

## 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 can not 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.

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 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 top attending officer of the club if necessary whether the rule will be waived or enforced, possibly causing the disqualification of the participant.

### **I. Rules:**

- A.** The tournament directors, the President and the Vice President 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.** The following guidelines will determine each season's tournament schedule, to be completed during the off season:
  - i.** Club members will discuss, propose and vote on how many tournaments will be included in the upcoming tournament season, to include how many will count towards the Angler of the Year points race and whether or not a "Classic" will be held at the season's completion. The membership will also decide on how many tournaments a member will be required to participate in to qualify for a "Classic". Club members will also decide and vote on whether or not to include an 'away' tournament in the

tournament series. An 'away' tournament is one in which the location is more than 3 hours from the general area of Chester County. Finally, club members will decide on the inclusion of any multi-day tournaments as well during the tournament season.

- ii. Club members will nominate waters for tournament locations
  - iii. The Tournament Director, with assistance from the club officers and other members will determine how to best vote on the nominated waters to choose the locations for each of the tournaments in the upcoming season
  - iv. Club members will vote on the waters for tournament locations via the method laid out by item I.C.iii above.
  - v. The club will appoint one or more members to compile a candidate schedule for the upcoming tournament series with dates, ramp locations and other pertinent information.
  - vi. The club will discuss, modify and vote on approving the candidate tournament series schedule and locations prior to the beginning of the tournament season.
- D.** After the determination of a tournament series' schedule and locations, changes are only permissible due to extenuating circumstances and must pass majority vote by club members.
- E.** Each Tournament shall consist of a minimum of four (4) 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. Outside persons (non-members invitees) may only be invited if there are empty rider slots or if an extra boater is desired (non-members may participate in a maximum of 2 tournaments as guests per non-member per year).
- B.** Any outstanding penalty fees assessed to a CCBM member for dropping out of a prior tournament must be paid before participating in any future tournaments.
- C.** Non-Member Invitees – Defined as CCBM guests who are not members. The following rules govern any involvement in a tournament:
- i. Non-member invitees pay entry fees as a member would, plus \$5 non-member fee - extra fee goes to club classic pot if they decide to fish competitively
  - ii. Non-member invitees may weigh Tournament caught, eligible fish, if they decide to fish competitively
  - iii. Non-member invitees are eligible for pot winnings should they qualify with their bag and/or lunker
  - iv. Non-member invitees MAY receive AOY points a priori 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.

- v. Non-member invitee may ONLY fish as a rider and ONLY if spaces are available. No exceptions due to insurance liability concerns.
- vi. Non-member invitees may choose not to fish competitively (for pot/lunker winnings) and as such, entry fees are not required.
- vii. Invitee must pay their share of boater's expenses as a member would, regardless of their decision to fish competitively or not.
- viii. Non-members may NOT participate in a CCBM Classic, if applicable.

### **III. Safety:**

- A.** Safe boating conduct must and will be observed at all times by all tournament participants while the gas motor is in operation. 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. Kill switches **MUST** be attached to the angler piloting the boat at all times when the gas motor is running.
- 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 refuse on 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. Drunkenness 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 a rod in use. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. 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.

#### **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 boat operations. A schedule must be set that permits each partner equal time to choose the fishing locations. 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. A judgment can be made 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.** No fishing is permitted between the check-in point and the launch area.
- C.** Once a boat has officially checked in, all fishing must cease.
- D.** 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 lending assistance in case of emergency.
  - iii. To use rest room facilities.
  - iv. Any reason verbally approved by the tournament director for special circumstances.
- E.** 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.

- F. Site-specific rules will be discussed prior to each tournament as well as at launch site in the event of severe weather conditions.
- G. 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. Tournament Hours**

- A. Start time to be determined by tournament director. Actual blast off subject to change based on conditions of weather and light.
- B. Tournament s 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 an officer 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 may call the tournament at that time.
- D. All tournaments will begin at the appointed time regardless of late arrivals.

**X. 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.
  - i. Release boat will be the last boat drawn for launch.

**XI. Late Penalty:**

- A. Contestants who are not at the official check-in point at the weigh-in time will be penalized. 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). An official time will be designated at the start of each tournament where all contestants will have the opportunity to synchronize their watches. 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 President will review late arrivals due to circumstances beyond the control of the contestant.

**XII. 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". Boat owners and riders nameplates will be put in separate containers and drawn in pairs at the meeting prior to the tournament.

- C. Any member wishing to participate in a tournament **MUST** make their intentions made by declaring “in” or “out” of the tournament as a boater or rider prior to the meeting at which pairing for that tournament will be done if they will not be present at that meeting. This declaration must be made via one of the following: the club’s online Message Boards, phone call to the Tournament Director or phone call to a club officer who will be present at the meeting. Any of these options must be completed by **NOON** on the day of the meeting at the latest. If these conditions are not met, a late-declaration is still possible with an extra fee (see item F below).
- D. 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 status at the time of the draw that member will be considered a rider.
- E. If you do not place yourself in the drawing at the meeting prior to the tournament, but still wish to enter the tournament, an extra fee of five dollars (\$5) 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.
- F. The launch position of each boat will be determined by the order of the draw.
- G. Upon completion of the drawing if there are any extra boaters their names will be redrawn as boater and rider in pairs if agreeable to all extra boaters involved. Whose boat may be used may be by mutual agreement or by a flip of the coin. If single boaters do not wish to ride with another boater, all will be allowed participation using their own boat without a rider.
- H. Rider emergency takes precedence over non-member riders.
- I. 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.
- J. A boater may not fish with the same rider more than twice in a single season if possible.
- K. For any two (or more) day tournaments, riders and boaters will switch day to day so that the rider/boater pairing differs day to day. Any deviations must be approved by the majority of the club and the Tournament Director.
- L. 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 loss of additional funds paid for the tournament you did not fish in. Clarification: "Tournament" refers to one or two day tournaments. This penalty must be paid prior to fishing in the next tournament.

### **XIII. Conduct of Weigh-In:**

- A.** Weigh-ins will be conducted by a group of 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 optional 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 will bring his catch to the weigh-in station in his own bag. Fish to be weighed **MUST** be in a bag with enough water to keep the fish from suffocating from lack of O<sub>2</sub>. 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.** The Bag Master counts the number of fish, checks the length against the official measuring board and checks to see if any fish are dead.
- H.** 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.
- I.** 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.
- J.** 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 fish in an attempt to make it legal.
- K.** Contestants may request the Tournament Director to review decisions made by the Bag Master.

- L. 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.
- M. 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.
- N. After final weight is called, fish are transferred back to contestant's transport bag. 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 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. 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 equal 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. In any tournament allowing culling, the return of a dead or obviously distressed fish during the tournament day while in the act of culling shall result in the loss of the heaviest fish's weight from the day's total bag weight.
  - 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 5 points for participation, as if they had caught no fish at all.

- D.** Point totals will be based on final weight and ranked in order from highest to lowest. Based on 40 point's system. (40 for 1st place, 39 for 2nd place, etc.) Five (5) points will be given for fishing but no fish weighed in. Additional points are added to the points earned as described above. One tenth of a point for each tenth of a pound of fish is added to the points earned for place. Weights beyond one tenth of a pound are rounded. For example, a first place weight of 5.22 pounds earns 40 points for first plus 5.2 points (5.22 rounded to the nearest tenth) or 45.2 points. A second place weight of 4.59 pounds earns 39 points for second place plus 4.6 points (4.59 rounded to the nearest tenth) or 43.6 points.
- E.** Tournament Tie Breakers:
  - i. Highest number of fish weighed
  - ii. Highest number of live fish weighed
  - iii. Heaviest single day weight (for 2 or more day tournaments)
  - iv. Second heaviest single day weight (for 3 or more day tournaments)
  - v. Heaviest fish weighed
  - vi. If still tied, anglers will split the prizes and points equally.
- F.** Any combination district/club tournament where a CCBM member fished all fish should be weighed. If a member was disqualified for any reason as a rider, a 3-man committee headed by the Tournament Director will make final decision if the member's catch is to be recorded in the club.
- G.** Angler of the Year will be determined by the tournament points total agreed to by the membership at the beginning of the year.
- H.** End of the year tie breaker for AOY points race:
  - i. Total weight
  - ii. Number of fish
  - iii. Largest fish
  - iv. Flip of a coin

## **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 president or top presiding officer 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. 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: 1/7 of Tournament Pool
    - 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: 2/7 of Tournament Pool
    - 3. 1<sup>st</sup> Place: 4/7 of Tournament Pool
  - ii. 2 members weighing fish
    - 1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: 1/3 of Tournament Pool
    - 2. 1<sup>st</sup> Place: 2/3 of Tournament Pool
  - iii. 1 member weighing fish
    - 1. 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

## **Appendix I – Definitions**

**Registration:** 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 lunker 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.