

# MLF BASS PRO TOUR OFFICIAL RULES



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Senior Director of Competitions

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## 1. MLF BASS PRO TOUR EVENT FORMAT

- The field size for the Major League Fishing Bass Pro Tour will consist of 80 Major League Fishing anglers
- The competition will be comprised of four rounds over six days, preceded by two official practice days prior to the first day of competition. The first day of official practice will start 30 minutes before sunrise and end 30 minutes after sunset. The second day of official practice will begin 30 minutes before sunrise and end at 4 P.M.
- The first three rounds have three, 2.5-hour periods with two, 15-minute lines out scheduled breaks.
- Anglers will be seeded into two groups of 40 Group A and Group B
- Major League Fishing will utilize a seeding system based on your MLF BPT finishes from previous tour events
- Competition Day 1 – Shotgun round 1 Group A: 40 anglers – Total weight for the Day Carried to Elimination Round
- Competition Day 2 – Shotgun round 1 Group B: 40 anglers – Total weight for the Day Carried to Elimination Round
- Competition Day 3 – Elimination Round 1 Group A: 40 Anglers – Total Cumulative Two-Day Weight – Top 20 Qualifying to Knockout Round
- Competition Day 4 – Elimination Round 2 Group B: 40 Anglers – Total Cumulative Two-Day Weight – Top 20 Qualifying to Knockout Round
- Competition Day 5 - Knockout Round: 40 Anglers Weights are Zeroed – Top 10 Total Weight Qualify to Championship
- Competition Day 6 – Championship Round: 10 Anglers - Weights are Zeroed - MLF Format (three, 2.5-hour periods with two 15 minutes lines out scheduled breaks. Total Weight of all scoreable bass caught is the event champion.

## 2. Participants and Eligibility

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- A. The following rules shall apply at all Major League Fishing Bass Pro Tour Events. These rules may be modified and changed from time to time with input from PBATA Angler Representatives working with our MLF Senior Director of Competition. All MLF Anglers will receive notice of such change or correction via text and or e-mail.
- B. MLF Events are only open to qualified Major League Anglers who have signed both League documents: 1. Major League Fishing, LLC Angler and League Agreement 2. Professional Bass Tour Anglers Association, Talent and Promotion Agreement.
- C. During official practice and competition days of any Major League Fishing Events: Tour, RedCrest, Cup and GT World Championship no Angler may operate a boat unless that Angler has documented proof of a minimum of \$300,000 per occurrence, in boat owners liability insurance (see Anglers Talent Promotion Agreement page 2.C.) covering the MLF angler's boat being used in the event. Proof of insurance must be with the MLF angler's boat being used and must cover all passengers in that boat. Each policy must show an effective start date and expiration date. Any Angler who does not have proof of in-force insurance with \$300,000 coverage may be subject to fines, penalties or disqualification. Major League Fishing MLF Senior Director Competitions will have final say. In addition, to this required insurance coverage, MLF Anglers are also required to carry a \$1,000,000 Professional Angler General Liability Insurance Policy. (See Anglers Talent Promotion Agreement page 2c ).
- D. Each calendar year prior to competing in an MLF Event, all competitors must sign a W-9 and when required a Form 590 or W-8 BEN provided by MLF. If tax status or address changes occur new forms must be submitted prior to participation in the next MLF event. PBATA TALENT AND PROMOTION AGREEMENT page 5,8. Federal and State Taxes.
- E. To ensure effective and timely communication between Major League Fishing, Pro Bass Tour, and MLF Bass Pro Tour Anglers, each angler must provide MLF Senior Director Competitions and Director of Marketing & Relationship Management with his/her primary cell phone number, primary e-mail address and home phone number (if applicable). If there is a change in an angler's primary cell phone number or email address, it is the angler's responsibility to make MLF staff in the first paragraph aware of that change. If the angler does not have an e-mail address that he/she checks on a regular basis, the angler may provide an email address for a significant other or manager who is in regular contact with that angler. Anglers' cell phones must be able to receive text messages from MLF staff in the first paragraph.
- F. Major League Fishing is the owner of all Bass Pro Tour Events and holds the content rights to all photos and videos (live or recorded) that are captured at any Bass Pro Tour Event which also includes REDCREST both on and off the water. During events, Major League Fishing may mount a small camera in a MLF angler's boat. The footage collected would be used for MLF's website, social media both on and off the water or TV coverage.

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- G. All MLF Anglers are required to comply, even if the MLF Angler already has a personal camera mounted in their boat. Refusing to comply may result in a penalty. In-boat MLF Officials and camera operators will be allowed to operate these cameras. In-boat MLF Officials are not allowed to operate an angler's personal camera unless an angler specifically asks an in-boat MLF Official to take a photo or video of the Angler during the competition.
- H. Photos taken by a MLF Angler during a MLF Competition may be posted on social media and the Angler's website. Anglers may shoot a video for promotional or marketing purposes and send it to sponsors/post videos on social media profiles/the Anglers website.
- I. If an Angler has their own camera person or crew following them on the water, that personal photographer or team must register with MLF media for an approved MLF Credential prior to being on the lake. The Angler's personal photographer or team must be respectful of MLF Camera Operators, photographers and other MLF competitors always.
- J. Personal photographers must do everything within reason not to interfere with MLF photographers, videographers and other MLF Anglers who are covering/competing in the event. At the event, MLF Angler's personal photographers must follow the same rules as any media covering the event. Media coverage guidelines will be provided by MLF Media no later than before the start of the competition.

### 3. MLF Bass Pro Tour Event Rules

- A. MLF Senior Director of Competitions oversees interpreting and enforcing these rules. If there is a rule violation, the MLF Senior Director Competitions will determine the angler's penalty. That may include disqualification, loss of points and winnings and prohibition from participation in future MLF events. Any MLF Angler can file an appeal of a penalty with the Major League Fishing Senior Director of Competitions. In the case of an appeal, the three (3) person Appeals Board made up of the Senior Director of Competitions, a PBTA Board Member and an MLF League Director will make the final ruling on all appeals submitted.
- B. MLF Anglers are required to report any concerns about possible rule violations by another competitor. If an angler witnesses a rule violation, the angler must report that violation to his own in-boat MLF Official and the Senior Director of Competitions as soon as the day of competition has ended.
- C. All MLF Anglers will start from and return to the same official check point unless otherwise instructed by the Senior Director of Competitions.
- D. During the morning before Lines-In, all MLF Anglers will follow all instructions from the Senior Director Competitions and his designees.

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- E. Each MLF Official will notify the MLF Angler when to leave the staging area for Lines-In.
- F. The MLF SCORETRACKER Scoring System Device will serve as the "Official Clock."
- G. The MLF Official will give the MLF Angler a countdown to Lines-In (beginning of competition). At the end of both periods and each round the MLF Official will provide the MLF Angler an official countdown to Lines-Out.
- H. Regarding the final cast of the day, any bass hooked on the final cast must be "inside the boat" — visibly inside the gunnel — before time expires to be scorable.
- I. The total weight of "scorable bass" caught during the day will determine the MLF Anglers' place for that day.
- J. When boating in low visibility situations (fog, heavy rain, etc.) during practice or competition, anglers must operate their boats at a safe speed and in a safe manner as determined by the MLF Senior Director Competitions.
- K. MAJOR LEAGUE FISHING reserves the right to impose boat speed limits at any time during any MLF Event. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area restricted by the speed limit and/or the actual speed will be determined by the MLF Senior Director Competitions. All boats used in MLF events must have a GPS unit on the console capable of displaying current miles per hour while on plane, and it is the angler's responsibility to have a working knowledge of that technology.
- L. In the event of an emergency, competitors must call 911 first and then notify the MLF Senior Director Competitions.
- M. Competitors and MLF Officials are allowed to leave the boat and seek safe shelter in bad weather where danger may be imminent.
- N. Once an MLF Angler is eliminated from competition that MLF angler is not allowed back on the MLF event waters without the approval of the Senior Director of Competition.

### 4. Daily Tie-Breaker

- A. 1. If two (or more) MLF Anglers are tied for a finishing position that determines whether that MLF Angler will advance to the next competitive round—meaning they have caught the same total on-the-record weight during that round — the following tie-breaking rules will be employed.
- B. 2. TIE-BREAKER NO. 1: The MLF Angler with the most total accumulative number of "scorable bass" caught during the day shall be deemed the winner.

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- C. TIE-BREAKER NO. 2: After Tie-Breaker No. 1 is employed and two (or more) MLF Anglers are still tied, Tie-Breaker No. 2 shall be employed: The MLF Angler with the largest single bass (highest weight) caught during the day shall be deemed the winner.
- D. 4. TIE-BREAKER NO. 3: After Tie-Breaker No. 1 and 2 have been employed but two (or more) MLF Anglers are still tied, Tie-Breaker No. 3 shall be employed: The 2nd largest single bass caught during the day shall be deemed the winner. After this, should there still be a tie, the tie-breaker no.3 procedure shall be repeated until a winner is determined.

### 5. Performance Rating Tie-Breaker

- A. To determine the event finish placement, MLF Anglers will be ranked at each event on a 1 through 80 finishing position. The order is determined in the following way. In the MLF Bass Pro Tour event there are Group A and Group B each with 40 MLF Anglers competing for a 2-day total weight. At the conclusion there will be 20 anglers eliminated from Group A and 20 anglers eliminated from Group B. this will be anglers placing 21-40 in A Group and 21-40 in Group B. There will be two anglers finishing in 21<sup>st</sup>, two anglers finishing in 22<sup>nd</sup>, two anglers finishing 23<sup>rd</sup> and so on until you reach two anglers finishing 40<sup>th</sup>. Each one on those ties will be broken by a Performance Rating.
- B. PERFORMANCE RATING CALCULATION: The MLF Angler with the highest Performance Rating of the applicable round fished is awarded the tie-breaker placement. The PERFORMANCE RATING is the average of TOTAL FISH and TOTAL WEIGHT percentages of the round against ONLY the other MLF Anglers in your same Round or Group.
- C. EXAMPLE:
  - Angler A: Scored the most fish and the most weight. 10 bass - 20 pounds.
  - Angler B: Scored 6 bass - 10 pounds.
- D. TOTAL FISH PERCENTAGE: TOTAL WEIGHT PERCENTAGE:
  - Angler A: 1.000 Angler A: 1.000
  - Angler B: .600 Angler B: .500
- E. PERFORMANCE RATING:
  - Angler A: 1.000
  - Angler B: .550

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## 6. MLF Bass Pro Tour and MLF REDCREST Prize Money and Qualifying Terms

### Bass Pro Tour Event Payout

1st \$100,000  
2nd \$42,000  
3rd \$30,000  
4th \$24,000  
5th \$18,000  
6th \$16,800  
7th \$15,600  
8th \$14,400  
9th \$13,200  
10th \$12,000  
11th-40th \$6,000  
Daily Big Bass \$1,000  
Overall Big Bass \$1,000  
Event Total Payout \$473,000

### REDCREST Payout

1st \$300,000  
2nd \$60,000  
3rd \$48,000  
4th \$30,000  
5th \$27,000  
6th \$24,000  
7th \$21,000  
8th \$18,000  
9th \$16,000  
10th \$ 15,000  
11th-20th \$12,000  
21st-30th \$6,000  
Daily Big Bass \$1,000  
Overall Big Bass \$1,000  
Event Total Payout \$745,000

During each of the MLF BASS PRO TOUR Events, MLF Anglers will earn MLF REDCREST qualifying points according to individual place finish at the end of each Event; Top thirty (30) Anglers in year-end points after all Eight (8) events have been completed will advance to the MLF REDCREST. Points are reset to zero at the beginning of each year.

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- The top 30 MLF anglers in points at the end of Bass Pro Tour events 1 & 2, will qualify for MLF Challenge CUP. (Points reset to zero)
- The top 30 MLF anglers in points at the end of Tour events 3 & 4, will qualify for MLF Heritage CUP. (Points reset to zero)
- The top 30 MLF anglers in points at the end of Tour events 5 & 6, will qualify for MLF PATRIOT CUP (Points reset to zero)
- The top 30 MLF anglers in points at the end of Tour events 7 & 8, will qualify for MLF Summit CUP IV.
- The following 16 Anglers will qualify for the World Championship:
  - One (1) Angler: First Place in MLF World Championship from previous season (Reigning World Champion).
  - One (1) Angler: MLF Bass Pro Tour MVP in current season.
  - One (1) Angler: First Place in MLF Bass Pro REDCREST in current season.
- Twelve (12) Anglers: First through Third Place winners in each of four (4) MLF CUPS in current season.
  - One (1) Angler: First highest in CUP Points in current season.
- Any double qualifiers from Angler categories listed directly above that create an open Angler spot, will be filled by Angler(s), using highest Cup Points ranking in current season, to complete the field of Sixteen (16) total Anglers.

## 7. Sportsmanship

- A Sportsmanship Violation is defined as aggressive or hostile behavior directed at a fellow MLF Angler, MLF Official, a non-competitor or any representative of MLF, including the use of profanity directed at these individuals, will not be tolerated. MLF Officials are required to report any such violations to the MLF Senior Director Competitions. Sportsmanship Violation, Penalty will be determined by the MLF Senior Director Competitions, PBTA and MLF Director.
- Flagrant Violation: A flagrant violation of any act that reflects unfavorably upon the positive efforts of MLF, MLF sponsors, spectators, fisheries conservation, and clean waters will not be tolerated. Flagrant Sportsmanship Violation, Penalty determined by the MLF Senior Director Competitions, PBTA and MLF Director.
- MLF Anglers are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, and conservation. Any violation of the standards may be deemed cause for disqualification. (SEE Sportsmanship and Flagrant Sportsmanship Violations, definition, and penalties, Rules.)
- Use of alcohol or drugs (other than drugs purchased over-the-counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any Angler during MLF BPT Events could be cause for automatic disqualification.
- Maximum courtesy must be practiced always, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters.
- MLF Officials have the responsibility of reporting to the MLF Senior Director Competitions or his designee an MLF Angler's sportsmanship violation or a flagrant violation for any act that reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote Fisheries conservation and/or clean waters. The MLF Senior Director Competitions will assess the incident.
- All competitors are bound by the laws and policies that are set forth by the various states/counties which they fish. Some regulations may differ from these rules, resulting in fines, citations or other penalties from local law enforcement and may or

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may not result in event penalties. MLF Anglers are responsible for researching boating regulations.

- H. Disqualification, suspension or other disciplinary action imposed by other fishing organization may result in disqualification from MLF.
- I. Substance addiction or abuse or conviction of a serious crime may be grounds for disqualification from an MLF event.
- J. All MLF Anglers are responsible for their own fishing license.

## 8. ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT PENALTY GUIDELINES

- A. When an MLF Bass Pro Tour Angler is found to have violated the Angler Code of Conduct, the following scale of fines will be used to determine the monetary penalty;
  - i. First offense: Not less than \$500, or up to forfeiture of points and winnings for that event
  - ii. Second offense: Not less than \$1,500, or up to forfeiture of points and winnings for that event
  - iii. Third offense: Not less than \$5,000, or up to forfeiture of points and winnings for that event
  - iv. Fourth offense: Possible suspension or ban from the MLF BPT and other levels of MLF.
- B. The number of offenses in the list above refers to violations over the course of MLF angler's career, beginning with its effective date January 1, 2019
- C. Additional penalties may be deemed appropriate by the MLF Senior Director Competitions.

## 9. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Fish Care and Conservation is a Major League Fishing priority. All bass must be caught in a conventional sporting manner.
- B. Use of nets and grippers for landing bass is prohibited.
- C. Only artificial lures can be used.
- D. MLF Anglers can receive lures and other equipment from other MLF anglers up until 12:01 am of the first official day of practice.
- E. Any bass caught while "visually fishing" must be identified by the MLF Official and angler so that the bass caught by the technique of "visually fishing" can only be scored once during that day of competition. All bass caught while "visually fishing" must be hooked in the mouth.
- F. Alabama Rigs are not allowed.
- G. If a competitor breaks their line while setting the hook or retrieving a fish they can use whatever means necessary to land that fish.
- H. Trolling as a means of fishing is not allowed.



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## 10. In-BOAT MLF OFFICIAL'S ROLE

- A. A fully trained MLF Official will accompany each MLF Angler throughout each day's competition.
- B. Each boat will be equipped with an MLF SCORETRACKER® Scoring System Device that will be linked to a central database system. The device will provide MLF Anglers with a Leader Board that shows the status of the event leaders.
- C. The duties of the MLF Official will be to weigh and record the weight of each scorable catch, update the MLF SCORETRACKER® Scoring System Device, "call the game" and communicate with the base of operation.
- D. The MLF Official will give the MLF angler a SCORETRACKER update every 15 minutes.
- E. The MLF Official will serve as rules enforcer and the official scorekeeper.
- F. Specific Penalty Violations will be assessed "on the spot" by the MLF Official and all other violations will be reported to the MLF Senior Director Competitions or his representative.
- G. Rules decisions made by an MLF Officials are considered final unless an MLF Angler chooses to submit a written protest to the MLF Senior Director Competitions.

## 11. THE WEIGHING OF BASS

- A. All MLF Events shall utilize the MLF term "scorable bass." A scorable bass is any bass caught that weighs one (1) pound or greater. Any bass caught that weighs less than one (1) pound shall be deemed "non-scorable."
- B. There is no limit to the number of scorable bass an MLF Angler can catch and record during MLF Event competition day.
- C. Only the MLF Angler will handle bass caught during competition. Once a bass is caught, the bass will be set onto the official scale by the MLF Angler.
- D. The MLF Official will hold the official scale by the handle only with both hands and position it at eye level. The bass must be held steady, allowing the scale to be clearly read first by the MLF Official in full view of the TV camera.
- E. Should the bass be less than one (1) pound, the MLF Official shall announce it to be non-scorable. Should the bass be more than one (1) pound, the official will proceed to call the weight.
- F. The MLF Official will call the weight. If the call is challenged by the MLF Angler, the MLF Official will zero the scale and re-weigh the bass a maximum of two (2) additional times, and then the MLF Official will make the final call, "the official weight is." The bass can't be dipped into the water between re-weighs.
- G. After the official weight is announced (or after a bass is deemed non-scorable) the MLF Angler is to remove the bass from the scale, properly release the bass **immediately** into the water and resume fishing.
- H. The MLF Official will immediately record the weight in writing on the MLF "Manual SCORETRACKER® Sheet" and enter the weight into the official MLF SCORETRACKER® Scoring System Device.

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## 12. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS:

- A. 250 is the maximum horsepower for all outboard motors used in official MLF BPT events. Horsepower cannot exceed the limitations set by the U.S. Coast Guard. When required, each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard horsepower rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer and that rating plate must be an accurate representation of the engine's horsepower. Each angler must agree to an inspection of their competition boat and outboard motor. Inspections will be performed by a factory-trained official if there is any reason for MLF Event Officials to suspect the horsepower is more than the rating. Normal engine maintenance is allowed and encouraged. However, changing or altering the standard factory parts of an engine to increase the horsepower over the 250-horsepower maximum is forbidden, and will result in disqualification.
- B. Falsifying any information on entry forms, including the horsepower-rating numbers on the engine will lead to immediate disqualification from all MAJOR LEAGUE FISHING events.
- C. Anglers must be mindful of their boat's speed at all time. Posted speed limits and limits set by MAJOR LEAGUE FISHING Competition Officials must be followed, and all anglers must operate their boats in a safe manner. Violations of speed limits will result in an angler losing competition hours and may lead to disqualification.

## 13. BOAT AND MOTOR REGULATIONS:

- A. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnels of the boat. Standing on the outboard engine or seats while fishing is not allowed. Trolling motors may be used for slow maneuvering around competition waters.
- B. Only manufacturer-installed gas tanks are allowed. Portable gas tanks or containers holding gasoline are not allowed on the event waters or shoreline for use by any event competitor.
- C. Any boat/hull designs other than standard mass-produced units are only allowed at the discretion of the Senior Director of Competitions.
- D. Anglers must compete from the same boat for the entirety of the season unless approved by the Senior Director of Competitions.

## 14. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT:

- A. During official practice days and the competition, every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment as well as a functional bilge pump.
- B. Before the start of each competition day, each angler's boat must be inspected by an MLF Competition Official.
- C. Anglers must provide adequate storage space for In-Boat MLF Official and Camera Operator. Also, providing ample space to ice food and drink is a requirement.

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D. The MLF Anglers' SCORE TRACKER ACCESS TERMINAL(S.T.A.T.) unit will be installed on the angler's boat each morning on all days of competition and removed from the anglers boat at the end of each day's competition. These (S.T.A.T) units are fully self-contained.

## **15. BOAT OPERATION AND EXPENSE:**

- A. During every MLF BPT Event, anglers can fish from anywhere inside the boat. MLF Officials should make every reasonable effort to stay out of the way of anglers while they are fishing or landing fish. MLF Official and/or Camera Operators are not allowed to help competitors in any way. MLF Officials and/or Camera Operators can drive boats in cases of emergency or with permission from the MLF Senior Director Competitions. Loading and unloading boats from trailers is an exception to this rule. All cost of boat operation is the responsibility of MLF Anglers. When idling in shallow areas, anglers can ask MLF Officials and/or Camera Operators to move their position in the boat if the MLF Official and/or Camera Operator can place his/her feet in the bottom of the boat.

## **16. MLF OFFICIAL OBLIGATIONS:**

- A. MLF Officials are required to have knowledge of SCORETRACKER® operation. SCORE-TRACKER® operation will be explained in the Boat with MLF Official Training before the events, and in briefings before each competition.
- B. MLF Anglers and MLF Officials are, to be honest, and timely with catch and weight reports. Any competitor who, in the judgment of the MLF Senior Director Competitions, advises MLF Officials to neglect or falsely report catches or weights will be penalized.
- C. MLF Officials can carry GPS systems and use cell phones during the events to communicate with MLF event officials and other boats on the water.
- D. MLF Official will bring a personal PFD as a part of his equipment bag to each event.
- E. MLF Officials are not allowed to text information to anyone other than MAJOR LEAGUE FISHING media and event officials unless in an emergency.
- F. MLF Officials can assist an angler with his personal camera if the angler requests help and the Boat Official is comfortable doing so. Major League Fishing Cameras and Go-Pro style cameras always take priority over angler's personal cameras, in terms of placement and access to batteries/chargers.

## **17. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:**

- A. Competition waters shall be established by MLF Competition Officials for each day of the event. Each competitor must obtain this information from MAJOR LEAGUE FISH-

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ING Competition Officials. Any areas within these boundaries that are obviously labeled "Off-Limits" or "No Fishing," will be off-limits to anglers and will be announced at the Event Briefing. Only areas open to public fishing will be considered event waters. Off-limits boundaries set by authorities or event officials should be treated as a wall, meaning anglers cannot cast over that boundary while fishing.

- B. All angling must be done from inside the boat. When fishing in states where land-owners have the legal authority to claim private property, private property areas must be posted, or they will be considered event waters unless anglers are instructed otherwise by MLF Competition Officials. If forced to leave a private area on event waters, an angler must report the incident to the MLF Senior Director Competitions as soon as possible. Any water to which a competitor is denied access automatically becomes off-limits to all competitors.
- C. Before the event check-in, any questionable areas must be brought to the attention of the MLF Senior Director Competitions to be considered event waters and may be announced in the briefing for all to hear unless determined otherwise by the MLF Senior Director Competitions has the right to restrict or modify competition waters based on any new information or conversations with local authorities.
- D. Anglers are not allowed to cut, remove, displace, or alter any type of structure on private property (dry land) at any time during an MLF event. Anglers can move structures to include sawing of logs or other obstructions in the water if the local laws permit it. No angler may place any object in the water or on dry land that could put another boater or angler in danger.

### 18. COMPETITORS MUST REMAIN IN BOAT:

- A. During the event days, competitors cannot leave the boat to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters.
- B. Competitors can leave the boat to retrieve a lure or a rod. All fishing by that competitor must cease until the competitor is back in the boat.
- C. Boats must remain in event waters during event days. Competitors must leave from and return to official checkpoints. Anglers must remain in the boat at all times except in case of dire emergency, bad weather or with permission from the MLF Event Officials. In that case, competitors may be removed from their boat to either a back-up boat or a rescue boat.

### 19. SCORING:

- A. Competition standings and final winners shall be determined by the pound-and-ounce weight of each competitor's catch during the competition days of the event. Only Black Bass will be weighed and counted.

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## 20. PAIRINGS:

- A. MLF Officials will be assigned to each boat and camera operators when appropriate. It shall be the responsibility of every angler and MLF Official to appear at an agreed upon check point in the morning with sufficient time remaining to check out and start on time. The MLF Senior Director Competitions, at his sole discretion, may reassign partners at any time.

## 21. TAXES:

- A. There may be events in states that have laws requiring income taxes to be withheld on cash awards to non-residents. If that is the case, the taxes will be automatically deducted from the angler's winnings prior to the awards being presented.
- B. Participants are responsible for all applicable taxes, execution of all tax forms, and rules on both cash and merchandise awards.

## 22. WAIVER AND RELEASE:

- A. As a condition of participation in each event, Anglers and MLF Officials must execute a waiver and release of liability and a name and likeness release.

## 23. NO INFORMATION RULE:

- A. **THE NO INFORMATION RULE WILL BE GOVERNED BY A RULE INFRACTION VERIFICATION TEST.**  
(Penalty –Official: Receiving/Sharing Information, will be determined by the Senior Director of Competitions)
- B. Once MLF has released the Bass Pro Tour schedule and dates or if an angler were to learn such information from other sources, the angler must comply with the MLF no information rule or be subject to fines, penalties or disqualification from that event or all future MLF events.
- C. No information means that an MLF angler cannot engage in any type of activity to gain a competitive advantage over other MLF anglers that is not public information. THIS INCLUDES RECEIVING WAY POINTS.
- D. MLF Anglers are allowed to research public information such as maps, Google, print material etc. MLF Anglers are prohibited from receiving research assistance from ANYONE.

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- E. MLF Anglers are not allowed to view live-streaming during the first two rounds of competition (Shotgun Round and Elimination Round).
- F. There will be a 30-day off-limits period leading up to 12:01 am the morning of the first day of official practice. During the official off-limits an MLF Angler cannot be on the event water, gather any information or intentionally receive any information from any source that is not publicly available.
- G. Prior to the 30-day off limits, an MLF Angler can prefish the scheduled event water by themselves or with immediate family members, however the immediate family members will not be allowed to fish for bass.
- H. During the official two-day practice period, an MLF Angler cannot be on the water with anyone without prior approval from the Senior Director of Competition.
- I. MLF Anglers are allowed to talk to other MLF Anglers about MLF event waters up until the first day of official practice.
- J. Actively competing MLF Anglers may not talk to MLF Officials about any other MLF Angler's tactics used during any competition day.

### 24. ASSESSING PENALTIES:

A. If the MLF Official calls a penalty on the MLF Angler, the angler must immediately stop all activities, including fishing. The MLF Angler can drop his shallow water anchors or engage Spot Lock. ALL other activities of any kind are not allowed, and additional penalty time will be added for a penalty compliance violation for each occurrence.

B. If a penalty results from a Fish Landing Violation the bass must immediately be weighed and released. The MLF Official is required to manually record the weight of the bass before he starts the penalty clock on the SCORETRACKER® Scoring System Device.

C. MLF Officials are not allowed to enter the penalty on the SCORETRACKER® Scoring System Device before the weight is first manually recorded. The MLF Angler must not request the MLF Official to start the penalty clock before the weight is first manually entered.

D. The MLF Angler must sit down on the front deck and is not allowed to do ANYTHING during his penalty time except for talking to the camera operator about his fishing day up to that point or what it is that he is going to do next.

(Penalty – Official: Penalty Compliance Violation, 1 Minute Additional Penalty)

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## 25. PENALTY CARRY-OVER:

- A. If an MLF Angler is assessed a penalty at the end of the day the penalty time spent will be at the “start of Fishing” the angler’s next day of completion. The beginning ride around time cannot be used for penalty time.

## 26. LINES-IN RULE:

- A. During the countdown to begin fishing and at the end of a Penalty, the MLF Angler cannot cast his lure before the MLF Official says “Lines In.”  
(Penalty – Official: Lines-In Violation, 2 Minutes at Start of Period)

## 27. LINES-OUT RULE:

- A. When the MLF Official has called "End of Period, Lines Out" or "End of Round, Lines Out" the MLF Angler cannot make another cast.  
(Penalty – Official: Lines-Out Violation, 2 Minutes Carry-Over Penalty)
- B. At the end of the round MLF angler is required to immediately return directly to the boat launch. MLF Angler cannot use this time to gain a competitive advantage over other MLF anglers. (Penalty—5 Minutes Carry-Over Penalty)

## 28. ENCROACHMENT RULE:

- A. There is no official buoy distance rule. However, at no time is an MLF Angler allowed to interfere with another MLF Angler’s line. If an MLF Angler casts close to another MLF Angler and hooks into his line, the casting MLF Angler will be penalized.  
(Penalty – Official: Hooking other’s line, 2 Min., stop fishing when line untangled)

## 29. LANDING BASS:

A. While landing bass, the bass cannot touch the carpet or any other part of the boat inside the gunnel at any time during the process. If the bass comes unhooked from the bait and falls to the carpet or hits any other part of the inside of the boat, it will be assessed as a violation. Exception from this rule will be laying the bass on the carpet to remove a deep-set hook, “only after it has been properly landed without it touching the carpet.” The MLF Angler should first ask the MLF Official if the MLF Angler can lay the bass on the carpet.

- B. Additionally, MLF Anglers are not allowed to cradle bass or allow bass being landed to touch the MLF Angler’s body. An MLF Angler cannot allow a bass to touch any part of his body other than his hands or forearms. A slight touch will not be penal-

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ized. If the MLF Angler brings the bass to the body deliberately to secure control of the bass or the bass hits the MLF Angler more than a “slight touch” as judged by the MLF Official, then it will be called a penalty. From a rules standpoint, the body is to be treated the same as the carpet.

- C. Should an MLF Angler hook multiple bass on one bait, a penalty will be assessed for every bass that touches anything inside the boat or touches the angler as described above.

(Penalty – Official: Fish Landing Violation, 2 Minutes immediate, stop Fishing)

### 30. FLAGRANT FISH LANDING:

- A. Should an MLF Angler intentionally harm a bass in any way during the landing process, the action shall be deemed a Flagrant Fish Landing Violation. Such actions include, but are not limited to, intentionally causing a bass to touch the carpet or any other part of the boat inside the gunnel, intentionally cradling a bass with arms, legs or body, intentionally stepping on a bass, etc.
- B. The difference between a regular Fish Landing Violation and a Flagrant Fish Landing Violation is intent. A regular Fish Landing Violation is the result of an unintended action. A Flagrant Fish Landing Violation is the result of an intended action.
- C. Should an MLF Angler hook multiple bass on one bait, and intentionally harm them as described above, a Flagrant Fish Landing Violation penalty will be assessed for every bass that is hooked.
- D. If a bass is landed by lifting or pulling it up with the angler’s rod and purposely dropping it on the floor is a Flagrant Fish Landing Violation.

(Penalty – Official: Flagrant Fish Landing violation, 5 Minutes immediate, stop Fishing)

### 31. RELEASING BASS:

- A. When releasing any bass that is scorable or non-scorable, the MLF Angler’s hand must be at gunnel level or closer to the water. No flipping or tossing of bass. Doing so will be considered a Fish Release Violation.

(Penalty – Official: Fish Release Violation, 2 Minutes immediate, stop Fishing)



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## 32. SECOND LINE:

- A. An MLF Angler will be allowed to utilize a second line ONCE PER PERIOD. However, when utilizing a second line, an MLF Angler must employ a “cast and retrieve” method. Working bottom baits very slowly is considered a “cast and retrieve” method. If an MLF Angler casts a second line more than once per period, the MLF Angler will receive a penalty. Dragging a line from a stationary rod is not permitted. Although the MLF Angler will be penalized for the second-time use of two lines, any scorable bass caught will be counted towards his weight total.

(Penalty – Official: Illegal 2nd Line, 1 Min., stop fishing when 2nd lure is retrieved)

## 33. LEAVING BOAT TO FISH:

- A. MLF Anglers may not leave the boat for the purpose of Fishing. Leaving the boat to assist in landing a hooked fish, as an act of Fishing, will result in a penalty. Although penalized, if an MLF Angler retrieves a scorable bass, the bass will be counted towards his weight total. Leaving the boat for non-Fishing reasons is allowed without a penalty. (Penalty – Official: Leaving Boat to Land Fish, 3 Minutes immediate stop fishing)
- B. Furthermore, the MLF Official and camera operator may not leave the boat to help the angler for any reason. The exception for the MLF Official is he may only leave the boat in a situation where the integrity of the game is at risk. The exception for the camera operator may leave the boat for alternate filming angles, but never to help the angler. However, if the MLF official has to aid the angler in boat retrieval, a 2-minute penalty will be called. (Penalty- Official : Boat Retrieval, 2 Minutes immediate stop fishing)
- C. The MLF angler is not allowed outside of their boat for the purpose of gaining access. If an MLF angler's boat gets stuck and the MLF angler needs assistance a penalty will be assessed. Once the boat is freed and the angler is back in the boat the penalty will start.

(Penalty - Official Assistance, 15 minutes immediate stop fishing)

## 34. OUT OF BOUNDS:

- A. On some bodies of water, MLF Anglers will compete in a pre-determined zone each day. The boat must be positioned inside the zone boundaries. Fishing outside of the boundaries is allowed as long as the boat position remains inside the boundaries. Any boat position outside the zone will result in a penalty.

(Penalty – Official: Boat out of Bounds, 5 Minutes immediate, stop fishing)

## 35. GOING NEUTRAL:

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- A. MLF Anglers will be required to “go neutral” immediately after MLF Official calls Lines -Out, end of round. Going neutral means the MLF Angler is required to immediately stop Fishing and return directly to the boat launch where you put in. The MLF Angler cannot use this time to gain a competitive advantage over other MLF Anglers.

(Penalty – Official: Failure to “Go Neutral,” 5 Minutes at the start of the next Fishing Period)

## 36. PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE:

- A. Each MLF Angler must have two Coast Guard-approved chest-type or inflatable life preserver. MLF Angler’s life preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition any time the combustion engine is in gear. The MLF Official's life preserver must be on, and the MLF Official must be seated before the boat is put on plane. Camera Operators are not required to wear the life preserver, but one must be on board for them always.

(Penalty - Official: Safe-boat conduct Penalty, 3 Minutes immediate, stop fishing)

## 37. KILLSWITCH

- A. The MLF Angler or other appointed driver must have his boat’s kill switch connected any time the combustion engine is in gear.

(Penalty – Official: Kill-switch connection, 5 Minutes immediate, stop fishing)

## 38. SPORTSMANSHIP:

- A. A Sportsmanship Violation is defined as aggressive or hostile behavior directed at a fellow MLF Angler, MLF Official, a non-competitor or any representative of MLF, including the use of profanity directed at these individuals, will not be tolerated. MLF Officials are required to report violations.

(Sportsmanship Violation, Penalty will be determined by the MLF Senior Director Competitions)

## 39. FLAGRANT VIOLATION:

- A. A flagrant violation of any act that reflects unfavorably upon the positive efforts of MLF, MLF sponsors, spectators, fisheries conservation, and clean waters will not be tolerated.

(Flagrant Sportsmanship Violation, Penalty determined the MLF Senior Director Competitions)

## 40. IMPEDANCE :

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- A. The MLF Angler cannot knowingly put the MLF Official or Camera Operator in a situation where they are unable to perform their job.  
(Penalty – Official, Impedance Violation, 15mins)