



# North Louisiana High School Fishing League

## Rules, Guidelines, and Expectations Updated October 2019

The LAHFL board and its advisors expect strict adherence to the following rules by all contestants. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 first and then notify the designated tournament director.

**1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT** • Updated November 2019. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to a Rules committee member or designated Tournament Director. Decisions of the rules committee are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant and coach agrees to report any rule violation to the designated tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in weight loss (late penalty, dead-fish penalty and short-fish penalty), disqualification from the entire tournament or, in an extreme circumstance, ineligibility to participate in future High School Fishing tournaments. If a Team is under review of a rules violation, the respective Club will be also reviewed and put on notice. Protests are to be made in writing/verbal before final team is weighed in on tournament day. Appeals will be made to the designated rules committee for final ruling if not resolved by the Tournament Director.

**2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY** • Participation is open to 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade school students providing that the 12th grade student does not turn 19 before September 1st of their senior year or have graduated or have an equivalent of prior the start of the season. Each team member must hold a current TBF\SAF membership. Contestants must have a valid fishing license for the waters they fish. Contestants are required to follow all applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws. Any violation of such regulations and laws will result in disqualification from the tournament. Each team will consist of one or two eligible contestants and one boat captain in one vessel on stated tournament waters (if only one contestant is fishing, there must be another observer 7<sup>th</sup> grade or older inside the vessel). There is no limit to the number of teams accepted from each school or club. Any special circumstances must be approved by the tournament director prior to the tournament beginning. Tournament officials reserve the right to reject any application to fish for any reason whatsoever. Eligible angler is a student in good standing with their respective school district. Grades will be reviewed and eligibility awarded using the process the schools already have in place for sports and activities. Student anglers are required to fish for the school which they attend. In the event that their school does not offer a high school fishing team, they are permitted to fish with a High School that does.

**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 or a coach is not permitted by any tournament participants including contestants and boat captains within 7 days of any tournament. In addition, no fishing information may be purchased, bartered, solicited, or received from any person who entered tournament waters during the official off limits period if an off-limits period is enforced. Violation of this rule, cheating or having a competitive edge will result in disqualification.

**4. DAY OF COMPETITION** • Once competition is under way, contestants and coaches may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except contestants and coaches confirmed in the tournament and through publicly available sources (quasi-public websites set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are not publicly available sources). On competition day, teams may not follow a non-contestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers by non-contestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. Violation of this rule, cheating or having a competitive edge will result in disqualification.



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**5. SAFETY** • Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant and boat captain is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved and state approved CHEST TYPE personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is in operation from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. 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 in operation. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location when the combustion engine is in operation. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation is not permitted. LA RS 34:851.13 "No person operating a motor boat of twenty-six feet or less in length shall allow any person to ride or sit on either the starboard or port gunwales thereof or on the decking over the bow of the vessel while underway unless such motor boat is provided with adequate guards or railing to prevent passengers from being lost overboard". Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is in operation unless loading or unloading the boat. Once boat is loaded or unloaded on the trailer, the angler must turn off the combustion engine. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants and coaches. At the discretion of the Tournament Director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Violation of safety rules will result in disqualification.

**6. SPORTSMANSHIP** • All contestants and coaches 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, to FLW, TBF, SAF, BASS, our sponsors, the school the team is representing, the sport of fishing and efforts to promote the sport. 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 current High School Fishing season.
- 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 weigh-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- 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 set forth in the first sentence of paragraph 8.

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 or to disqualify a contestant. Unsportsmanlike conduct will be proven by 2 or more witnesses.



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**7. BOAT OPERATION** • Captains must supply and drive boats for their teams. To qualify as a boat captain, the person accompanying a team must be at least 19 years old, have not guided on the tournament waters in past 30 days, or fished a tournament with an entry fee of more than \$1000 (\$2000 if team tournament) or more within the last calendar year. Anyone wishing to be considered boat captain that has paid more than this amount to enter a tournament within the past calendar year must be approved by the tournament director. The contestants may operate the trolling motor. Captains may provide assistance, including information about locating and catching fish, BUT ARE NOT PERMITTED TO FISH. The use of mobile communication devices may only be used by the boat captains. Students may assist in unloading and loading boats.

**8. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS** • Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the lure in the water. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Only ONE fishing rod per contestant may be used at a time. Students must initiate and complete every cast in order for a catch to be considered legal. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. All bass caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth and immediately shown to your boat captain for verification.

**9. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS AND BOUNDARIES** • Teams may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries defined on Highschoolfishing.org that is 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, local, state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a contestant’s previously anchored boat. A previously anchored boat will be considered a boat held in a stable position by a line to a weight, stationary object, or by a shallow water anchor, with the trolling motor in the up position. All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time, may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. 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.

**10. WEIGH IN’S** • There will be only one checkpoint for weigh in’s in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check and or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. In the event of an early departure teams must contact the tournament director or return their boat peg. There will be a 1 pound penalty enforced for any team showing up at the weigh in line with any other bag other than a league issued bag. (This is important for preserving fish life).

**11. LATE PENALTY** • Teams that are not at the designated afternoon checkpoint at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight. Teams more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day’s weight. The Tournament Director will communicate and make decisions regarding extensions of time due to traffic detours, or wrecks.

**12. LIVE FISH** • Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated live well. Eight ounces (1/2 lb.) will be deducted from the total weight for each dead bass presented for weigh-in. No dead fish are to be culled at any time (State Law).



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**13. SCORING** • Scoring is determined by the final weight of each team's catch during each tournament. The tournament limit is five bass (unless otherwise notified by the tournament director) per team unless the state or lake limit is less than five, in which case the state or lake limit prevails. Any team possessing more than 5 fish at weigh in will be disqualified immediately. The minimum length limit for bass is 12 inches unless the state or lake limit is more than 12 inches, in which case, the state or lake limit prevails. Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit measured on the weigh master's board will be penalized by not being able to weigh that fish and a 1 pound penalty \*\*\*weigh mater's bump board will be available for check at the morning safety check against the bump board on your vessel. If you are ticketed by state wildlife officer during tournament hours, it will result in immediate disqualification.\*\*\* Each team's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag, not a personal weigh bag. The winning team is determined by the day's heaviest catch.

**14. TIES** • In the event of a tie, points and or boat captain reimbursement will be split equally.

**15. ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO** • During all days of competition, any and all alcohol and tobacco logos are prohibited and may not be worn or displayed. Contestants may not smoke or use tobacco products during tournament hours, including weigh-in at any event. Students caught in violation of these rules will be disqualified immediately.

**16. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST** • Each contestant and coach agrees to submit, by 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.

**17. INSURANCE** • Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required on all boats used in High School Fishing tournaments. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat.

**18. CUMULATIVE SEASON POINTS** • Points will be awarded to teams based on position of finish. Examples- 1st place – 200 pts, 2<sup>nd</sup> place- 199 pts, 3<sup>rd</sup> place- 198 pts etc. Participating teams not weighing a fish will receive points based on the finishing position of the last place team which weighed a fish. A team that does not have fish to weigh will obtain the minimum posted points for participating in the event if that team pays the entry fee and has at least one of the anglers participate in that day's event. Zero points will be given for a team that is a no show to the event. All points are subject to change based on the number of teams participating in the tournament.

**19. CHAMPIONSHIP** • All qualifying anglers may participate in the championship. Qualifying requirements- Top 50 teams will be eligible after first 5 events. Team of the year and qualifying teams for the championship will all be determined after the first 5 events.

(Team is determined by the unique "team" number issued to that team at the beginning of the year)

Disqualification means no points