OFFICIAL WESTERN PA TEAM BASS SERIES RULES AND GUIDELINES

RULES ARE IN PLACE TO MAKE A FAIR, FUN, AND ORGANIZED EXPERIENCE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS, SO UNDERSTAND THAT ALL RULES WILL BE ENFORCED. BECAUSE ALL RULES ARE ENFORCED, PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING RULES:

1. On January 8, 2017, a meeting was held to form the Western PA Team Bass Series or the WPTBS. The association is comprised of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Tournament Director, and Assistant Tournament Director. A meeting will be held once a year by current officers to elect officers and each member has a right to vote in secrecy. All rules and positions will be voted on by the officers only.

2. Participation is open to any legally licensed angler who is 18 years of age or older. If under the age of 18 years old, then documented approval of a parent or guardian is required.

3. No person under the age of 18 shall operate an outboard motor during tournament hours.

4. All participants must sign a liability release and waiver statement for each event, including parents or guardians of minors.

5. All tournament entry fees and a $50 annual per person membership fee must be paid by the Monday prior to the tournament date. There will be no entry fees accepted after the entry fee deadline. There will be no refund of membership fees for any reason. There will also be no refund of any tournament entry fees "for any reason" unless that tournament is cancelled. (all attempts will be made to reschedule a canceled tournament assuming that those responsible for operating said tournament will be available and a permit can be obtained)

6. Entry fees and membership dues can be paid by check, money order, or online at www.wptbs.net (no cash please). Do not mail entry fees that require a signature as we only sign for mail once a week which could cause your entry fee to be received after the deadline.

7. The annual membership fee is $50. $40 dollars of that fee is to help run the organization and $10 dollars goes to your B.A.S.S. membership. The B.A.S.S. membership entitles you to participate for a chance to compete in the B.A.S.S. Team Championship for the opportunity to fish in the Bassmaster Classic. You will also receive one year membership to B.A.S.S. Times magazine. The membership fee is non-negotiable.

8. The entry fee is $150 per tournament day. The championship tournament is a two-day event and will have a $220 entry fee. Of the $150 entry fee, $10 will be paid to biggest fish of the tournament (lunker). Big fish will be paid for each day at the championship at a cost of $20 out of each entry fee that is split up between both days. BIG FISH OR LUNKER OF THE TOURNAMENT MUST BE WEIGHED IN ALIVE.

9. All regular season tournaments will pay back 90% of entry fees. For every five teams one place will be paid. The championship will pay back 100% of all entry fees for that event. WPTBS is not responsible for any local, state, or federal taxes being taken out of tournament winnings or any payouts of any kind whatsoever.

10. Each team is allowed to have one alternate. The alternate cannot be a member of another team or an alternate for another team. The alternate must be a paid member of Western PA Team Bass Series.

11. A valid email must be provided by each member as this is how all communications and alerts will be delivered, such as tournament cancellations, etc.

12. All fishing must be done from a boat and with both anglers in the vessel. No angler may leave the vessel during tournament hours unless it is an emergency or if the angler is using a restroom. One angler must be in the vessel at all times during tournament hours. Fishing must cease until both anglers are in the vessel (this is to ensure that both anglers agree that all fish were caught legally). Anglers can pull their boats out of the water and stop fishing early but angling may not resume once that has happened.

13. Anglers may fish by themselves but only after being a current paid member of a WPTBS team and paid as a team for the tournament. All points will be awarded to those fishing by themselves. Anglers fishing by themselves must follow all local and state rules for creel size and culling rules for individuals.

14. You must have a $300,000 watercraft liability insurance policy on your boat and that information must be provided on the tournament application and it must also be available upon request by any Western PA Team Bass Series official.

15. All boats must be at least 14 feet in length and comply with all local, state, and federal laws governing such vessel. All vessels must be equipped with a "working" ignition kill switch and it must be attached to the outboard operator while the outboard is underway. All vessels must have a working aeration system in their livewells.

16. Anytime an outboard engine is underway a Coast Guard approved life vest must be worn by all occupants in the vessel.

17. Any team or member of a team that is cited during tournament hours for any local, state, or federal violations of laws or regulations will be disqualified for that tournament (this disqualification applies to both team members). All violations must be reported to the tournament director before weighing any fish in or before leaving the tournament weigh-in site. Those that do no report such violations may be disqualified for the remainder of the year and if it is the last tournament of the regular season you may be disqualified for the first tournament of the next year.

18. In the event that a tournament has a maximum boat limit, the participants will be chosen based on the order of received payment until all available entries are filled. Once the full field has been met all remaining entries will be returned.

19. The tournament hours for each event will be listed on the tournament application. Any team not on the water and ready to go by the listed start time for that event will be disqualified and there will be no refund. If all teams are on the water and ready to go then takeoff may start early but it will not start late unless there is a weather or emergency delay.

20. All teams will draw their boat position from a hat at the launch while their boats are being inspected. You will be given a chip with your boat launch number on it. This chip must remain in the team's possession and returned at the weigh in. All boats will be inspected while they are in line at the launch. Any boat that is put in the water without an inspection has made it their responsibility to get a tournament official to inspect their boat before the start of the tournament. Any boat that has not had a pretournament inspection is not allowed to participate in the event. If you participate in the event without a boat inspection, then you will be disqualified for the remainder of the season and if it happens on the last tournament of the regular season then you will be disqualified for the first tournament of the next year. (if a marker is put on your trolling motor to signify your vessel has been inspected then that marker must remain for the entirety of the tournament) (boat checks will start 1 to 1.5 hours before tournament start time)

21. Any portion of the watercraft is subject to inspection by officials at any time before, during, or after the event. Refusal of inspection is an automatic disqualification.

22. We are implementing a 100 yard no-wake zone in any direction of the launch site until all boats are launched and 30 minutes prior to the first flight weigh-in time until the tournament end time. The 100-yard mark is not exact but within reason.

23. The last place boat position will be the call boat in the morning unless WPTBS has a volunteer assigned for this position. This boat or volunteer will let the anglers go in order of their boat position in accordance with rule #25 which is the rule governing flights. (A tournament official will explain how the process works to the call boat or volunteer before the tournament begins so there is no confusion.)

24. Boats will leave in a single file in the order that they are called by the call boat or volunteer. All boats will go past the call boat or the dock in which the caller is present in a single file and in order at an idle and will continue to be in idle until at they are at least 100 yards past the launch site or until there is no longer a no-wake zone. Boats choosing to go in the opposite direction of the call boat must go past the call boat before turning around and going the opposite direction.

25. 49 boats or less we will launch in one flight. At 50 to 74 boats we will cut the field in half and launch 2 flights at 20 minute intervals. At 75 to 99 boats we will divide the field by 3 and launch 3 flights at 20 minute intervals. At 100 to 124 boats we will divide the field by 4 and launch 4 flights at 20 minute intervals.

26. Before weighing in, the team must put the chip with their boat launch number on it that they received at the beginning of the tournament onto the weigh in board. If the chip is not on the board in the correct spot by the tournament end time, then that team is considered late. It is a one pound penalty per minute late and disqualification after 15 minutes.

27. Anglers may pull their vessels out of the water before weighing in but we would like to remind you that catch-and-release is of the utmost importance. If any fish are questionable in your livewell we ask that you please weigh them in before you pull your boat out of the water. There may be some tournaments where you will be required to take your fish and release them back into the lake away from the launch site. In such an event the participants will be informed before take-off and the vessel must stay in the water until their catch is released.

28. Anglers must use the weigh bags that are provided by tournament officials. Any fish brought to the scales in any other bag will not be weighed.

29. Each dead fish brought to the scales will incur a ½ pound penalty. This penalty will subtract from your total weight. Dead fish are determined by the tournament officials only. Any fish that is questionable is considered dead. Western PA Team Bass Series is not responsible for an angler's catch and is therefore not responsible for discarding an angler's dead fish. Dead fish will not be discarded at or near the launch property that the weigh in site is located. Do not throw dead fish back into the water at the launch or any woods surrounding the weigh in site. Anyone caught doing so will be disqualified. Please take all dead fish home and harvest them or discard of them properly.

30. A team limit will consist of a five-fish limit of any smallmouth, largemouth, or spotted bass. The length limit will be 15" in PA lakes from November 1 till the first Saturday after April 11 and the length limit will be 12" from the first Saturday after June 11 to October 31. The length limit will be 15" in PA rivers from October 1 till the first Saturday after April 11 and the length limit will be 12" from the first Saturday after June 11 to September 30. Lake Erie PA is 15". The length limit for Ohio tournaments is 12" except when on Lake Erie it is 14". The length limit for NY tournaments is 12". If the length limit number changes it will be stated at the launch before take-off.

31. You are not allowed to bring more than the limit to the scales to be weighed. In the event that there is more than the limit brought to the scales you will lose your biggest fish(es) until you get to the limit and then a one pound penalty. For example: If you bring 6 fish to the scales in a 5-fish limit tournament you will lose the biggest fish in your bag plus one pound. If you bring 7 fish to the scales in a 5-fish limit tournament you will lose the 2 biggest fish in your bag plus one pound.

32. If you would like to compare your dink board to the dink board used at the weigh in, simply ask the tournament director before weigh-in begins. All fish will be measured according to the state fish commission rules and regulations. If a short fish is brought to the scales it will result in an automatic disqualification.

33. Once fish are weighed they must be immediately released. Failure to do so in a timely manner will result in an automatic disqualification. (any fish that do not swim away must be discarded in accordance with rule #29)

34. Fishing is only permitted in tournament waters. Anglers must follow the state and lake laws for off limit areas. Anglers are not allowed to fish within 100 yards of the launch site 30 minutes prior to end of first flight end time.

35. Teams cannot fish within 2 boat lengths of one another, unless in passing in a narrow section of a lake, or if permission is given by both teams to do so. Hole sitting is the act of sitting on a spot until another competitor gets there or having a non-competitor sit on a spot until the chosen angling team gets there. Hole sitting is illegal and is terms for disqualification for the first offense. If a team receives two offenses for whole sitting, then it will be a one year suspension.

36. Any angler or anglers caught threatening or verbally assaulting another competitor or non-competitor will be disqualified. We need to get along so if you have nothing nice to say to somebody then don't say anything at all and we will all get along.

37. The use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or legal drugs for anything other than its intended purpose is prohibited. Those that are aware of such activity must report it immediately.

38. Only artificial baits are permitted for use during tournament hours. Trolling is not permitted. Each angler can have only one fishing rod in use for the purpose of catching fish at any one time or you are only allowed to have one rod in use with a lure attached to it. Example: 1) If you are snagged and you pick up another rod and make a cast that is considered a violation of

this rule because you have two lines in the water with lures on each. 2) if you throw a lure out and you want to pick out a backlash in the process it is ok to have line in the water from the second rod as long as there is no lure attached.

39. Teams that have broken down can have another team transport their fish to the weigh-in as long as the fish are separated in a divided livewell and one team member of the broke down vessel is present with their catch at all times.

40. There is no off-limits period for fishing a regular season event or the championship.

41. All ties will be broken by big fish and in multi day tournaments it will be the accumulation of the big fish for each day. Big fish is only chosen by a member of the team weighing in. (you are only allowed to weigh one big fish each day) If big fish is also a tie then both places payouts will be combined and split equally and the points for AOY will be decided by a coin toss.

42. Tournament winnings check(s) will only be given to the individual whose name is on the check(s). If an individual is not present at the weigh-in to receive their winnings, then it is that individual's responsibility to retrieve their winnings within 60 days. Individuals must send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

    WPTBS
    42 Mabel Dr
    West Middlesex, PA 16159

    Individuals can also retrieve their checks at the next tournament (as long as it is within 60 days). All winnings that are not collected within 60 days will be forfeited and left for the WPTBS to do with as they see fit.

43. Angler(s) qualify to go to the B.A.S.S. Team Championship based on their angler of the year points. Angler of the year points are based on a 100-point system. 1st place gets 100 points, 2nd place gets 99 points, 3rd place gets 98 points, and so on. Any teams that come in 100th place or more receive 1 point towards angler of the year. If you catch zero fish, you get zero points. In the event of a tie the cumulative weights of all five tournaments will decide the angler of the year. If it is still a tie, then a coin toss will determine the draw. The angler of the year will be crowned at the championship and given a plaque and possible contingency monies from sponsors. For every 25 teams one team can go to the B.A.S.S. Team Championship. In the event that a team cannot go we will offer the opportunity to the next team in line until the position is filled. (all team members must be 16 years old or older)

44. The 2-day championship at the conclusion of the 5 regular season tournaments is a 100% payback tournament. To qualify to attend you must fish 4 of the 5 regular season tournaments or if a team has won one regular season event during the year of the championship event that team will automatically qualify for the WPTBS championship.

45. All protests must be made in writing within 15 minutes after the last fish is weighed. Written protests will result in a binding decision being made. If the acting tournament director is unable to resolve a dispute by substantiated evidence or admission of the accused, a polygraph will be required. The results of that polygraph will be binding. Both involved parties must give a deposit of ($375) to the director for the cost of testing. Refusal to give a deposit by either party will result in a binding decision at that time. The deposit will be returned to the party in which the polygraph was found in favor of and the party that the polygraph was found to not be in favor of will pay an additional ($375). Any participant is subject to polygraph at request of the director at any time with or without cause and must provide a ($375) deposit which will be returned if the polygraph is in favor of the accused. A refusal to submit to a polygraph test is considered an admission of guilt. All polygraphs will be completed within 15 business days from the time of the request. All written protests and their finding will be made public to the members of the Western PA Team Bass Series.

46. Even if any anglers do not wish to make a public protest in writing all rule violations must be reported to tournament officials before the end of the weigh-in. Such accusations will be handled by officials and could result in requesting a polygraph test. If a polygraph test is requested by an official the same rules for a polygraph test will be applied as in rule #45. Only the accused will receive a polygraph test if the test is requested by an official.

47. Any team or person found to be cheating or being unsportsmanlike by officials will be disqualified from that tournament and all future tournaments. The individual(s) will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Their actions will be made public.

48. Western PA Team Bass Series reserves the right to accept or deny any membership or tournament entry fee received.

49. As a B.A.S.S. sanctioned team trail no members shall openly talk negatively about B.A.S.S. or the B.A.S.S. Nation. Doing so is grounds for termination of membership from the WPTBS. We encourage the support of the B.A.S.S. Nation as it is the backbone of B.A.S.S. which gives us the ability to have a chance to fish in the Bassmaster Classic among many other things.

50. Only non-penetrating culling clips and culling beams are allowed for use. Any clip or device that penetrates or is designed to penetrate the skin or mouth of a fish is not allowed.