

## Open Trail Tournament Rules

9/12/2006

### Tournaments-Highlights

The Illinois Bass Federation sponsors and conducts a modified Boater/Co-Angler circuit referred to as the "Open Trail" on Illinois waters. The tournament circuit consists 6 tournaments, concluding with the Federation Classic.

Anglers must be a member of BASS Federation, and the Illinois Bass Federation in good standing either through an affiliated club, or become an Associate member for a one time annual fee of \$100.00.

Classic Entry Awarded As Follows:

The top 46 Pro's and the top 46 Amateur contestants determined by point standings from the best five (5) tournaments of the six (6) tournaments, (4) each wild card draws from a list of anglers who fished at least five (5) of the six (6) tournaments, but did not qualify through points, will be invited to the Federation Classic.

Angler of the Year: Will be determined by the end of year standings with all six (6) tournaments considered. Angler of the year will qualify and be invited to represent the Illinois Bass Federation at Divisional state championship series with the possibility of advancing to the BassFan "Weekend Warrior Series".

Guaranteed Boat Use – Any Boater who submits their entry with the entry of an amateur will be guaranteed use of their boat and to be paired with a Co-Angler.

Payouts/Entry:

- Entry fee for the Boater is \$125.00 - Entry money breakdown per tournament is \$49.00 Classic Fund, \$6.00 Tournament Expenses, \$1.00 Division of Fisheries, \$2.00 Angler of The Year, \$5.00 Big Bass, \$62.00 payback based on number of entries to 10% of the entries (\$1000. 1st Place guaranteed minimum).
- Entry fee for the Amateur is \$70.00 - Entry money breakdown per tournament is \$17.00 Classic Fund, \$6.00 Tournament Expenses, \$1.00 Division of Fisheries, \$2.00 Angler of The Year, \$5.00 Big Bass, \$39.00 payback based on number of entries to 10% of the entries (\$300. 1st Place guaranteed minimum). The Co-Angler may use their boat, but only after all Boater angler boats are being used.
- Open Trail Membership is \$25.00 – See Rule 5 of official rules

*Illinois Bass Federation 2006 Ranger/Yamaha Team Program*

Qualifying Events • Six (6) Illinois Bass Federation Tournaments and one (1) Classic

Qualifying Guidelines

- Must own a Ranger Boat.
- Must fish from a Ranger Boat at all qualifying tournaments
- Must return official registration form to Ranger before qualifying for Ranger Cup prize money.
- Must meet clothing requirements.
- Must display Ranger Cup decal on driver's windshield/console of boat you are fishing from.

*Additional Guidelines*

- Registration is not retroactive and will only count for tournaments after official registration form is received.
- Ranger boat owners who are Ranger Cup registered will be eligible for \$750.00 cash prize as the highest placing Ranger Cup participant for each tournament. In addition, if Ranger boat is powered by a Yamaha motor, an additional \$750.00 will be awarded.

### Tournaments-Official Rules and Procedures

1. RULES CHANGES: Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. The following rules of this tournament trail will remain unchanged, except for special tournaments conducted by the Illinois Bass Federation. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may impose such sanctions as he deems appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, forfeiture of prizes and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the Tournament Director and tournament officials shall be final in all matters.

2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY: Participation in this tournament is open to any Member or Associate member of the Illinois Bass Federation, who is 16 years of age or older and who is an active member in a federation affiliated chapter. Proof of age to the satisfaction of the tournament officials is the responsibility of the potential competitor. During the practice and competition day of any Illinois Bass Federation tournament no contestant may operate a boat unless that contestant has documented proof of a minimum of \$300,000 boating liability insurance on that particular boat. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover the competitor using the boat. Random checks will be conducted, each policy must show an effective date and expiration date. Any candidate for competition who, in the judgment of the Tournament Director, is handicapped in such a

manner as to unfairly hinder his partner or endanger the safety and well being of his partner or himself shall not be eligible. A properly signed official entry form must be received at the Illinois Bass Federation tournament headquarters. All mail entries must be postmarked by the Sunday, 2 weeks prior to the tournament weekend. Call-in/credit card entries will be taken by calling 217-632-3110, no later than 10:00 p.m. the Sunday, 2 weeks prior to tournament date unless special arrangements are made with the tournament director. Late entries will be accepted at tournament HQ, by call-in/credit card no later than 10:00pm the Wednesday prior tournament, a \$25.00 late charge will be applied. The Tournament Director reserves the right to discontinue acceptance of applications prior to the deadline and also the right to extend the acceptance date with the approval of the Illinois Bass Federation Board of Directors. Entry fees may be transferred or refunded provided Tournament Headquarters is notified by 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday, prior to the tournament. Entry fees will not be transferred or refunded after Tuesday. There will be a \$10.00 service charge for each refund, transfer of entry fee and credit card charges. There will be a \$25.00 surcharge for all returned checks.

3. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE: There will be no official practice period or off-limits period prior to the pre-tournament meeting. No contestant may be on tournament waters for the purpose of locating bass or potential fishing waters after the start of the pre-tournament meeting except during tournament hours. The purchasing of information or hiring of guide services will not be permitted after the entry deadline for each tournament. (This rule does not apply to classic which will be defined under classic invitation)

#### 4. REGISTRATION AND PRE-TOURNAMENT MEETING:

Each competitor must register in person or have a representative register with the official Illinois Bass Federation staff at the time and place prescribed on the schedule of events. Registration shall be 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. on the day previous to the event. Failure to register during the prescribed registration hours (4:30 – 5:30pm) shall result in a penalty of 2 pounds off the contestant's total catch when registering between 5:30 p.m.-5:45 p.m. Contestants more than 15 minutes late for registration will forfeit their entry fee and will not be entered in the tournament.

Pre-tournament meeting begins with a raffle at 6:00 p.m. ALL entrants must be at the Pre-Tournament meeting. No EXCEPTIONS. NO Representatives. Contestants not personally present for the pre-tournament meeting/pairings will forfeit their entry fee and will not be entered in the tournament. (See rule 5 for exception to this rule)

IT SHALL BE EACH COMPETITORS RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR REGISTRATION TIME AND LOCATION OR OBTAIN TIMES FROM THE ILLINOIS Bass FEDERATION TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS. NO EXCEPTIONS

5. OPEN TRAIL MEMBERSHIP: Members who cannot attend the pre-tournament meeting will be allowed to send a person who is 16 years of age or older to represent them at registration. Non-contestants can represent one person; contestants can represent themselves and one other contestant. This representative must attend the pre-tournament meeting to record flights, takeoff time, check-in time, off limits areas, size and creel limits, ect. This representative must also attend the partner draw immediately following the pre-tournament meeting to receive the angler he represents boat number, meet with their partner, record partners lodging information, phone number and the exact morning meeting location. Failure to attend the tournament will result in the loss of the right to utilize the Open Trail membership in future tournaments that year.

6. PAIRING OF CONTESTANTS: Partners will be paired by draw. Partners should advise each other of their respective lodging and phone numbers, and establish a meeting place for the following morning's take off. In the event there are an odd number of boaters a coin flip will take place to determine whose boat will be used. Two contestants will be assigned to each boat. Whenever possible no contestants from the same Federation club will be paired together. Announcement of your fishing partner shall be made at the tournament briefing, which MUST BE ATTENDED by each competitor. It shall be the responsibility of each partner to appear at a mutually agreed upon location with sufficient time remaining to check out at the official checkpoint and start on time. Tournament officials shall have no responsibility for finding missing partners. The Tournament Director, at his sole discretion may reassign partners prior to the morning take-off. It is suggested that a minimum of 30 minutes is required for preparation to depart to the checkout point. When two contestants check out at the beginning of the day they must stay together and within sight of each other and each others catch throughout the day until the weigh-in is completed: except in the case of dire emergency. (See Rule 14) A contestant must not allow any bass caught by him to be counted on the score of another contestant. In such a case, both contestants shall be disqualified from this tournament and from all future tournaments conducted by the Illinois Bass Federation.

7.SAFETY: Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by competitors. During the official practice and competition, each competitor must wear a Coast Guard-approved chest-type life preserver. This preserver must be worn at all times the combustion engine is operating. This preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the combustion engine is shut off. Violation of this rule shall be reason for disqualification. Tournament officials have the right to delay, shorten or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather. IBF reserves the right to impose boat speed limits on any or all tournaments. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area covered by the speed limit and/or the actual speed limit imposed, shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the tournament director. In the event of an emergency situation, competitors should call 911 first and then notify tournament officials. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek safe shelter in bad weather where danger may be imminent.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP: COMPETITORS IN ILLINOIS Bass FEDERATION 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. Use of alcohol or drugs 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 Illinois Bass Federation tournaments. 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. The prevailing statutes and regulations of the State of Illinois bind all competitors. No alcoholic beverages or stimulants or depressants, non-prescriptions or otherwise shall be allowed in the boats during the official practice or competition days, registration, pre-tournament meeting or when in the weigh-in area. 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 for disqualification. Competitors who fail to show the morning of take off and who have not notified the Tournament Director no later than 11:00pm the evening prior to tournament day, at the Tournament Directors discretion may be disqualified, penalized 50 points from year to date standings and/or other disciplinary actions as determined. Any disqualification or suspension from, or other disciplinary action regarding any tournament or fishing organization shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification.

9. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT; Only artificial lures may be used, No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of pork strips, rinds, etc. Only casting, spin-casting or spinning rods (8-foot maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reels may be in boat at any time, all other types are prohibited. Only ONE rod and reel combination 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 day's catch disqualified. When visually fishing for bedding bass, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked to be counted as a legal fish. Dip nets are allowed in all Illinois Bass Federation tournaments. The use of grippers in landing bass is prohibited.

10. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: Maximum horsepower for all outboard motorboats used in tournament practice and in tournament competition will be limited, not to exceed the horsepower limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard in their ruling of November 1, 1972. 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 rating plate. Any boat manufactured prior to November 1, 1972 must adhere to the ratings set by the U.S. Coast Guard for similar boats. Each competitor agrees to submit, by his 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 to increase the performance of your engine is allowed. Changing or altering standard factory parts of your motor 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 will result in disqualification. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower-rating numbers on the motor also would be cause for immediate disqualification from IBF tournaments.

11. BOAT AND MOTOR: For the safety of all contestants. ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH SOME TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH. This ignition-kill device must be attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime 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 may be used that are 16 feet or more in length. Any raised platform or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat. 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 legal. 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. During the official practice and during the tournament, 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 cumbersome craft will be permitted. No boat equipped with "stick steering" or "tiller steering" shall be used during the tournament by any competitor. A competitor answering affirmatively the question, "Will you bring a boat and motor?" will be expected to make that boat and motor available for tournament use by himself and his partner, if so requested by tournament officials. Those answering the same question negatively will be presumed not to have a boat and motor available and will be paired with one who does when possible. It shall be the responsibility of the fishing partners to mutually agree on whose boat to use and a basis for sharing operational expenses. If partners are unable to agree, the Tournament Director shall make such determination, which shall be binding upon the partners.

12. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT: Every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and livewell space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass by both fishermen using the boat. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate".

13. BOAT IDENTIFICATION; Each boat MUST be given, prior to the day's start an inspection check by a tournament official

14. BOAT OPERATION: During tournament hours boat operation and selection of fishing location shall be at the boaters discretion, except in the event of a Pro/Pro or Am/Am pairing then each angler is entitled to equal time in boat operation and selection of fishing location. In view of the large expense in the operation of a Bass boat. it is suggested that the non-owner partner share part of the cost of gas and oil on competition day. Any boater who in the judgment of the tournament director operates the boat in such a manner that unfairly handicaps their amateur will be disqualified from the tournament. During the-hours of competition, contestants may not obtain or receive assistance from non-competitors, follow a non-competitor's boat or participate in the practice of hole sitting or the placing of markers by anyone. During tournament hour the use of underwater camera's or mobile communication devices such as cellular phones, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CB's, etc... is not permitted except to communicate with tournament headquarters or In the case of an emergency. Communication with Corps of Engineers Lockmasters is also permitted.

15. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this Information from the Illinois Bass Federation Tournament Director. Fishing is permitted anywhere on tournament waters except within 50 yards of another competitors boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position with the trolling motor out of the water. All such boats are required to advise any other competitor when such boat believes the competitor boat is close to being within this 50-yard radius. A competitor has the right to navigate through this 50-yard radius to get to other fishable waters. No such boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within this 50-yard circle claimed by him to the exclusion of any other competitor. Any water within boundaries posted off-limits or No Fishing by state or federal agencies will be OFF-LIMITS. Also, the live bass release area established by the tournament Director will be OFF-LIMITS and will be announced at the tournament briefing. All angling must be done from a boat. Competitors wishing to change fish habitat by placing any object in tournament waters may do so if such action does not violate state or federal regulations.

16. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT; Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Contestants must leave and return to official check-in by boat. Both competitors must remain in the boat at all times except during dire emergency. In such an emergency, competitors may be removed from their boat to: A BOAT OPERATED BY OTHER COMPETITORS OR A RESCUE BOAT. Partners must remain together at ail times, in sight of each other and each others catch under the conditions sited above, in order for their catch of that day to be scored in the tournament. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions (to contact a tournament official by phone or other means or to report an emergency or breakdown), both competitors must cease fishing at this point and their catch must be verified by a tournament official in order to be counted in the tournament. If after the emergency situation is resolved by the tournament officials and enough time is left for the competitors to resume fishing a RESTART will be allowed and the competitors will continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations. Trailering of boats during the tournament hours is prohibited except by the direction of tournament officials.

17. OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT: There shall be only one official point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon and this point shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of check out, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all the rules set forth by the Tournament Director. At check-in all boats shall identify themselves by means of numbered plates and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. Partners must stay together until they have completed weigh-in and initialed each others weigh-in slip.

18. SCORING: Tournament standings, auxiliary awards and final winners shall be determined by the pound and hundreth of a pound weight of each competitor's catch during the competition day of the tournament. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Redeye or Shoal bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day, unless the prevailing state limit is less than 5, or a special limit is established for a particular tournament by the tournament officials, in which case the state limit, or special limit, shall be the tournament limit. At no time shall a competitor have reduced to possession more than the tournament limit. Tournament officials will conduct checks for violation of this provision and in the event a competitor has reduced more than the above-described limits to possession shall cull the largest bass first down to the limit described. The official length for bass shall be determined by the Tournament Director and announced at the tournament briefing. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more on the longest straight line, shall be weighed-in. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled or otherwise altered will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of the tournament officials. After a competitor check-in at the official checkpoint he MUST present all LEGAL bass fish in his possession to the tournament official to be counted, measured and weighed. Each competitor is expected to keep his catch alive by use of a properly aerated live well. All bass shall be escorted from the live well to the bump tank in special bags filled with water to insure survival. Failure to do this can result in disqualification. The few bass which do not survive will be used for scientific study and for charity. The signature of his partner of that day must certify his catch. Once a competitors catch is measured, counted and verified by a tournament official that contestant may not return to his boat until his catch has been weighed and recorded. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. The Tournament Director will furnish specially designed bags which increase survival rate and these bags must be used for the weigh-in.

19. PENALTY POINTS: For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in official the competitor shall be penalized .50 pound of weight to be deducted from his daily score. Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length will be penalized at the rate of 1(one) pound for each non-legal bass presented from the total score of the competitor after throwing out the illegal bass. A negative weight can be assessed in a two-day event. The Tournament Director and his designated appointees shall have authority for assessing penalty points.

20. LATE PENALTIES AND NO SHOWS

- A. Contestants who are not in the official check-in area at the appointed time will be penalized at the rate of 1lb. per minute to be deducted from his total weight, including any weight to be counted toward a big bass award. Any competitor more than 10 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's weight.
- B. Late penalties apply to both boater / non-boater.

21. TIES: A tie will be resolved in the following order: number of fish weighed, largest one-day catch (2 days), largest bass. If tie is still broken, Tournament officials will determine tie breaker.

22. None of the above rules shall prohibit a properly designated tournament official from approaching or boarding any competitor's boat at any time during the official practice period or official competition day.

23. The Tournament Director has the right to refuse any entry to any tournament and has final say so regarding all rules.

24. PROTESTS:

- All protests concerning the tournament must be in writing and signed by the protester and presented to the Tournament Director within 30 minutes of the end of weigh-in time.
- If there is evidence of extreme rule violations uncovered at a later time, the board of directors reserves the right to review and take whatever actions it deems necessary.
- Results of the Tournament will not be official until reviewed by the Tournament Headquarters.