



2011 BUD LIGHT TRAIL BIG BASS TOURNAMENT RULES

TRAILERING: Contestants will be allowed to trailer at all BLT tournament lakes (to help minimize the ramp traffic at the registration check in sites, keep angler fishing times equal, and allow anglers to return to the weigh in sites by water, when possible, or, to trailer back when they desire).

RULE CHANGES: Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament Director (TD) may impose such sanctions as he deems appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, and forfeiture of prizes, entry fees, and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. The decision of the TD is final.

PARTICIPATION and ELIGIBILITY: Anyone that has been disqualified from any fishing tournament must inform the TD before entering a BLT tournament (*being disqualified from a previous tournament does not automatically prevent entry). BLT Big Bass Tournaments are designed primarily for amateurs. Anyone who has fished in a Bass tournament as a boater/pro-angler with an entry fee in excess of \$500 or who has guided on the tournament lake within 90 days prior to the tournament is not eligible to participate in the BLT Big Bass Tournament. Only contestants who have paid to enter the BLT Big Bass tournament may be in the contestant's boat. Participation in BLT Big Bass tournaments are open to contestants who are 16 years of age or older. A wavier must be signed by a parent or guardian for contestants under the age of 16. The TD will provide these forms. The TD will reserve the right to disqualify entries. During tournament hours, every boat must have Boat Liability Insurance with effective dates (for the tournament date). There is no minimum, but you must have coverage. These will be polygraph questions.

PRE- FISHING, FISH LOCATING and POLYGRAPH: Each tournament has an off limits period from midnight until the posted start time on the day of the tournament. Start, stop, and weigh in cut off times are posted on the BLT web site (www.budlighttrail.com) one week prior to the tournament date. Contestants can also contact the BLT TD by phone, email, or at the registration check in location. Pre-fishing may be done on any day prior to the tournament day. During the tournament hours contestants may not have the assistance or advice of anyone for the purpose of locating or catching bass other than from another contestant. No one is permitted to "hole sit" for contestants. No micro chips in the fish or other electronic tracking devices may be used to locate fish. Communication devices may be used in the event of an emergency or for reasons other than catching or locating bass. By entering the BLT, each contestant agrees to abide by all BLT contest rules, Federal, State and Local laws. All contestants are subject to a polygraph examination, which may be administered to winners, randomly, or in the event of a protest, or they will risk disqualification.

OFFICIAL DESIGNATED OBSERVER and OR FILM PERSON(S): The BLT may request that an observer and/or film crew is allowed to follow or ride in a contestant's boat during tournament hours. The contestant(s), by signing the entry form, agree(s) to let BLT use any film, photos, audio and or written accounts of the activities during the BLT tournament, weigh in, and award presentations for reasons relevant to the BLT program.

SAFETY and CANCELATION: Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by tournament contestants. During tournament hours, each contestant is required to wear a Coast Guard approved life preserver. This life preserver must be worn anytime the combustion engine is in gear. The preserver must be strapped, snapped or zippered securely and maintained in that condition until the contestant reaches his fishing location and the combustion engine is no longer in gear. The TD may cancel and reschedule the tournament based on severe weather or other factors that might endanger the safety of the contestants. Contestants will be notified about tournament rescheduling on the BLT web site and through the BLT E-newsletter. It is the contestants' responsibility to check the web site and/or E-newsletter.

SPORTSMANSHIP, FISH ALTERATIONS or CHEATING: Contestants are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, and conservation. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. During all tournament/contest hours, no contestant shall use alcohol or drugs other than those prescribed by a physician. This will be grounds for immediate disqualification. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially in the vicinity of any other boaters. Alteration of a fish from its natural state is prohibited during a contest. The adding of weights, modifying fish tails, or any other method used to alter fish length, stuffing foreign substance(s) into the fish, or other alterations, is prohibited during a contest. It will be the contestant's responsibility to notify the TD of hooks, weighted hooks etc. left inside the fish before the fish is weighed, or they risk disqualification.

TACKLE, EQUIPMENT and LANDING FISH: Dip nets are allowed and contestants may land each other's catch. Vinyl or rubber coated nets are recommended. Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or prepared bait will be permitted, with the exception of pork strips, rinds, etc. Only one rod and one reel may be used, with bait in the water, by each contestant at any one time. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will be disqualified. All visible or bedding fish must be hooked inside the mouth. No gaffing or grippers may be used to land fish. During tournament hours, contestants cannot leave the boat to land a fish but may leave the boat to retrieve a bait or for other necessary reasons.

HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS: No motors may exceed the maximum Coast Guard rating. This rule is to prevent an altered or factory motor from exceeding the boat's horsepower rating.

BOAT, MOTOR and BREAKDOWNS: For the safety of all, boats must be equipped with some type of ignition kill switch. This device must be attached to the driver any time the combustion engine is operating. All boats must be 15 feet or more in length. Jet drive or air boats are prohibited. Raised platform or decks higher than the gunnels are prohibited. An electric trolling motor may be used for positioning only. Trolling for the purposes of fishing is prohibited. Only manufacturer approved gas tanks are permitted. Stick steering boats are prohibited. In the event of a break down, contestants may contact another contestant to bring their catch back to weigh in. One contestant from the disabled boat must accompany the catch back to the weigh in. Contestants may contact the TD by phone or wave down other boaters to ask for assistance.

However, the contestants' disabled boat catch must be brought back to the weigh in location by another tournament contestants' boat either trailered or by water before the weigh in cut off time.

BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT: Contestants' boats must have all required safety equipment. **In addition, it must have a functional bilge pump and live well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain a limit catch of bass.**

PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: All contestants may only fish on the tournament lake specified on their entry form. No fishing within 25 yards of another contestant's boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position with the trolling motor out of the water. BLT contestants must be at least 25 yards away from all tournament contestants when the trolling motor is down. All such boats are required to advise any other contestant of being too close. **Contestants cannot use this rule in boat lanes or other narrow passages to block passage to commonly fished areas.** All angling must be done from the contestants' boat. Contestants cannot leave their boat to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Contestants must observe all posted Federal, State and local off limits areas.

CONTESTANT REFUNDS: Contestants may get an early entry refund if approved by the TD before the tournament date. No refunds will be made on the day of the tournament.

START AND STOP FISHING TIMES: Official time will be set to match cell phone network time (we understand there can be a small discrepancy between providers- the purpose of this rule is to allow all contestants the same amount of fishing time. If you have any questions regarding official times, please contact the TD). Contestants who are posted on the BLT web site as early entries may leave their launch sites on the tournament days at any time prior to the Start fishing time. All contestants may start fishing at the official "Start Time" (posted on the BLT web site one week prior to the tournament date, and given at morning registration, based off of "Safe Light" - **We caution contestants to be careful if they choose to travel on the water before safe light!**). Contestants who are registering on the morning of the tournament will get their boat number, start, stop, and hourly weigh in times at the registration location beginning at 5:00 AM. All Contestants must stop fishing before 2:00 pm, be checked in by a BLT tournament official at the official weigh in check point, and in line with their catch, before the 2:00 pm weigh in deadline. Early entries may write down or print off their boat numbers, start fishing, stop fishing and hourly weigh in cut off times information from the BLT website. All contestants will check in at the weigh in location by assigned boat number. All fish will be put in chemically treated aerated tanks and returned to the Tournament Lake at the conclusion of the weigh in. Contestants may use their own weigh bags or get one to use at the weigh in location. All fish must be brought to the weigh in with water in the bags. Fish will be taken from the weigh bag and placed in a mesh bag to be weighed. Contestants must be checked in by a tournament official before the designated hourly weigh in times to be included in that hours' weigh in.

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION & WEIGH IN LOCATION: Official registration and weigh in location will be posted on the BLT web site and a tournament official will be there by 5:00 AM on the morning of every tournament. There will be only one official weigh in location. All contestants must be registered to obtain a boat number and to get start fishing, stop fishing, and hourly weigh in times. Boat numbers will be assigned in the order received by mail and online first, and then resumed on the morning of the tournament at the tournament registration location. BLT tournament early entries, post marked by Monday before the tournament, and online credit card entries received by Thursday before the tournament, may get their information prior to the tournament date off of the BLT web site and do not have to come by the morning registration location. Tournament officials suggest early entry contestants and online credit card contestants print a copy of their information or write it down. Contestants will need their assigned boat numbers at the weigh in. If a contestant mailed, or submitted online, their paid entry, but are not posted on the BLT web site before the tournament date, the contestants can call the TD to resolve the situation. If the situation cannot be resolved with proof of paid entry, before the Monday post marked date or Thursday online cut off date, the contestant(s) must come to the registration location on the morning of the tournament and register again. BLT officials will work diligently to investigate the cause of the situation, and to find a resolution at the tournament registration, or as soon as possible at a later date. **BLT contestants who enter any BLT tournament after the early entry deadlines will be charged an additional \$10 late entry fee per entry.**

Contestants who are eligible for hourly prize money should not leave the Weigh in location before the weigh in is completed without notifying the TD. Hourly prizes will be handed out at the conclusion of each hourly weigh in. Pictures will be taken and a polygraph may be given to any of the contestants.

SCORING: Weights will be documented in pounds to the nearest one hundredth of a pound. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Bass will be weighed. Only Bass 14" or larger, measured from closed mouth to squeezed tail by the TD or tournament official, will be allowed. A courtesy board will be available at the beginning of the weigh in line for contestants to check their fish before weighing in. Only one fish per weigh in bag is allowed, and only one fish per hour, per contestant is allowed. All fish caught on any tournament day can only be weighed in on that day. All bass being weighed in must be weighed in by the contestant who caught the bass. No more than a five fish limit may be weighed in during each tournament day by one contestant. No more than five (5) bass per angler, or ten (10) per boat, may be kept in the live well at any time during tournament hours. This rule is to help preserve the fish.

DEAD FISH: **No dead fish will be weighed in.**

TIES: In case of a tie, the monies, prizes and/or awards will be given to the first angler to weigh in. There will be no ties.

PROTESTS: All protests must be signed and submitted in writing within 15 minutes of the final weigh in. If warranted, the TD may require all parties to take a polygraph. The TD decision is final.

INFORMATION: Any and all announcements concerning emergencies and hourly results will be conveyed by messages left on the official Big Bass Hotline phone number. Be sure to check the BLT web site for the official cell phone number that will be used. Contestants will need a cell phone to check the hourly information.