



Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation

Commissioners' Cup

presented by



Saturday, May 3rd, 2025 – Lake Hamilton Public Boat Ramp - Lake Hamilton – Hot Springs, AR

RULES & REGULATIONS

1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT

Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the Commissioners' Cup Tournament Committee. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant, coach and boat captain agree to report any rule violation to the Commissioners' Cup Tournament Committee immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in, but is not limited to, weight loss, the loss of weight up to a particular time in the tournament day, the loss of weight for the entire day, the loss of the heaviest one-day catch, the loss of the heaviest bass for the day, disqualification from the entire tournament or ineligibility to participate in future tournaments. Protests are to be made in writing within 30 minutes after the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day.

2. PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY

Participation for the High School division is open to a team consisting of two high school students, current grades 9-12, although a younger angler may “fish up” with high schooler if he or she was a consistent team member throughout the circuit season. For the Junior division, students currently in grades 8 and under are eligible although a younger angler may “fish up” with junior high student if he or she was a consistent team member throughout the circuit season. The age deadline is September 1 of the current school year. At least one angler on each team must reside in the state of Arkansas. **Each team will consist of two contestants and one coach/captain/mentor, pursuant to federal law guidelines under the Youth Safe Sports Act of 2017 there MUST be 3 people to a boat at all times, no exceptions.**

Each team (applies to JR & SR) will qualify to enter the tournament by:

1. Fish in FOUR SANCTIONED TOURNAMENTS in one of Arkansas's Major Youth Bass Fishing Circuits – defined as those circuits having more than 20 teams per season participating.

Final determination for participation will be left exclusively to the Commissioners' Cup Tournament Committee

In the event of a medical or family emergency on a tournament day, a contestant may be permitted to fish alone with approval from the Commissioners' Cup Tournament Committee. If a contestant fishes multiple qualifying events with different teammates, only the first team that qualifies will advance to the tournament. A contestant cannot qualify for the tournament as a member of two

different teams. Contestants must have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the entry form. Contestants must have in their possession a valid fishing license for the waters they fish if required by law and a current student identification card from the school they represent or other proof of grade level. Random checks will be conducted at the tournament. Failure to provide proof of a valid fishing license within a reasonable amount of time when requested by the Commissioners' Cup Tournament Committee will result in disqualification for that day and any preceding days in which the license was required for the tournament. Contestants are required to follow all applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws. Any violation of such regulations and laws may result in disqualification from the tournament. Accepted teams will be confirmed and notified via e-mail prior to the tournament. Tournament officials reserve the right to reject any application to compete for any reason whatsoever.

3. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION

The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted by contestants, coaches, boat captains or anyone working on a team's behalf within 10 days of the start of any tournament. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

4. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE & COMPETITION

Off-Limits will be sunrise Tuesday, April 29th, 2025–sunrise Friday, May 2nd, 2025,

making only one day of practice. Testing equipment on tournament waters after the start of onsite registration is permitted only with prior approval from the tournament director. Within 10 days of the tournament no contestant, coach or boat captain may practice with, hire, barter for, or engage in services with, for the purposes of locating or catching bass on the tournament waters, any person who has been a bass guide for hire on the tournament waters within the last 12 months unless such person is the parent or documented permanent legal guardian of a contestant on a team in the event. Written proof of permanent legal guardianship to the satisfaction of tournament officials may be required. Within 10 days of the tournament contestants may only practice with their teammate that is confirmed in the tournament, their coach, their boat captain or an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister or grandparent) who also meets the above criteria concerning guides. Nobody else, except a media representative or official approved by the tournament director, is allowed in the boat. Within 10 days of the tournament and extending through competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except contestants, coaches and boat captains confirmed in the tournament and through publicly available sources (quasi-public websites, blogs and/or social media pages, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram and Periscope, set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are not publicly available sources). Within 10 days of the tournament and extending through competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not follow a non-contestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers, brush or other physical fish attractors by non-contestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. During competition days, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not place brush or other physical fish attractors, including chum of any kind, in tournament waters. Flights over tournament waters, including drones, are not permitted on competition days.

A contestant does not have to be present in the boat while a boat captain, coach, or immediate family member may be pre-fishing for an event.

Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

5. REGISTRATION & PRE-TOURNAMENT MEETING

Contestants must check in the morning of the tournament at the tournament trailer before take-off. It is mandatory that 1 contestant, or coach or boat captain attend the pre-tournament meeting at 6:00 PM on Friday, May 2nd, 2025, at Trader Bill's Outdoor Store, 1530 Albert Pike Rd, Hot Springs, AR 71913 unless prior approval is received from the Commissioners' Cup Tournament Committee. Contestants and/or coaches or boat captains not present for the pre-tournament meeting may not be entered in the tournament.

6. BOAT ASSIGNMENTS

Takeoff order (boat number) is determined by random draw. Onsite entries may receive the last available boat numbers. Each team must be accompanied on the water by their boat captains. At registration, contestants are to pick 2 boat captains and one alternate. These are the only 3 boat captains that can be used through-out the year. If in a catastrophic event, none of the 3 are available, you may be granted an emergency boat captain for your event upon approval of the tournament director and the board.

7. SAFETY

Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant, coach and boat captain on the water is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is running. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location with a driver behind the steering wheel or at the tiller in full control of the boat whenever it is on plane or the combustion engine is running and in gear. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation and in gear is not permitted. Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is running. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants, coaches and boat captains. At the discretion of the tournament director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is eminent. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP

All contestants, coaches and boat captains are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy and conservation and to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, FLW, TBF, SAF, tournaments sponsors, the school the team is representing, the sport of fishing the FLW, TBF and SAF's efforts to promote the sport. Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any kind of mind-altering substance during registration, the pretournament meeting or during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- Conviction of a felony within the past 36 months.
- Suspension/disqualification, probation or ban from any tournament or fishing organization.
- Any other words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set forth in the first sentence of paragraph 8.

In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, tournament officials have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete, to disqualify a contestant or impose any penalty outlined in paragraph 1.

9. BOAT OPERATION

Coaches will supply and drive boats for their teams or arrange boat captains to supply and drive boats for their teams. To qualify as a coach or boat captain, the person or persons accompanying a team must be at least 19 years old and reside in the same state as the students comprising the team or be an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister or grandparent) that is at least 19 years old regardless of residence. Bass guides who operate or have operated for hire at any time during the previous 12 months from the tournament date on the designated tournament waters are not permitted as coaches or boat captains unless they are the parent or documented permanent legal guardian of one of the contestants on a team in the event. Written proof of permanent legal guardianship to the satisfaction of the tournament director may be required. The use of a guide as defined above will result in disqualification. Contestants may operate the trolling motor. Coaches and boat captains may provide assistance, including information about locating and catching fish, but are not permitted to fish. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not use mobile communication devices, including but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc., to communicate with anyone about locating or catching fish on tournament waters during tournament hours. Mobile communication devices may be used during tournament hours to communicate with lockmasters about locking, to communicate with the tournament director. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may use smart phones and/or tablets during tournament hours for GPS, mapping, weather, power generation, tidal charts, personal fishing notes and related data. At no time during tournament hours may contestants, coaches and boat captains read or discuss social media posts from other contestants. If a special circumstance arises that inhibits a contestant's ability to compete, the tournament director may allow the contestant to withdraw from competition and maintain the weight caught to that point.

10. BOAT & HORSEPOWER REGULATION

All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 16 feet in length. No barges or similarly cumbersome craft will be permitted. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated livewell space to maintain alive a limit catch of bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition shall not exceed the horsepower capacity set forth on the "Maximum Capacities" placard described below. Each boat must have a clearly legible "Maximum Capacities" (or comparably titled) placard that includes a maximum horsepower rating affixed to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the maximum horsepower capacity specified on this placard. By signing the entry form, contestants, coaches and boat captains agree to submit their boat and/or motor to an inspection by tournament officials. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating placard will be cause for disqualification from the tournament and may result in ineligibility to compete in future High School Fishing tournaments. Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks or auxiliary fuel tanks that are securely strapped or otherwise fastened to the boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle. The use of generators, other than solar or wind-powered generators, is prohibited in contestant boats during tournament hours.

11. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS

Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the rod in hand. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. All lures must adhere to state regulations. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Alabama rigs and similar umbrella-type rigs are limited to a maximum of five wires with a maximum of five spinners, five lures and three hooks (single or treble) unless state regulations are more restrictive, in which case state regulations prevail. Only ONE fishing rod may be used at a time. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. Trolling is defined as operating any combustion engine to extend a cast or lengthen a retrieve or using any mechanical propulsion device to move the boat as the sole means of imparting action to the lure. All bass caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth and immediately shown to your coach or boat captain for verification.

12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS & BOUNDARIES

Teams may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries defined by the tournament director that are available to the public and accessible by boat except areas designated as “off-limits,” “no boats,” “keep out,” “restricted,” “no trespassing” or “no fishing” (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by tournament officials, commercial property owners and/or local, state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a contestant’s boat that was first anchored. An anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a weight or by a Power-Pole, Talon or similar shallow water anchor with the trolling motor in the up position. All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs after the start of onsite registration and/or the removal of official local, state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament. Teams must leave and return to the check-in by boat. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No tournament boat may be loaded on a trailer before the team using the boat presents their catch for weigh-in, except with the permission of the tournament director. In the event of equipment failure or emergency, the tournament director must be notified as soon as it is safe to do so. There are then three permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both contestants remaining in their boat and being towed by water, (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one contestant entering the boat of another team or (3) both contestants entering a rescue boat so designated by the tournament director. Under these three conditions the team’s catch may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) provided each team’s fish are adequately marked or separated so as to provide clear distinction of each catch to the tournament director. Teams that elect to return to the check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day’s catch to that point in time of the tournament day. Abandoning a boat and leaving it adrift without proper tie-off or anchoring after a mechanical failure may result in disqualification of that day’s weight. Any team returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the tournament director or his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of teams to locate the tournament director to request a restart. Teams must remain together at all times and within sight of their coach or boat captain until check-in. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for restroom breaks is permitted. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

13. CHECKPOINTS

There will be only one checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check and checkout in the morning or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. All fishing must cease upon check-in.

Tournament hours are as listed –

Boats will be back to shore at 2pm

14. LATE PENALTY

Teams that are not at the designated afternoon checkpoint at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight. Teams more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight.

15. LIVE FISH

Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated livewell. Eight ounces will be deducted from the total weight for each dead bass presented for weigh-in.

16. SCORING

Scoring is determined by the pounds and ounces of each team's catch during each tournament. Only largemouth, spotted, redeye or smallmouth bass are accepted species. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a bass. The daily limit will be five bass per team unless the state or lake limit is less than five, in which case the state or lake limit will prevail. Teams possessing more than the tournament limit must notify the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the infraction and reduce their catch to the tournament limit by releasing live bass. Teams possessing more than the tournament limit will be penalized 2 pounds for each bass over the limit. The minimum length limit for bass will be 12 inches unless the state or lake limit is more than 12 inches, in which case, the state or lake limit will prevail. Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit will be penalized at the rate of 1 pound for each short bass presented. Each team's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag. The winning team is determined by the day's heaviest catch.

17. TIES

If a tie is in place, the place tied and the next place thereafter will be combined and split between the ties.

18. LOGO DISPLAY & MEDIA COVERAGE

Contestants, coaches and boat captains may wear their own apparel. Tournament officials reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to prohibit any contestant, coach or boat captain's apparel that is determined to be offensive.

19. ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

During all days of competition any and all alcohol and tobacco logos are prohibited and may not be worn or displayed. Contestants may not smoke or use tobacco products during tournament hours, including weigh-in, at any event.

20. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST

Each contestant and coach agree to submit, by signature on the tournament entry form, to a polygraph or voice stress analysis examination and to abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass an examination will result in disqualification from the tournament. Truth verification tests will be used at the sole discretion of tournament officials, and the determination of the meaning of the results will be made solely by tournament officials.

21. INSURANCE

Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required on all boats used in High School Fishing tournaments. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat. Random checks will be conducted. Failure to provide proof of insurance when requested by the tournament director may result in disqualification.

22. CAPTIONS

The captions at the beginning of each paragraph are intended to facilitate convenience in referring to the various rules. The captions are not part of the substance of the paragraph and should not be used in construction of any paragraph or of this overall set of rules.