

\*\*All teams participating in SETX should have a copy of these rules IN THEIR VESSEL during tournaments.

# 2025-2026 SETX High School Fishing Association

## Rules, Guidelines, and Expectations

The SETX board and its advisors expect strict adherence to the following rules by all contestants. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 first and then notify the tournament director.

### 1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT • These rules will remain unchanged during the 2025-2026

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school year. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director and or an executive board member. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant and coach agrees to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in weight loss (late penalty, dead-fish penalty and short-fish penalty), the loss of weight up to a particular time in the tournament day, the loss of weight for the entire day, disqualification from the entire tournament or, in an extreme circumstance, ineligibility to participate in future High School Fishing tournaments. If a Team is under review of a rules violation, the respective Club will be also reviewed and put on notice. Protests are to be made in writing within 30 minutes of the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day.

**2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY •** Participation is open to 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. All SETX members must also be a registered member of Bassmaster B.A.S.S., National B.A.S.S., and Texas B.A.S.S. Nation. 7<sup>th</sup> grade will be considered Junior B.A.S.S. member. 8<sup>th</sup> grade may be considered Junior B.A.S.S. if fishing with grade and below “or” considered High School B.A.S.S. if fishing with a team member 8<sup>th</sup> grade and above. 9<sup>th</sup> grade thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade will be considered H.S. B.A.S.S. member. All contestants fish against all members Junior High and High School. The only separation is in BASS membership. The entry fee for each tournament is \$50 a boat with no more than two team members. All student anglers must be a SETX member. Contestants must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the liability form which will be in the possession of your club advisor and a valid fishing license for the waters they fish. 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. Each team will consist of one or two eligible contestants and one boat captain in one vessel on stated tournament waters. There is no limit to the number of teams accepted from each

school or club. Any special circumstances must be approved by the tournament director and board president prior to the tournament beginning. Tournament officials reserve the right to reject any application to fish for any reason whatsoever. Eligible angler is a student passing ALL classes and in good standing with their respective school district. Grades will be reviewed and eligibility awarded using the process the schools already have in place for sports and activities. Student anglers are required to fish for the school which they attend. **Should a student transfer within the SETX season, the student must participate with the school he/she has transferred to if that school is an SETX member and follow all applicable rules and guidelines within the club and member school. All previously accrued points will be lost in the transfer.** In the event that their school does not offer a high school fishing team, they are permitted to fish with the closest geographically located school that offers a team and allows students outside of that school district to participate with their club.

**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 or a coach is not permitted by any tournament participants including contestants and boat captains within 15 days of any tournament. In addition, no fishing information may be purchased, bartered, solicited, or received from any person who entered tournament waters during the official off limits period. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

**4. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE AND COMPETITION** • The lake will be off limits for student anglers and boat captains from the Sunday evening at sunset until Friday morning at safe light the week of tournament. Friday will be the official practice day. Contestants and coaches may not enter tournament waters to locate bass or potential fishing waters or sight see after the start of the pre-tournament meeting except during tournament hours. Testing equipment on tournament waters after the start of the pre-tournament meeting is permitted only with prior approval from the tournament director. Once competition is under way, contestants and coaches may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except contestants and coaches confirmed in the tournament and through publicly available sources (quasi-public websites set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are not publicly available sources). On competition day, teams may not follow a non-contestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers by non-contestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

**5. REGISTRATION AND PRETOURNAMENT MEETING** • Registration deadline will be at 6 PM the Thursday prior to the tournament. At that time, no more registrations will be accepted. All registrations will be "time-stamped" by the computer and that time-stamp will be the official registration time. ANY changes with Anglers and boat Captains MUST be approved by the tournament director after the team has registered. Captain must be the captain of record. What this means is that the captain must be the captain that was registered at the time of registration. If for any reason the captain needs to be changed it must be approved and documented prior to the tournament start time.

**6. SAFETY** • Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant and coach is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved and state approved CHEST TYPE personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is in operation from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff kill switch that must be

securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is in operation. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location when the combustion engine is in operation. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation is not permitted. Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is in operation. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants and coaches. At the discretion of the tournament director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

**7. SPORTSMANSHIP** • All contestants, coaches, parents 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, our sponsors, the school the team is representing, the sport of fishing and credit to Southeast Texas High School Fishing Association in efforts to promote the sport. Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violation of or failure to comply with any of the rules for the 2025-2026 High School Fishing season or any violations in any previous competitive fishing tournaments.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any kind of mind-altering substance during registration, the pre-tournament 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 (example social media) 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 or to disqualify a contestant.

**8. CAPTAINS CRITERIA** –To serve as a boat Captain one must meet the following criteria. **(1)** Official faculty member of the student's institution. **(2)** Close Family member of either Angler **(3)** SETX approved volunteer. Each school will provide SETX H.S. Assn. with a list of captains and volunteers prior to the start of the season. Each will have passed the school's background check. In order to captain a team in the championship, the boat captain must have been a previously approved captain, for that season, for the school that they represent in the championship.

**9. BOAT OPERATION** • Captains must supply and drive boats for their teams. To qualify as a boat captain, the person accompanying a team must be at least 21 years old, have not guided on the tournament waters in past 30 days, or fished a tournament with an entry fee of more than \$1000 (\$2000 if team tournament) or more within the last calendar year. This tournament entry fee amount or "guided on tournament waters" does not apply to immediate family members of either angler

participating in the tournament. Anyone wishing to be considered boat captain that has paid more than this amount to enter a tournament within the past calendar year must be approved by the tournament director. The contestants may operate the trolling motor. Coaches may provide assistance, including information about locating and catching fish. The use of mobile communication devices may only be used by the boat captains but not for the purposes of sharing fishing information during the tournament. Students may assist in unloading and loading boats. Captains are NOT permitted to fish on or during tournament days.

**10. BOAT AND HORSEPOWER REGULATION** • All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 16 feet in length. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated live well space to maintain a live limit of bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards is not to exceed the maximum horsepower capacity set forth on the "maximum capacities" placard described below. Each boat must have a clearly legible "maximum capacities" (or comparably labeled) placard that includes a maximum horsepower rating affixed to the boat by the manufacturer. The maximum horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the maximum horsepower capacity specified on this placard or any horsepower limit set forth by SETX. By signing the entry form, contestants and coaches 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.

**11. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS** • Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the lure in the water. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Only ONE fishing rod per contestant may be used at a time. Students must initiate and complete every cast in order for a catch to be considered legal. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. All bass caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth and immediately shown to your coach for verification.

**12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS AND BOUNDARIES** • Teams may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries that is 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, local, state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a contestant's boat that was first anchored. AN ATTACHED MAP OF SAM RAYBURN "OFF LIMITS" is available to all SETX members and will be provided in these rules. An anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a weight or by a Power-Pole 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 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. All restarts will be solely at the discretion of the tournament director. 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 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 check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check and or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in **NO Points** awarded to that team. All fishing must cease upon check-in.

**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 live well. Eight ounces (1/2 lb) will be deducted from the total weight for each dead bass presented for weigh-in. No dead fish are to be culled at any time (State Law)

**16. SCORING and PAYOUT** • Scoring is determined by the final weight of each team's catch during each tournament. Only large mouth, spotted, red eye or smallmouth bass are accepted species. The tournament limit is five bass per team. Teams possessing more than the tournament limit will have their catch to that point in the day disqualified and, time permitting, are eligible for a restart from the takeoff location. Any team possessing more than 5 fish at weigh in will be disqualified immediately. The minimum length limit for bass is 14 inches. Only large mouth, spotted, redeye and small mouth are accepted species. The daily limit shall be (5). After possessing the daily limit, contestants must cull immediately upon their next catch. The minimum length for all bass is 14 inches. 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, not a personal weigh bag. The winning team is determined by the day's heaviest catch.

**17. TIES** • Will be broken by big bass. If a tie remains, total number of fish for the tournament will break tie. If a tie remains, it will be broken by a flip of the coin.

**18. PAYOUT** • Payout is 100% of collected tournament fees. Places are determined as 1 place per 10 anglers by the registration deadline. (400 teams = 40 places) All checks must be cashed within 60 days. Lost or destroyed checks can be rewritten with a \$25 fee if SETX is notified within the 60-day period. After 60 days, all checks are void. SETX will not re write a check for any reason after 60 days.

**19. LOGO DISPLAY AND TELEVISION COVERAGE** • Contestants and coaches may wear their own shirts or jerseys during State Championships. Tournament officials reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to prohibit any contestant or coach's shirt or jersey found to be offensive. All decisions are in SETX advisor's sole discretion.

**20. ALCOHOL AND 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. Students caught in violation of these rules will be disqualified immediately.

**21. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST** • Each contestant and boat captain agrees 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 a SETX administered examination on site 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.

**22. INSURANCE** • Liability insurance with coverage in the amount of a minimum of \$300,000 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.

**23. CUMULATIVE SEASON POINTS** \* Points will be awarded to teams based on position of finish + stringer weight for that tournament. Examples- 1<sup>st</sup> place – 300 pts + 23.26 lbs.= 323.26 overall pts.....2<sup>nd</sup> place- 299 pts + 22.19 lbs.= 321.19 overall points. Participating teams not weighing a fish will receive points based on the finishing position of the last place team which weighed a fish. All points are subject to change based on the number of teams participating in the tournament. Above examples are based on a 250 boat field. AOY (Anglers of the Year) Payout will be based on available funds agreed upon by the SETX Executive board. These funds will be distributed to the top 15 teams in cumulative AOY points. Upon approval, funds will be allocated at the following rates: 1st- 23.33%, 2nd- 13.33%, 3rd- 10%, 4th- 8.33%, 5th- 6.66%, 6th- 5.83%, 7th- 5%, 8th- 4.66%, 9th- 4.33%, 10th- 4%, 11th-3.66%, 12th- 3.33%, 13th- 3%, 14th- 2.5%, 15th- 2%. Team of year- top 5 team's points will be totaled after each event. We will announce the team of the year during the Championship.

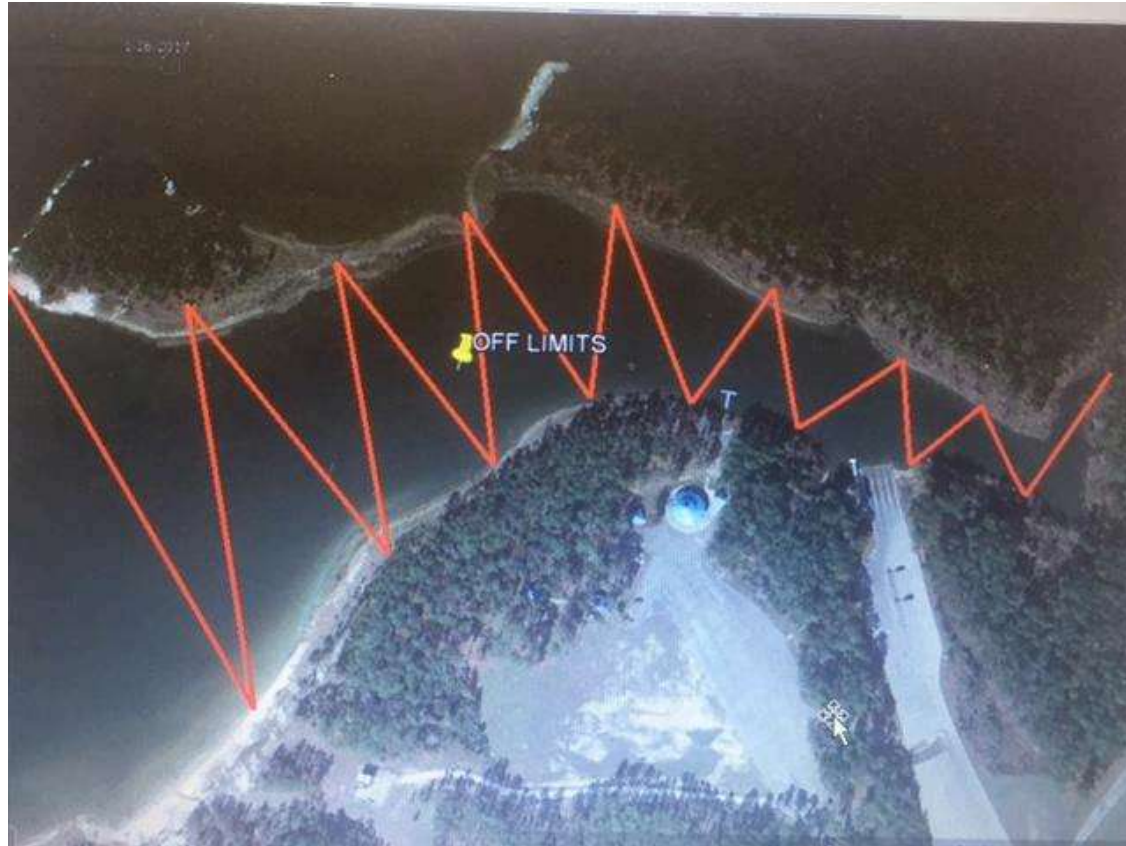
**24. CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION CRITERIA** \* 1). Win one of the 5 qualifying tournaments 2). Top 50 in points who have not yet qualified in the previously mentioned qualifiers 3). Register and Pay for all 5 qualifying tournaments as a team. (Team is determined by the unique boat number issued to that team at the beginning of the year.) In addition to the three qualifiers mentioned above, every angler participating in the championship must sell at least one book of SETX fundraiser tickets.

**25. RIGHT OF REFUSAL** \* The SETX High School Fishing Association reserves the right to refuse entry into our tournaments to anyone. The tournament director has final say in all matters concerning rules interpretation or any extenuating or unforeseen circumstances which may arise during any tournament hosted by the SETX High School Fishing Association.

**26. CAPTIONS** • The bold 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 used in the overall interpretation of this set of rules.

**ABSOLUTELY NO FISHING INSIDE THE OUTLINED RED AREA DURING OFFICIAL  
TOURNAMENT HOURS.**

**Sam Rayburn (Umphey Pavilion Area)**



Toledo Bend (Cypress Bend)

