

# Military Team Bass Fishing Tournament Rules - 2009

(NOTICE: UPDATED - December 05, 2008)

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**RULES:** The following tournament rules shall apply to the Military Team Bass Fishing Tournament operated by American Bass Anglers except these rules may be changed by American Bass Anglers (ABA) immediately upon notice by ABA to its members; which notice may be published on the ABA internet site at [www.militarybassanglers.com](http://www.militarybassanglers.com) Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director or his/her designee at the tournament. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director or a rules committee may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate by them, including, without limitation, disqualification, and forfeiture of prizes, entry fee and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the Tournament Director, his/her designee, or the rules committee shall be final in all matters. Rules violations must be reported to the Tournament Director on site within 15 minutes after the announcement is made "The scales are now closed".

**PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:** Participation is open to teams comprised of two anglers which both must be members in good standings of American Bass Anglers, Inc. (includes any temporary membership) who are 16 years of age or older. Contestants between 16 and 18 years of age must have a parent or guardian signature prior to entering the tournament. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the competitor. Tournament officials reserve the right to refund any membership and/or entry fee, if they choose for any reason not to accept the application and/or entry fee.

**SPECIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT:** Participation is open to all active duty Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard members, their dependents 16 years of age or older (holding a valid ID card), National Guard, Reservists, DoD Civilians, DOD contractors and retired military. Veterans who served and received an Honorable or General discharge and possess a DD-214 are eligible to participate. Contractors must be under active DOD contract during the tournament week. Identification (ID) cards will be checked during the on-site registration.

**FISHING LICENSE:** Competitors must have a valid fishing license for the tournament waters.

**LIABILITY INSURANCE:** During the official practice and competition days of an American Bass Anglers, Inc. tournament, no competitor may operate a boat unless that competitor has documented proof of a minimum of \$100,000 boat liability insurance on that particular boat. Proof of insurance must be in the boat being used and must cover the competitor using that boat. Random checks will be conducted. Each policy must show a minimum of \$100,000 liability coverage and valid expiration date.

**PRE-REGISTERED ENTRIES:** It is recommended that contestants pre-register through the American Bass Anglers National headquarters to ensure their reserved slot in the tournament. Registration will be limited to 250 teams. Each team member must be a member of American Bass Anglers. Membership requirements can be satisfied at the same time as registration. Contestants desiring to register on-site must do so in person during the official registration period. Registration period for teams where both members possess a valid DOD issued ID card or a DD-214 begins 10 November 2008. Registration for anglers fishing with a family member and only one team member possesses a valid DOD issued ID card or DD-214 will begin on 1 March 2009. All anglers will be required to check-in during the on-site registration period to verify the team is present and to sign the liability and release form. In addition, at least one team member must attend the mandatory on-site safety and rules briefing. Failure to attend check-in for the on-site registration or the mandatory safety and rules briefing will result in forfeiture of entry fee and disqualification from the tournament. Teams may also register on line at [www.militarybassanglers.com](http://www.militarybassanglers.com) by phone at 888-203-6222, or by mail at: American Bass Anglers, Inc. Attn: Military Team BFT, P.O. Box 475 Athens, AL 35612.

**REGISTRATION:** All pre-registration is accomplished through the national office only. Teams desiring to register on-site at the tournament site must register in person prior to 12:00 noon local time, Tuesday, 5 May 2009. One member of each team must attend the mandatory rules and safety briefing on Tuesday, 5 May 2009, 6pm local time. Failure to attend the safety briefing will result in forfeiture of entry fee and the team will not be entered in the tournament.

**TEAM COMPOSITION:** A team will be comprised of two anglers meeting the requirements as specified in the Participants and Eligibility sections.

**ENTRY FEE:** Entry fee is \$150 per team if registering prior to the entry deadline. After the entry deadline, 24 April 2009, a \$25 late fee will be assessed.

**BIG BASS POT:** A big bass option pot will be available for teams to sign up for during on-site registration. Do not include this payment with your initial registration. The option pot will be \$30 per team and payout will be 70 percent for largest bass and 30 percent to second largest bass each day of the tournament based on the total number of teams who entered.

**POLYGRAPH:** By his/her signature on the official tournament entry form, each competitor agrees to submit to a polygraph examination/truth verification method or any other type examination as determined by ABA, and abide by its conclusion should he/she be accused of any rule violation. In the event of a protest for rule violation American Bass Anglers Inc. shall have the discretion to determine the need for a polygraph/truth verification method examination. The American Bass Anglers, Inc. shall be responsible for selecting an independent expert to administer and interpret the results and establishing, in consultation with the expert administrator, the scope of the questions which may be asked during the polygraph/truth verification method examination. The American Bass Anglers, Inc. shall attempt to have the location of such polygraph/truth verification method examination as close in proximity to the angler's permanent address or such other mutually convenient as possible. The competitor shall make himself/herself available at the location selected by the American Bass Anglers, Inc. and shall cooperate in all respects with such examination. Anglers taking a polygraph/truth verification method examination may be responsible for any and all cost incurred.

**GUIDES:** Individuals who are serving as a licensed guide or are paid for guiding on tournament waters within the previous 30 day period are not eligible to compete in this event

**OFF LIMITS:** There will be no official off-limit period. Off-limit areas will consist of those designated by local, state and federal authorities, and within 50 yards of a marina gas pump. Tournament directors may impose other off-limit areas at their discretion at the time of the pre-tournament meeting. No contestant may be on tournament waters for the purpose of locating fish or potential fishing waters after daily weigh-ins. The purchasing of information, the hiring of services or receiving on the water information from local anglers will not be permitted after the entry deadline (24 April 2009).

**SAFETY/BOAT CHECK:** Safe boating will be observed at all times. Contestants understand that participating in fishing tournaments in an open boat is inherently dangerous. Safe boating conduct will be observed at all times. During the official practice and competition, each competitor is required to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved chest-type life preserver (PFD). This preserver must be worn any time the combustion engine is in gear. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. The boat operator must have a safety-stop switch attached to his/her person when the combustion engine is in gear. During practice and tournament hours extreme caution must be exercised by boat operator during bad weather. In addition extreme caution must be exercised and boat operator must be aware that there could be large cruisers and/or barges operating on tournament lakes that displace extremely large volumes of water which create unusually large wakes and turbulence. Weather and water turbulence can be extremely hazardous and extreme caution should be exercised at all times. Violation of either the PFD or safety-stop switch portion of this rule will result in disqualification.

**SPORTSMANSHIP:** Competitors in ABA tournaments are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification.

i.) Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over-the-counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any competitor during the official practice or during the tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future ABA tournaments. No alcoholic beverages other stimulants or depressants or otherwise, shall be allowed in the boats during the official practice or competition days, or in the weigh-in area.

ii.) Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of a competitor which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters and courtesy, shall be reason for disqualification.

iii.) All competitors are bound by the prevailing statutes and regulations of the various states within which they fish.

iv.) Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and/or for disqualification after circumstances are reviewed by the Tournament Director. Any disqualification suspension from, or other disciplinary action regarding any tournament or fishing

organization shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation in an ABA tournament and/or disqualification from an ABA tournament after circumstances are reviewed by the Tournament Director.

**MEDIA COMMENTS, PUBLIC ATTACKS:** The favorable public reputation ABA as a sanctioning organization in the sport of fishing, the integrity of its officials, and the reputation of its media properties are valuable assets and tangible benefits of ABA. Accordingly, it is an obligation of competitors to refrain from comments to the news media that unreasonably attack or disparage the integrity of tournaments, tournament officials, sponsors, fellow members, fellow anglers or the ABA organization. Competitors are encouraged to express themselves and have the right to question the rules officials. Responsible expressions of legitimate disagreement with ABA policies are encouraged as opposed to attacks upon the integrity of the rules or officials. However, public comments that an angler knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of ABA, ABA officials or sponsor shall be considered conduct unbecoming a professional and will result in disciplinary action.

**TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT:** The use of grippers in landing bass is prohibited. Only artificial and biodegradable lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted during official practice and competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds. Only one casting, spin casting or spinning rod (8 foot maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. Other rigs as specified above may be in boat ready for use; however, only one is permitted in use at any given time. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their catch disqualified. When visually fishing a bed or for bedding bass to be counted as a legal fish, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth.

**HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:** Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in official tournament practice and in tournament competition will be 250 HP. Horsepower cannot exceed the limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard or the manufacturer's rating plate. When required, 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 plate nor the horsepower maximum set by ABA. Each competitor agrees to submit, by their signature on the official 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 of engines is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of a competitor's engine to increase the horsepower over the factory horsepower rating is forbidden, and will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower-rating numbers on the engine is also cause for immediate disqualification from ABA tournaments. Posted speed limits must be observed and all boats must be operated in a safe manner.

**BOAT AND MOTOR:** For the safety of all competitors, during competition all boats must be equipped with an approved type of operable ignition kill switch and lanyard. Only one manufactured lanyard may be used and must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is in gear. Any time the combustion engine is operating and in gear there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. Fishing boats that are less than 16 feet in length may not be used. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat. Anglers fishing while standing on the outboard motor or on boat seats are not permitted. An electric trolling motor may be used for slow maneuvering. However, trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. All bladder tanks and any other type of auxiliary gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by a manufacturer's authorized dealer are permitted. Boats that do not have factory-installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat. No portable gas tanks or containers capable of holding gasoline can be placed anywhere on the tournament waters or shoreline for use by any tournament competitor. No "barges" or similar craft will be permitted. No boat equipped with "Stick Steering" shall be permitted to be used during official practice or during the tournament by any competitor. "Stick steering" shall be as defined by the Tournament Director.

**BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT:** During competition every boat must have all required US Coast Guard safety equipment as well as a functional bilge pump. During competition every boat must have live-well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass. ABA recommends live-wells are maintained at full level and aerators/re-circulators on manual. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is proper and adequate.

**BOAT IDENTIFICATION:** Prior to each day's start, each boat must be given an inspection check by a tournament official. Each day, each boat will be given a number, which must remain with the boat until turned in each day at the check-in. This number must be displayed upon the request of tournament officials, and turned in to the officials at each check-in.

**PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Contestants may fish anywhere accessible by boat, except off-limit areas designated by federal, state or local officials, within 50 yards of a marina gas pump or off-limit areas briefed by the tournament director during the mandatory rules and safety briefing. All angling must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a member of a team leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. All contestants must leave and return to the official checkpoint by boat and the boat must remain in tournament waters during the tournament. In the case of a breakdown or emergency contestants have only two ways to return to the check-in and have their days catch counted. 1) Both members of the team remain in their boat and are towed in by water; 2) A member of a team may enter another contestant's boat with their fish and ride back to the checkpoint.

**OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT:** There shall be only one official point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon, these points shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of check-out, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformity with all rules set forth by the Tournament Director. At check-in, all boats shall identify themselves by means of the numbers described herein and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Angler's not weighing bass may trailer their boat.

**TOURNAMENT HOURS:** Official start and weigh-in times for each flight will be announced at the pre-tournament briefing. Our best effort will be given to allow at least 8 hours fishing time. In the case of adverse weather conditions, the tournament director will open weigh-in at 12 Noon for safety.

**SCORING:** Tournament standings, auxiliary awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound-and-ounce weight of each teams catch during the competition days of the tournament. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Redeye or Shoal bass will be weighed. The limit per team shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day, unless otherwise specified by tournament officials. At no time shall a competitor have in their possession more than the tournament limit. Tournament officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision, and in the event a team has in its possession more than the above-described limits, the team will be immediately disqualified. The official length for bass shall be determined by the Tournament Director and announced at the Tournament Briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed. Bass presented for weigh-in, which fail to measure the official length, shall result in a penalty of 1 pound for each such bass, which penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials. After competitors check in at the official checkpoint they must present all legal fish in their possession to a tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a competitor's catch is measured, counted and verified by a tournament official, that competitor may not return to the boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be placed on a stringer at any time during the tournament. Culling tags or clips are allowed. Specially designed bags which increase survival rate will be furnished by the Tournament Director and must be used for the weigh-in. The official measuring board for this tournament will be the American Bass Anglers/Triton Boats measuring board.

**CATCH AND RELEASE: CULLING OF DEAD BASS IS PROHIBITED.** A penalty of 1 pound will be deducted from the total weight for each short fish and a penalty of 4 ounces (.25 pounds) will be deducted from the total weight for each dead fish. In the event the anglers' big fish is dead a penalty of 4 ounces (.25 pounds) will be deducted from the big fish total weight. It is suggested in warm weather tournaments anglers keep extra ice for fish care. Contestants are allowed to purchase ice on the water; however they are not allowed to receive ice from non contestants.

**TIES:** In case of a tie, combining awards and dividing them equally among the tied contestants shall resolve positions. Big bass weight will be used to break the ties for trophy positions. The tournament director may decide to break first place ties with a fish-off.

**TRANSFERS/REFUNDS:** Entry fees may be transferred or refunded provided American Bass Angler, Inc. receives notification prior to entry deadline. Those entries on the waiting list that are not accepted into the tournament will receive a full refund after the tournament. All refunds will be assessed a 20 percent processing fee.