

## ~ OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES OF THE OHIO MEGA BASS TOURNAMENT TRAIL ~

**ELIGIBILITY:** Participation in the tournaments will be by paid entry. Anyone, whose entry has been received and approved, is 18 years of age or older, is a current member of the Ohio Mega Bass Tournament Trail (hereinafter referred to as OMBTT) and having paid the appropriate entry fee and team membership, may be eligible to fish. OMBTT reserves the right to refuse any entry/s received without showing cause. Anglers under the age of 18 must fish with a parent or guardian with written permission and explicitly exempt the OMBTT from any liability thereto.

**GENERAL EXCEPTIONS & AMMENDMENTS:** As it relates to eligibility - the Ohio Mega Bass Tournament Trail, LLC, has occasion to operate and or sponsor, as subdivisions to the OMBTT; open tournaments as well as special sponsored trails (KMTT) and as such, fee requirements (membership) may differ, as may some specific rules.

**MEMBERSHIP, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, CANCELLATIONS AND FIELD SIZE:** Membership fee of seventy-five (\$75) dollars is due and payable, along with the event's entry fee, prior to the first tournament fished; there will be no pro-rating of this fee. Entry Fees shall be two-hundred (\$200) dollars per event. Event pre-pays (prior to the event) will "draw" for start number. Teams choosing to pay for the entire season (\$1200 without classic/\$1400 with classic) will be allowed to double-draw for their start number. At-site entries will be accepted. Entries received at-site will be assigned starting numbers in the order of receipt of entry. **The trail has no limit on paid boats.** In the case that an event is cancelled then the entry fee will be refunded.

**STARTS:** Will be "by the numbers", e.g., that is the number drawn, or assigned, at the beginning of each event. In the case of Open events, starting numbers will be in order of entry with at site entries in order of signup at site. Participant boats must pass within 50-feet of the start boat. If planning on fishing areas "behind" the start boat, boats must first pass around the start boat and then safely proceed to U-Turn while underway. At no time, will any boat pass another competitor/s boat, which is "first underway" in "transit: no wake zone/s. Transit NO-WAKE zone/s are described as short sections of reservoirs/lakes placed under speed control by the controlling authority such as control zones associated with bridge/s, marinas, channels, etc.

**POINTS:** Will be based on a DROP "20" SYSTEM on a 100-point descending scale of one-point per place, i.e., 100-points to first place, 99 to second, 98 to third and so forth until all teams who've caught fish have been "pointed", we will then DROP 20 and remaining anglers will receive the total left. POINTS ARE USED FOR ANGLER (TEAM) OF THE YEAR (AOY) ONLY! **Should a tie in point standings occur in Team of the Year Standings, then the Team with the highest weight will be declared the winner and, if still tied, total number of fish caught, then total number live fish released and then Big Bass.**

**OFF-LIMITS:** There shall be no off-limits **time-periods** EXCEPT that all competitors' boats must be off of the tournament waters starting at 12:01 AM the morning of the tournament. Lake off-limit areas will consist of any area marked as "NO FISHING" by the controlling authority as well as 50-yards from any area/dock designated as a fueling point. Area wide off limits may be declared for individual events/locations.

**SAFETY:** Safe boating conduct must be observed at all times. Each contestant is required to wear an approved personal floatation device (PFD) anytime the combustion engine is operated above idle speed. All boats must be equipped with an ignition shut-off device securely attached to the operator when boat is operated above idle speed. At the discretion of the Director/s, tournament days may be shortened, lengthened or cancelled due to unsafe weather/water conditions. Alcoholic beverages/drugs are prohibited (prescribed medications are allowed).

**COMMUNICATION DEVICES.** The use of cell/mobile communication devices during tournament hours for the transmission of any fishing information is strictly prohibited. Participants "protested" under this section will have to "show" that they were not in violation of this section.

**SPORTSMANSHIP:** All contestants are required to follow the highest degree of sportsmanship, courtesy and conservation as well as conducting themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves; the OMBTT, our sponsors and the sport of tournament fishing. Any words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules will not be tolerated and may result in disqualification. During the hours of competition, contestants may not obtain or receive assistance from non-competitors, follow a non-competitors' boat or participate/benefit from the practice of "hole sitting".

**ALTERNATES:** For all intents and purposes there is (1) Alternate allowed. When one member of the original team fishes with another non team individual. More than (1) alternate a new team will be created for point purposes only. For purposes of the entry fee, the event will be entered as in paid status provided that the stand-in pays a alternate fee of (\$50) which allows them to fill in for any regular team member on any team. (2) Alternates may not fish together for any team.

**CLASSIC:** To qualify for the Classic, each team member must have fished a minimum of four (4) events and have paid for all six (6) qualifying events, two of which may be by buy in. If a team member cannot fish for any reason, then the remaining member may fish alone and still receive the team's qualification for points. Remember whenever you fish an event even with an alternate it will count towards classic qualification (events fished). For our classic if your partner cant fish you may pair with another classic qualified OMBTT team member. Each team member who can't fish the classic must give their blessings to do so. This accommodation was not meant to ditch your partner.

**BUY-INS:** Teams may buy-in for any "missed" event, up to a maximum of two-events per season, and with the payment of \$200 per event missed.

**LIMIT/CREEL:** The tournament limit shall be five (5) fish, twelve (12) inches or in length or greater, OR the lake length/slot limit, whichever applies. Only largemouth, smallmouth or spotted bass will be presented for weight. Fish will "bumped" with their mouth closed, tail compressed and brushed for length. Once bumped and called, no further action will be warranted.

**PERMITTED TACKLE/ANGLING METHODS:** All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner using only one casting, spin casting or spinning rod, 10-foot or less, measured butt to tip, in hand contact, may be used at any one time. A hung lure, or lures attached to additional rods deck side will be considered as in compliance with this rule. Only artificial lures or biodegradable artificial lures may be used. No live bait will be allowed, the only exception to this will be what is commonly referred to as pork or pork rind. **The use of umbrella rigs and other such contrivances, which attach to the main line and forming an apex for additional arms/lines to which more than one lure is displayed, are prohibited, as are any "arrayed lures", described as anything attached to a horizontal plane and which use one, or more, hooks, either as an attractor or as a standalone unit, are also prohibited.**

**OFFICIAL CHECK POINT:** There will be only one site for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon. At the time of morning inspection, all competitors must be in full compliance of all rules set forth in these rules. All boats shall identify themselves at check-in sites by means of boat number and proceed IMMEDIATELY to the designated weigh-in area. Failure to check-out in the morning or to check-in at the check-in point within the time permitted will result in disqualification of that day's catch.

**BIG BASS:** Competitors may choose only one live bass out of their bag as an entry into the "big-bass side pot/s".

**LATE PENALTY:** One-pound per minute after the designated end time, up to five-minutes, after which time the competitor/s will be automatically disqualified.

**DEAD/SHORT FISH:** Every effort shall be made to keep the catch in a viable state of health. Dead fish presented for weight shall incur an eight (8) ounce penalty. Participants will be responsible for disposing of their own dead fish in an appropriate manner so as not to negatively impact future OMBTT tournament activities. Short fish will incur a one (1) pound penalty.

**CULLING:** The OMBTT no longer permits the use of culling clips/systems which physically punch/pin/attach via piercing the catch. Only pressure clip style may be or non-invasive marking systems may be used. Teams must have culled to the tournament limit prior to checking in.

**50-YARD RULE:** Competitors may not fish within a 50-yard radius of another competitor's boat which was first anchored with its trolling motor up and stowed, however, anchored boats may not prevent access, to and from, areas outside of the 50-yard radius (such as coves, creeks, tubes etc.) Use of mechanical or staked anchoring systems are recognized as "anchored" and also must pull your trolling motor.

**TIES regular season event:** In a regular series event, ties will be broken by first; total fish weighed, second; total live fish weighed, third; big bass of the bag and fourth; if everything else is equal, a toss of a coin. If the tie is for big bass, then prize money is split and the BB plaque awarded by coin toss.

**LEAVING THE BOAT:** If an angler needs to leave the boat due to an emergency, or to use the bathroom, etc., the partner must immediately cease fishing until such time as the partner returns. Normally, depending on what is announced at the start of the tournament, this means returning to the launch site and using the facilities there.

**BREAKDOWNS:** Teams may choose to double-up with another team in order to bring their catch to the scale; provided, however, that the catch is kept separate and/or distinctively marked. Catch must be well cared for.

**INSURANCE/LIABILITY:** Each boater, as a condition of participating in these events, shall carry a minimum of \$300,000 liability insurance. Participants, by participating in any sponsored OMBTT event(s) and as a condition of participating, agree to hold everyone associated with these events as harmless in case of injury or death.

**DISBURSEMENT/PAYOUTS:** 70% of paid entrant fees shall be paid out at each event (\$140) with the remaining 30% set aside for the Classic Championship (\$60). The OMBTT will post all payouts on an event-by-event basis so as to uphold the highest levels of accountability to its membership. All teams MUST have their individual SSN on file prior to the disbursement of any Place money which may be awarded as a single check. Each team member will be credited with one-half (1/2) of the amount awarded for IRS reporting purposes (IRS1099). The KMTT Division will payback a minimum 90% at each event with the remaining 10% used for permit/trail expenses and points champs payout.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE TESTING:** By their signature on the entry form and/or participation in these tournaments, all participants agree to any quality assurance tests as required by the Director. They may include all, or part, of the following; polygraph test, urinalysis, blood test, and/or observer in or out of the boat. Refusal of anglers to submit, **or test failure by one or both of the anglers**, will result in immediate disqualification plus subsequent disqualification from future tournaments. None of the above rules shall prohibit the Director or an authorized member of the Tournament Committee from observing, approaching or boarding a competitor's boat during official tournament hours. Quality assurance tests will be conducted as soon as possible after conclusion of official tournament hours. **Nothing in these rules shall prohibit the use of metal (foreign object) detecting of competitors catch.**

**THE COMMITTEE:** A committee of "the whole"; Tournament Committee, will be appointed by the director/s at each event by drawing the **three (3) teams from the field**. This committee will address all issues of note. If, for any reason, one (or more) of the drawn teams are themselves a subject of rules violation, then another team will be drawn to take their place.

**KNOWLEDGE OF THESE RULES IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:** Failure to read these rules and/or ignorance of these rules is not an excuse for prohibited conduct. Any extreme violation of rules will be grounds for disqualification from all future OMBTT events. Any announcement made by the Director/s at tournament sites takes precedence over written rules if in conflict with same.

**PRESUMPTIVE CONDUCT:** Defined as intra-team interaction on the water, as an example, contestants who were FIRST ANCHORED OR TIED TO a fixed-point, with their trolling motor stowed (up) and prior to the arrival of another competitor's boat may claim exclusivity within a 50-yard radius of their boat. This does apply to those instances where the boat claiming the exclusivity is blocking access to "another area" (creek, bay, slough, etc.) in those cases, egress shall be allowed to other competitor's boats. Competitors boats which are obviously fishing in a fixed position, such as on a point, should, as a matter of courtesy, be given a wide berth when approaching, going around and going away from, as a matter of good sportsmanship. Conduct prior to, as well as after the conclusion of the event and while still at site, must reflect the highest standard of sportsmanship. Cursing, fighting words, and any other action or conduct which may reflect negatively on the series or its competitors, will not be tolerated and may result in disqualification from further events.

*Jami Norman, Director*

**Ohio Mega Bass Tournament Trail, LLC**

As promulgated; February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023