

~ 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 or deposit by the Wednesday (prior) deadline date, 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 and explicitly exempt the OMBTT from any liability thereto.

**GENERAL EXCEPTIONS & AMMENMENTS:** 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). As such, fee requirements (membership) may differ, as may some specific rules thereto.

**MEMBERSHIP, ENTRY FEES, DEPOSITS, 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.. Teams may "reserve" their entry slot with payment of a \$50 deposit, as long as the balance (\$150) is paid prior to the imposition of a late fee. Event pre-pays (within the deadline) will "draw" for start number. Teams choosing to pay for the entire season (\$1200/\$1400) will be allowed to double-draw for their start number. A late fee of \$20 will be added to all entries starting that Wednesday prior to each tournament. At-site entries will be accepted prior to the start of the event if the field size has not been exceeded. Entries received after the 3-day deadline, as well as that at-site, will be assigned starting numbers in the order of receipt of entry. Deposits may be transferred to another tournament during the same year, but are not refundable. The field is limited to 65 paid boats. The KMTT Division membership fee is fifty (50) dollars per boat.

**CANCELLED EVENT(S):** In the case that an event is cancelled then the entry fees, minus the 30% Classic forward, will be disbursed amongst the remaining events. Should the cancellation be for the last event, and the team either isn't qualified for the Classic, or doesn't plan to go, their entry will be returned in full.

**RESERVED STATUS:** Teams may "reserve" their entry slots with the payment of fifty (50) dollars for each of the season's 6 events (\$300) provided, however, that the balance is due and payable within the time frames noted in the preceding section. Team's which have chosen this option will not qualify for the double-draw option.

**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. The Angler/Team of the Year will "fish for free" in the following season's regular events.

**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.

**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 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:** An Alternate may fish in place of one, or both, regular team members provided that they meet all other eligibility requirements including an Alternate Membership Fee of fifty (50) dollars. A team may not use more than two (2) alternates per season and no two alternates may fish in place of the regular team. It is the responsibility of the regular team member/s to notify the Organizer/s when an Alternate is used, failure to do so will result in disqualification. An Alternate, once paid, may fish for one or more teams.

**CLASSIC:** All teams, in paid status for six (6) regular season events will auto qualify for Classic competition provided that regular team members fished a minimum of four (4) events as partners. If a team finds themselves in a situation where one of the member's is unable to fish the Classic, then the remaining member may either fish alone or voluntarily pair with a member of another team in similar circumstances. Start numbers will be randomly drawn for each team, either manually or electronically, at the Classic Meeting the evening prior. Start numbers will be reversed the second day.

**BUY-INS:** Teams may buy-in for any "missed" event, up to a maximum of two-events per season, provided that the event/s in question was one of the first four events ONLY and with the payment of \$220 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, 8-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 end 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 will result in disqualification of that days catch.

**OFFICIAL WEIGH-BAG:** Participants are required to use OMBTT Weigh Bags which are logo'd as Bas-n-Bag. Personal bags (Bas-n-Bag or Bass-ina-Bag) may be used. A team bringing their catch to scale in an unapproved bag will subsequently forfeit their days 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:** Teams must have culled to the tournament limit prior to leaving the water.

**50-YARD RULE:** Competitors may not fish within a 50-yard radius of another competitors 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, etc.) Use of mechanical or staked anchoring systems are recognized as "anchored".

**TIES:** Will be broken by first; total live fish weighed, second; total 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. In case of a tie for 1st Place; teams will be sent out for a one-hour fish-off, team with the heaviest weight will win, if still tied; number of fish, then big bass, if still tied, flip of the coin (or splitting of the 1st and 2nd Place purses).

**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, if more than two fish expire, don't bother to come to the scale.

**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 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.

**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 Directors. 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 will result in immediate disqualification plus subsequent disqualification from future tournaments. None of the above rules shall prohibit the Director/s 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.

**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 competitors 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; January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016