

Chester County Bass Masters Philosophy of Tournament Rules

Tournament rules in whole and in part are necessary to ensure that each angler has a theoretically equal chance to catch and weigh fish in the tournament. The rules are to ensure that one or more anglers cannot gain an unfair advantage over the rest of the field by engaging in illegal, unethical, or unsportsmanlike conduct. The rules could never cover every situation that arises in every tournament, nor is it expected that they do. The rules are *not* meant to unnecessarily penalize an angler who exhibits sportsmanlike behavior and the spirit of fair play in the event that the letter of a rule is broken, through no fault, choice or doing of their own. Education, rather than disqualification, is called for in situations where a rule is violated in which an angler is: unaware of that rule, gains no advantage, and poses no significant risk to himself or others.

For this reason, the rules are open to interpretation by the tournament director in conjunction with the president or top presiding officer at the tournament if requested by any angler in the tournament.

The tournament director may waive or alter any of the following rules while maintaining fairness of competition to all anglers, the health and safety of participating anglers, and the health of involved fisheries. Any angler wishing a rule to be waived for any reason must get the tournament director's *PRIOR* approval if at all possible. If the tournament director is unavailable or involved in the issue, then three officers or uninvolved members will deliberate and render a decision. If asking for a waiver of rules after an event due to not being able to contact the tournament director, it is at the sole discretion of the tournament director, after discussion with the attending officers of the club if necessary (or three uninvolved members, if no officers participated), to decide whether the rule will be waived or enforced, possibly causing the disqualification of the participant.

- I. Rules and Tx Scheduling:**
 - A.** The tournament director(s) and the attending officers shall interpret the rules and regulations set forth in said tournaments. Decisions of these appointed people will be final in all matters.
 - B.** All changes in the CCBM (Chester County Bass Masters) Tournament Rules will be officially made during the off-season months only (typically November through March)! A written proposal outlining changes may be given to the Secretary or Tournament Director at any time during the year to be voted on at the designated off-season meeting. At that time, after a period of discussion the rules may be amended by a majority vote of members present.
 - C.** All new members will have a probationary status for six months during which they can participate in all club functions but will not have voting privileges. New members must also fish on three occasions with established club members, whether it be in a club tournament or any fishing activity outside the club in order to be eligible to become a full

voting member. Any new boaters will be assigned riders who are full club members their first 3 tournaments.

- D.** The following guidelines will determine each season's tournament schedule, to be completed during the off season:
 - i. Club members will discuss and provide input concerning the tournament schedule throughout the year as new ideas and observations arise. After the tournament season, usually at the December club meeting, there will be a final opportunity to give the officers guidance about the tx schedule.
 - ii. The officers select the waters and dates for the official club schedule, usually presented at the January club meeting.
 - iii. The officers decide any in-season tx changes required due to unforeseen circumstances such as scheduling conflicts with large tournaments placed on top of our existing dates or dangerous weather.
 - iv. The number of tournaments a member is required to participate in to qualify for a "Classic" may be changed by a majority vote at a club meeting in the off-season.
- E.** In order for the tournament to be a legal AOY points tournament, at least 30% of the club's paid membership (rounded up to next whole number) must be in the tournament draw (declare) at the club meeting during which the draw is made. For example, if the club's membership is 19, 6 member-participants would be the minimum required to make the tournament legal. If the club's membership is 21, 7 member-participants would be the minimum required to make the tournament legal. Once tournament pairings are drawn with the correct number of entrants needed for an official tournament, the tournament cannot be canceled if people drop out, even if the number drops below the 30% mark. If, at the club meeting where the next scheduled club tournaments are to be drawn, there are not enough members in the draw to make it an official club points tournament, a discussion can ensue on moving the tournament location, ONLY if the club members who have already declared to be in that tournament draw vote unanimously to move the location. If the vote is not unanimous, the tournament will be canceled.
 - i. Guests are not member-participants

II. Participants and Eligibility:

- A.** Participants in CCBM club tournaments include CCBM members in good standing and others by invitation only by members in good standing of CCBM. Boaters may invite guests if the boaters are open (don't have a rider) after the draw. Non-members may not participate as boaters because of insurance and other safety factors. A non-member may participate in a maximum of 2 tournaments as a guest each year).
- B.** Any outstanding tournament fees, including those for the tournaments to be drawn at the next meeting, and penalty fees assessed to a CCBM

member for dropping out of a prior tournament must be paid before the draw deadline for the next tournament they wish to enter.

C. Non-Member Invitees – Defined as CCBM guests who are not members.

The following rules govern their entry in a tournament:

- i. Non-members pay a non-member tournament fee of \$5 and must enter at least for lunker (\$5) for a total of \$10 to fish a club tx. However, a non-member can choose to enter for the full tournament pot and pay \$30 (\$25 regular tx fee, which includes lunker, + \$5 non-member fee).
- ii. Non-member invitees **MAY** receive AOY points for a Tournament fished if they join and pay dues before the next tournament they participate in, otherwise the points go away. Points are valid in this fashion only for **ONE** Tournament, regardless of any other factors. Non-member invitee is not necessarily guaranteed membership via this route, should the club decide the invitee is unfit for membership.
- iii. Non-member invitee may **ONLY** fish as a rider and **ONLY** if spaces are available. No exceptions due to insurance liability concerns.
- iv. Non-member invitee is expected to pay their share of boater's expenses, just as a member would, regardless of their decision to fish for the full tournament pot or just for lunker.
- v. Non-members may **NOT** participate in a CCBM Classic, if otherwise applicable.

III. Safety:

- A.** Safe boating conduct must and will be observed at all times by all tournament participants throughout the tx. A U.S. Coast Guard approved life preserver must be worn and fastened. A kill switch in working order must be used on all boats. Every boat must meet safety requirements.
 - i. Kill switches may be checked at random prior to launching.
 - ii. A U.S. Coast Guard approved life vest must be worn whenever the engine is running and in gear, and the driver of the boat must be connected to the kill switch.
- B.** No boat may pass another within a no-wake zone. No wake zones will be clarified prior to each tournament.
- C.** Members are responsible for providing their own U.S. Coast Guard approved life vest. Members are also responsible for their equipment and trash at each club-sponsored tournament.

IV. Sportsmanship:

- A.** Sportsmanship courtesy, safety, and conservation are expected from each participant. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principals may be deemed cause for disqualification. No alcoholic beverages are permitted while boats are in the water. Inebriation on the part of any

contestant during a tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from that and all future CCBM tournaments. Violation of any prevailing local, state, or federal regulations may result in disqualification.

- B.** All CCBM rules and regulations must be followed or disqualification may result.

V. Tackle and Equipment:

- A.** Only artificial lures may be used. No live bait or “prepared bait” except commercially prepared pork trailers may be used. Only one rod may be used at any time. Other rigged rods may be put in boat for substitute purposes. However, only one rig is permitted to be used and in the water at any one time. A snagged rod is not considered to be a rod in use. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. The use of umbrella rigs is allowed by the club to the extent permitted by the regulations of the waters being fished. Electronic equipment is permitted. Nets are permitted. By-product baits commercially available such as “gulp” are permitted, however preserved natural baits in any form are not permitted.

VI. Boat and Motor:

- A.** Fishing boats may be used that are at least 14 feet in length or the minimum length required by local laws. Any motor may be used that adheres to the particular regulations of the water to be fished. No inflatable boats may be used.
- B.** Minimum ten (10) gallon aerated live well required for each angler.

VII. Boat Operation and Expense

- A.** A full discussion should be held between the two partners prior to the morning departure as to a schedule of the locations to be fished. Any contestant found operating the boat in an obvious and deliberate manner to handicap his partner will be disqualified. The rider’s suggested share of expenses is a minimum of \$20.00 or half the expenses including gas, oil and ramp fee, whichever is greater.
- B.** A boater has the right to refuse a ride to a rider who habitually refuses to share the day’s operating expenses with the boater. The matter will be decided by the tournament director if a rider protests the refusal and therefore refuses to share expenses. The tournament director can declare, whether or not the protest is upheld, that the refusal of the rider was justified. Any rider in arrears to another boater is ineligible for future tournaments upon refusal by the affected boater(s).

VIII. Permitted Fishing Locations:

- A.** Fishing is permitted in any legal, navigable place in tournament water. However, no fishing is permitted within a distance that would interfere with another boat already fishing a particular location without the consent

of the first boater. All fishing must be done in the boat. Boats must stay in the water during the tournament day.

- B.** Once a boat has officially checked in, all fishing must cease for its anglers.
- C.** All fishing must be done from the boat. It is acceptable to get out of the boat for the following reasons only:
 - i. To push or pull the boat only if it is stuck or a safety issue.
 - ii. To board a vessel or lend assistance in case of emergency.
 - iii. To use rest room facilities.
 - iv. To retrieve a stuck lure (with no fish on it. The main point here is to not leave lures on docks or boats or in locations that would be a nuisance or dangerous for others.)
 - v. Any reason verbally approved by the tournament director for special circumstances.
- D.** All bass must be released in the body of water from which they were caught with the exception of a “Trophy Bass” which the Tournament Director will determine and approve.
- E.** Site-specific rules will be discussed prior to each tournament as well as at the launch site in the event of severe weather conditions.
- F.** All tournaments that have closed boundaries will be established at the meeting prior to the tournament. Failure to adhere to these boundaries may result in disqualification.

IX. Contestants pair off

- A.** Up to two (2) contestants per boat except for when a rider emergency occurs.
- B.** The tournament drawing will be “luck of the draw” and held at the club meeting prior to the tournament. Boat owner and rider names will be put in separate containers. Boat owners are drawn to establish the launch order. Then riders and boaters are drawn in pairs, avoiding pairings that have already occurred in a given season unless no longer avoidable.
- C.** For two-day tournaments such as the Classic, any boaters who were open on the first day must be paired with riders on the second day to the extent possible in order to minimize the number of boaters open both days. Where there is a conflict with the rule to avoid pairings that have already occurred, this “leveling of the conditions” takes precedence.
- D.** Any member wishing to participate in a tournament **MUST** make their intentions known by declaring “in” or “out” of the tournament as a boater or rider by 5 pm on the day prior to the meeting at which pairing for that tournament will be done. This declaration must be made via one of the following: the club’s online Message Boards, contacting the Tournament Director or a club officer who will be present at the meeting. If these conditions are not met, a late-declaration is still possible with an extra fee (see item E below).
- E.** If you place yourself in the drawing as a rider when the drawing is held, you must go as a rider in that tournament unless need dictates an additional boater. If a member is uncertain of rider/boater status at the

time of the draw, that member must nonetheless decide or not participate in the draw, although he may still enter the tournament late once he has decided.

- F.** If you do not meet the draw deadline, but still wish to enter the tournament, an extra fee of ten dollars (\$10) will be required to participate. Fees collected for late-signup will go directly into the club Classic pot, or, if there is no Classic, into the club's general fund.
- G.** A rider who enters the tx after the draw is then placed in the first open boat of a boater who is appropriate, avoiding pairings that have already occurred in a given season unless no longer avoidable.
- H.** Boaters are allowed two late entries per season as boaters, after which they must fish the TX as a rider.
- I.** In the days leading up to the Wednesday before a tournament, member rider emergency takes precedence for pairing with boaters over non-member riders. After 5:00 pm on the Wednesday prior to the tournament, if all boats are full, guests cannot be bumped out by a member deciding to put in late for that tournament.

The only exception occurs when a club member who is already in the tournament draw experiences a mechanical breakdown prior to 5:00 pm Friday before the tournament and the boat is not available for the tournament, in which case both the boater and rider of this boat will be placed into the first available boats that were originally scheduled with guests and said guests will be bumped from the tournament.

- J.** Once a tournament draw is final, all changes involving boat owners and riders must be made with the knowledge and consent of the Tournament Director and both members affected.
- K.** For any two-day or longer tournaments, riders and boater pairings will be different each day. Any deviations must be approved by the majority of the club and the Tournament Director.
- L.** For any two-day tournaments, the first day's boater launch order will be reversed to determine the second day's launch order.
- M.** If you place yourself into a tournament (regardless of tournament fee payment status) you are required to fish in that tournament. If you withdraw for any reason, a \$10 penalty will be assessed, which will go towards the Classic pot, or the Club's general fund if there is no classic scheduled for that season. No additional funds are required beyond this \$10 penalty for a tournament in which a participant does not fish. Clarification: "Tournament" refers to one or two-day tournaments. This penalty must be paid prior to fishing in the next tournament.

X. Tournament Hours

- A.** Start time is to be determined by the tournament director. Actual blast off is subject to change based on conditions of weather and light.

- B.** Tournaments will end at 2:30PM, unless modified by the Tournament Director due to weather, light, or other conditions. If a change is made to the end time, it will end only on the quarter, half, three quarters or hour.
- C.** If there is a weather problem, the Tournament Director and attending officers of the club will decide by majority vote whether or not to have the tournament. The decision will be arrived at by 6:00PM on the day before the tournament. However, if conditions are such to make it unsafe to proceed with the tournament at launch time, the Tournament Director and attending officers may call the tournament at that time.
- D.** All tournaments will begin at the appointed time regardless of late arrivals.

XI. Tournament Headquarters and Send-off

- A.** The launch area will be the location of the start and weigh-in of the tournament unless otherwise directed by the Tournament Director.
- B.** During tournament send-off, as your boat number is called, you must pass directly by the release boat (please idle past at least 20 yards before you blast off) and be recognized. If you want to fish an area that is located behind you as you head to the launch boat, you must nonetheless first go past the launch boat and then turn around to go back to this spot.
 - i.** Release boat will be the last boat drawn for launch.
- C.** The first boat to launch will be the official check-in boat and is responsible for checking in all contestants at the designated check-in location at the check-in time. This check-in boat must be at the check-in point at least five minutes before check-in time and must assure all the boats are back at the launch area and determine whether they are on time.

XII. Late Penalty:

- A.** Contestants who are not at the official check-in point at the weigh-in time will be penalized. Contestants must acknowledge the check-in boat at the check-in location before check-time. It is the contestants' responsibility to ensure their return has been acknowledged.
- B.** Anyone returning 15 minutes late will lose all credit for that tournament (any fish caught should be released before pulling the boat out of the water as the angler's catch is invalidated).
- C.** It is assumed that times are synchronized through the use of cell phones, but contestants will have the opportunity to synchronize watches with the tx director cell phone before launch if they need to.
- D.** Contestants are expected to act in a sportsman-like manner. A request for towing and aid should be honored whenever possible. The Tournament Directors and the attending officers will review late arrivals due to circumstances beyond the control of the contestant.

XIII. Conduct of Weigh-In:

- A.** Weigh-ins will be conducted by a group of at least three members (the tournament weigh-in crew).

- i. Weigh Master — calls all fish weights from the official scale.
 - ii. Bag Master — checks creel limit (number of fish), minimum length, and if any fish are dead.
 - iii. Score Master — Records tournament weigh-in results and calculates the final score.
- B.** Selection of a tournament weigh-in crew may be on a voluntary, assigned, or lottery basis.
- C.** Materials Used
 - i. Official scale with basket attachment
 - ii. Small folding table (optional)
 - iii. Official BASS measuring rule
 - iv. Clean weigh-in bags
 - v. Mesh weigh-in bag (optional)
 - vi. Small plastic tub (optional)
 - vii. Official score sheets
- D.** Weigh-In Preparation
 - i. Set up weigh-in station at an optimal location
 - ii. Verify that the scale is functioning properly and zeroed with the mesh weigh-in bag in the basket.
 - iii. Check measuring boards to make sure that they are identical.
 - iv. Check availability of weigh bags and scoring sheets.
 - v. Ensure mesh bags are ready for use in weighing fish.
- E.** Each contestant should be prepared with his own bag to bring his catch to the weigh-in station, although club weigh bags may be used, if available. Fish to be weighed **MUST** be in a bag with enough water to keep the fish from suffocating from lack of O₂. Absolutely no carrying of fish to the scales out of water.
- F.** Once fish are presented to the Bag Master, they are subject to official scrutiny. Contestants will be penalized for fish that do not meet the minimum length requirement.
- G.** Length check: Mouth closed, nose slightly touching against stop, then tail may be fanned or squeezed or petted. If any part of the tail touches the minimum length tick the fish qualifies as legal. If the tail does not touch the line, it is permitted to flip the fish on the opposite side and try again. Any short fish will result in a penalty.
- H.** Live or dead status: Any movements of the fins, gills, gill cover, mouth, body, or eyes will be sufficient to score the fish as alive.
- I.** Dead, mangled, or mutilated fish will be weighed at the discretion of the Bag Master in consulting with the Tournament Director. No contestant may physically alter a fish in an attempt to make it legal.
- J.** Contestants may request the Tournament Director to review decisions made by the Bag Master.
- K.** Contestants select their largest bass that is placed in mesh weigh bag alone and weighed. Weigh Master calls weight of largest bass (lunker) which is recorded by the Score Master.

- L. All remaining bass are added to the mesh bag and the contestant's entire catch is weighed to determine total weight. Weigh Master should solicit contestant's agreement with his call before announcing it to the Score Master. The Weigh Master's call is official. Official weight is recorded by the Score Master.
- M. A weight can be questioned by a participant before leaving the scale and can be reweighed once. If the reweight differs by more than .25 lbs, then use a different scale or otherwise fix the situation. Participants must accept the second weight if they elect to reweigh.
- N. After final weight is called, fish are transferred back to the contestant's transport bag. The contestant is responsible for returning his fish safely to the water and for the disposal of any dead fish he brings to the scales. Anglers must carefully return the fish to the water as gently as possible to reduce the chances of further stressing or wounding the fish.
- O. Weigh in does not start until 10-15 minutes after the last boat is out of the water, unless otherwise directed by the Tournament Director.

XIV. Scoring of Tournament Results:

- A. Largemouth, spotted, or smallmouth bass only.
- B. Local fishing regulations apply with the following additional restrictions if applicable:
 - i. No fish under 12" will be accepted for weigh in.
 - ii. No more than 5 fish per tournament angler or team.
 - iii. If local regulations do not allow culling of fish when the daily limit is reached, the bag limit will be one less than the daily limit if this allows culling.

C. Scoring system for club tournaments:

Points will be awarded for finish place in the tournament starting with 100 points for first place. Placement will be based on final weight and ranked in order from highest to lowest

1st = 100 points
 2nd = 96 points
 3rd = 93 points
 4th = 91 points
 5th = 90 points
 6th = 89 points
 7th = 88 points
 8th = 87 points

and 1 point less per spot on down.

Members who fish the tournament, bring no eligible fish to weigh-in, and stay through weigh in** will receive 25 points less than the last person who weighed in bass.

Example: All fish weighed in are live :

Angler 1 weighs in 5 fish for 9.50 lbs and receives 100 points
Angler 2 weighs in 5 fish for 7.50 lbs and receives 96 points
Angler 3 weighs in 4 fish for 5.25 lbs and receives 93 points
Angler 4 weighs in 3 fish for 3.25 lbs and receives 91 points
Angler 5 weighs in 2 fish for 3.25 lbs and receives 90 points
Angler 6 weighs in 1 fish for 1.25 lbs and receives 89 points
 Anglers who zeroed in this tournament and stay thru weigh-in will receive 64 points each

** If you have a need to leave the weigh-in immediately after weighing your fish, this needs to be announced to the TX director prior to tournament launch or you will not receive points for the TX.

If there is an emergency requiring your early departure from the TX that occurs after launch, the TD should be notified.

Anyone leaving the TX early who did not inform the TX director before launch receives no points.

D. Penalties:

- i. If an angler produces more fish than the limit set for the tournament, the weigh master will cull the largest fish down to the limits described.
- ii. Dead Fish result in an 8oz. (0.5 pounds) deduction from total weight for each dead fish.
- iii. Short fish will result in a 1-pound penalty *plus* loss of the short fish.
- iv. Weight penalties due to dead or short fish are *not* deducted from the lunker award, only from the total bag weight.
- v. Weight penalties due to late return are deducted from the total bag weight *and* from the weight counted towards the lunker award. The late penalty is one pound per minute.
- vi. Culling a dead fish is prohibited and will result in disqualification.
- vii. If the sum of any and all assessed penalties and the total bag weight result in 0 or negative weight, all fish in the penalized angler's bag become 'illegal' and the angler's catch is zeroed (no fish weighed). This applies to lunker fish as well, as it has become 'illegal'. The angler in this situation receives points for participation, as if they had caught no fish at all.

E. Tournament Tie Breakers:

- i. Number of live fish weighed
- ii. Total Number of fish weighed

- iii. Single heaviest fish
 - iv. If still tied, then points awarded will be tied.
- F.** All fish of any CCBM member participating in both a district and club tournament should be weighed. If a member was disqualified for any reason in the district tx, the Tournament Director and attending officers will make a final decision if the member's catch is to be recorded in the club tx.

XV. Protests

- A.** Protests of tournament results must be made within 30 minutes of the close of the scales. The protesters' reasons must be thoughtfully and seriously considered and discussed by the tournament director and the attending officers at the tournament. The decision reached will be final.

XVI. Tournament fees and payouts.

- A.** Total tournament fee is \$25 per angler per tournament day.
- B.** Pay out schedule
- i. \$4.00 to club for classic winner payout (if applicable)
 - ii. \$5.00 for lunker per day. A lunker prize is paid each day of the tournament.
 - iii. \$16 to Tournament Pool to be paid to tournament winner(s)
- C.** Three places are ALWAYS paid out, unless less than 3 members weigh in fish in a tournament. Schedule below:
- i. 3 or more members weighing fish
 - 1. 3rd Place: 1/7 of Tournament Pool
 - 2. 2nd Place: 2/7 of Tournament Pool
 - 3. 1st Place: 4/7 of Tournament Pool
 - ii. 2 members weighing fish
 - 1. 2nd Place: 1/3 of Tournament Pool
 - 2. 1st Place: 2/3 of Tournament Pool
 - iii. 1 member weighing fish
 - 1. 1st place: Tournament Pool in its entirety
 - iv. 0 members weighing fish
 - 1. 100% of Tournament Pool goes into the Club Classic pot or the club's general fund if there is no classic for the year.

XVII. Angler of the Year

- A.** Angler of the Year will be awarded to the CCBM member with the highest points total at the end of each Tournament Season based on each member's best seven tournament scores and membership points.
- B.** The CCBM Tournament Season begins at the club meeting in November of each calendar year and ends the day before the following year's November meeting
- C.** Each club member can accrue Member Points (up to 20 per Tournament Season) at a rate of one (1) for each of the following activities that they attend:
- i. CCBM Club Meeting

- ii. CCBM Club Tournament
 - iii. Work an CCBM Open Tournament (weigh-in and/or registration assistance)
 - iv. Fish a CCBM Open Tournament
 - v. State and/or Local District Meeting
 - vi. Any club-sponsored philanthropic or conservation activity
 - vii. Any other club-activity if approved by the majority of the club
- D.** If the top two or more anglers are tied after the Classic, all of these anglers will be recognized as AOY.
- E.** In forming the regional team or other selections of the top anglers for the club, any situations requiring a tie breaker for anglers tied in AOY points will use the total of the weights in the txs that were used for each angler in calculating their AOY point total.

Appendix I – Definitions

Registration (for Open tournaments): A time set, usually for the morning of the tournament, usually 1 and ½ hours before the announced start of the tournament, used to identify that all anglers are present and to announce the start time, weigh-in time, check-out point, check-in point, weigh-in area, legal creel limits and minimum size or slot, off limits areas, and any other information deemed necessary by the tournament director pertaining to the day's event.

Start Time: Official time that the contestants may leave the Check-Out Point and/or begin fishing the tournament.

Weigh-In Time: Official time at which all contestants must be recognized at the Check – In Point (2:30PM unless modified by the tournament director on the day of the tournament)

Check-Out Point: Designated location at which the contestants must pass, in order of the draw, before being allowed to throttle up their boat and/or begin fishing.

Check-In Point: Designated location at which contestants must be recognized as having returned from the “field” and the point at which the weigh-in time is recorded. Once a boat is recorded as having returned from the field, contestants must cease all fishing. All boaters must proceed directly to the weigh-in area with their partners.

Weigh-In Area: Area in which each angler's catch is weighed, recorded and posted and at which the winner(s) and lunger award are announced.

Inspection Point: Location, usually at the end of a dock, that the required safety and live well equipment is checked for compliance with the rules. The boat should slowly approach the inspection point with live wells open and running, life vests on, zippered and buckled (for both contestants) and kill switch attached (boat operator). Upon advancing past the inspection point, the kill switch is tested by the operator standing up at which time the motor should shut off.