches and boat captains are permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is running. The contestants may not drive the boat when the combustion engine is running, except for loading and unloading or in case of emergency.
- C. Unsafe Weather or Water Conditions** – At the discretion of the tournament director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is imminent.
- D. Boating Safety Course** – It is recommended, but not required, that each contestant successfully complete a boating safety course.

- E. **Speed Limits** – The tournament director may impose boat speed limits during a tournament to account for weather conditions, comply with federal, state, or local limits, or as otherwise deemed necessary. Speed limit restrictions and areas covered by the speed limit are at the discretion of the tournament director.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP AND CODE OF CONDUCT

All contestants, coaches and boat captains are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy and conservation and to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, tournament affiliates, tournament sponsors, the school the team is representing, and the sport of fishing. Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the rules for the Student Angler Tournament Trail.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any kind of mind-altering substance during registration, the pre-tournament meeting, or during tournament hours extending through the check-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- Conviction of a felony within the past 36 months.
- Suspension/disqualification, probation or ban from any tournament or fishing organization.
- Any other words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards and rules defined by the Student Angler Tournament Trail.
- In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, tournament officials have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete, to disqualify a contestant, or impose any penalty outlined in rule 1.

9. BOAT OPERATION

Coaches will supply and drive boats for their teams or arrange boat captains to supply and drive boats for their teams.

- A. **Trolling Motor Operation** – Contestants, coaches, and boat captains may operate the trolling motor during qualifying or open tournaments. Coaches and boat captains have the right to take control of the trolling motor at any time if safety or equipment is at risk.
- B. **Assistance from Coaches and Boat Captains** – Coaches and boat captains may provide assistance, including information about locating and catching fish, but are not permitted to fish during competition.
- C. **Mobile Communication Devices** – Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not use mobile communication devices, including but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc., to communicate with anyone about locating or catching fish on tournament waters during tournament hours. Mobile communication devices may be used during tournament hours to communicate with lockmasters about locking, to communicate with the tournament director or officials, or to communicate with tournament media staff. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may use smart phones and/or tablets during tournament hours for GPS, mapping, weather, power generation, tidal charts, personal fishing notes and related data.
- Smart phones and/or tablets may also be used by the boat captain, or coach, to publish social media updates. We encourage coaches or boat captains to publish updates and photos on social media. We discourage coaches and boat captains from using any information they may see on social media to the advantage of the student anglers.
- D. **Abandoning Boat** – Abandoning a boat and leaving it adrift without proper tie-off or anchoring may result in disqualification of that day's weight.

10. BOAT AND HORSEPOWER REGULATION

All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 14 feet in length. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment.

- A. **Maximum Capacities** – Each boat must have a clearly legible "Maximum Capacities" (or comparably titled) placard that includes a maximum horsepower rating affixed to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the maximum horsepower capacity specified on this placard. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating placard will be cause for disqualification from the tournament and may result in ineligibility to compete in future Student Angler Tournament Trail tournaments.

- B. **Platforms** – Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition.
- C. **Fuel and Fuel Tanks** – Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks or auxiliary fuel tanks that are securely strapped or otherwise fastened to the boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle.
- D. **Inspection** – By submitting or signing a tournament entry form, contestants, coaches and boat captains agree to submit their boat and/or motor to an inspection by tournament officials at any time during practice or competition.

11. PERMITTED AND NON-PERMITTED FISHING METHODS

Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the rod in hand. Only ONE fishing rod may be used at a time.

- A. **Catching of Fish** – All fish must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. All fish caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth and immediately shown to the coach or boat captain for verification.
- B. **Lures** – All lures must adhere to state regulations. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. No live bait is permitted.
- C. **Umbrella Rigs** – Alabama rigs and similar umbrella-type rigs are limited to a maximum of five wires with a maximum of five hookless spinners/plastic trailers and one artificial lure/bait containing one (single or treble) hook. If state regulations are more restrictive, then the state regulations prevail.
- D. **Trolling** – Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. Trolling is defined as operating any combustion engine to extend a cast or lengthen a retrieve or using any mechanical propulsion device to move the boat as the sole means of imparting action to the lure.
- E. **Fishing Under Power** – Contestants are not allowed to fish at anytime when the combustion engine is running. Power fishing from dock to dock, through no wake zones or channels are prohibited.

12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

- A. **Boundaries** – Teams may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries defined by the tournament director that are available to the public and accessible by boat except areas designated as “off-limits,” “no boats,” “keep out,” “restricted,” “no trespassing” or “no fishing” (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by tournament officials, commercial property owners and/or local, state or federal officials.
- B. **Fishing and Travel via Boat** – All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a contestant, coach or boat captain leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. Teams must remain together at all times and within sight of their coach or boat captain until check-in. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for restroom breaks is permitted. No fishing will be permitted during bathroom breaks.
- C. **Removal of Barriers** – The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs after the start of a tournament and/or the removal of official local, state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament.

13. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

Tournament format is Catch-Record-Release (CRR). No fish will be brought to the check-in location or weigh-in stage.

- A. **CRR Procedures** – The CRR procedures will be reviewed at the pre-tournament meeting. The general procedures are as follows:
 - Catch the fish in accordance with tournament rules.

- Weigh the fish using the tournament-supplied scale.
 - Take a photo of the fish that captures the fish hanging on the tournament-supplied scale with weight visible in the picture to insure it is a scorable bass is (1) one pound or more.
 - Record the fish using the designated tournament App.
 - Record the fish on the paper weigh slip.
 - Release the fish alive in proximity to where it was caught.
- B. Mobile Device Capabilities** – CRR format requires the use of a mobile device like a smart phone. Tournament officials will not provide mobile devices. It is recommended, but not required, to have multiple smart phones in the boat for backup purposes. Contestants, coaches and boat captains must supply their own mobile device that is capable of the following:
- Installing a custom mobile application supplied by tournament officials.
 - Taking pictures.
 - Maintaining battery life for the duration of the tournament.
- C. Tournament-Supplied Scale** – Each team will be provided one official tournament scale containing marking, banner, or other signage that illustrates the scale as one that is acceptable use during the tournament. All fish must be weighed using the tournament-supplied scale. Any fish weighed and photographed on a non-sanctioned scale will not be counted toward the team’s weight for the tournament.
- D. Photographs** – All fish entries must be accompanied by a photograph that captures the fish hanging on the tournament-supplied scale with weight visible in the picture, **in pounds and ounces**. If the weight of the fish cannot be determined from the picture, **for any reason**, then the entry will be disqualified and not counted toward the team’s catch. It is the responsibility of the contestants to ensure the fish is photographed properly.
- 1) Tournament officials reserve the right to examine the metadata of any photo image to confirm the validity of the photo. Photos with edited or missing/altered metadata may be disallowed at the discretion of tournament officials.
- E. Recording Fish** – Contestants, coaches and boat captains will record fish via the tournament-supplied custom mobile application. They should also record the fish on the provided backup paper weigh slips. Contestants, coaches and boat captains must install the tournament-supplied custom mobile application prior to tournament start.
- 1) **Recording Time Periods** – Contestants can record fish only during the designated tournament starting and ending times. Contestants cannot record fish before tournament start time, during specified break periods, or after tournament end time.
 - 2) **Delayed Recording Prohibited** – Fish must be recorded at a time reasonably near when it was caught. Delaying the CRR process or fish recording for purposes of catching more fish is strictly prohibited.
 - 3) **Alternate Recording Method** – Tournament officials may, at their discretion, specify an alternate recording method that best supports the tournament format.
- F. Same Fish Caught Multiple Times** – In the instance when the same fish is caught multiple times, only the first CRR recording of that fish will count toward the team’s weight. Intentional weighing and recording of the same fish is prohibited.
- G. Multiple Fish at Same Time** – In the instance when two or more fish are caught at the same time, the CRR process requires that one fish must be weighed, photographed, recorded, and released as quickly as possible before next fish can be processed.
- H. Livewell Usage** – In general, livewell usage is unnecessary during the CRR tournament format. Using a livewell to retain fish for purposes of delaying the CRR process is strictly prohibited.
- 1) **Conditions of Usage** – Livewell usage is only permitted under the following circumstances.
 - i. If multiple fish are caught at the same time and livewell usage is necessary to keep the fish alive until the CRR process can be completed.
 - ii. If a fish requires care or revival in order to be released alive.
 - iii. If contestants want to take photos of a large/trophy fish it may be kept in the livewell, but rule 2 below regarding **Contestant Fishing Prohibited During Livewell Usage** must be followed.
 - 2) **Contestant Fishing Prohibited during Livewell Usage** – The contestant whose fish is retained in a livewell must cease fishing immediately and cannot resume fishing until the fish is returned to tournament waters.

- I. **Agreements and Care** – Contestants, coaches and boat captains agree to use the tournament-supplied equipment for their designated purpose only and agree to refrain from abusing such equipment. Contestants, coaches and boat captains agree to work together to weigh, photograph, and record their catch as efficiently as possible to ensure fish are released alive.

14. TOURNAMENT EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO TEAMS

Teams will be provided official tournament equipment to enable the tournament format of Catch-Record-Release (CRR). Equipment will include one official tournament scale and may include other items.

- A. **Penalties for Failing to Return Equipment** – Contestants, coaches and boat captains must return all tournament-supplied equipment to tournament officials at the location designated by the tournament director. Failure to return tournament-supplied equipment may result in \$50 fine, disqualification from all other tournament trail tournaments, and/or disqualification from Tournament of Champions or State Championship.

15. SCORING

Scoring is determined by the pounds and ounces of each team's catch during each tournament. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a fish.

- A. **Species** – The tournament director will designate the allowable species for each tournament and communicate those species to contestants, coaches and boat captains before or during the pre-tournament meeting.
- B. **Minimum Size** – A scorable bass is any bass caught that weighs one (1) pound or greater. Any bass caught that weighs less than one (1) pound shall be deemed "un-scorable."
 - 1) Weight will be the sole determining factor for a bass being scorable or un-scorable. This effectively eliminates the need and use of measuring boards in our events.
- C. **Tournament Limit** – The tournament director will designate the number of fish that will be counted toward each team's weight for the tournament. Unless otherwise noted, the limits below apply.
 - 1) During qualifying or open tournaments, each team's top 7 fish in weight will count toward the team's cumulative weight for the tournament.
- D. **Tournament Places** – Tournament places will be determined by the cumulative pounds and ounces of each team's tournament limit.

16. TIES

In the event of a tie in any tournament place, the tied teams' individual tournament limit fish weights are compared, and the tie breaks in favor of the team with the heaviest single fish weight. If the heaviest single fish weights are the same across teams, then the second-heaviest single fish weights are compared, and so on. In the unlikely event that all single fish weights are identical across the tied teams, then the same process will be repeated using earliest single fish time of catch. In the unlikely event that all previous tie breakers failed, then the tournament director will flip a coin to break the tie.

17. QUALIFYING FOR A TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS OR STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

If a Tournament of Champions (TOC) or State Championship is planned during or following a given tournament season, then the top 10 percent of teams in each qualifying or open tournament will advance to the TOC or State Championship.

- A. **Team Designation for TOC or State Championship** – If a contestant fishes multiple qualifying events with different teammates, **only the first team that qualifies can advance to the TOC or State Championship**. A contestant cannot qualify as a member of two different teams.
- B. **Emergency on Day of TOC or State Championship** – **In the event of a medical or family emergency on the day of the TOC or State Championship, a contestant may be permitted to fish alone with a non-fishing observer. If the boat captain is a parent/guardian/relative then any non-fishing observer over the age of 18 would be allowed, if the boat captain is not a parent/guardian/relative, then the observer must be a parent/guardian/relative, and only with approval from the tournament director.**

18. LOGO DISPLAY AND MEDIA COVERAGE

Contestants, coaches and boat captains may wear their own apparel. Tournament officials reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to prohibit any contestant, coach or boat captain's apparel that is determined to be offensive.

19. ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

During all days of competition, all alcohol and tobacco logos are prohibited and may not be worn or displayed. Contestants are never permitted to consume alcohol. Coaches and boat captains, regardless of age, cannot consume or possess alcohol during tournament hours, including check-in, at any event. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not smoke or use tobacco products during tournament hours, including check-in, at any event.

20. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST

Contestants, coaches and boat captains agree to submit, by entry into the tournament or signature on the tournament entry form, to a polygraph or voice stress analysis examination and to abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass an examination will result in disqualification from the tournament. Truth verification tests will be used at the sole discretion of tournament officials, and the determination of the meaning of the results will be made solely by tournament officials.

21. BOAT CAPTAIN INSURANCE

Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required on all boats used in Student Angler Tournament Trail tournaments. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat. Random checks will be conducted. Failure to provide proof of insurance when requested by the tournament director may result in disqualification.

22. STUDENT ANGLER INSURANCE

All Student Anglers participating in a Student Angler Tournament Trail event must be a current member of the Tournament Bass Federation/Student Angler Federation which provides the appropriate insurance.