

Mid-States Tournament Association Official Rules for the Pro-Am 2010 Tournament Circuit

Reviewed 15 March 2010

The tournaments will be a Pro-Am format. (Throughout these rules and other information, Pro and Amateur designations are frequently replaced with Boater and Non-Boater respectively.) Weight and points of each division will be determined by the combined weight of the pro and amateur team's five largest fish. In other words, the Pro and Amateur will be working as a team for the day's event. Each will take the total weight to their respective division to determine winning points.

1. **RULES:** These rules will remain unchanged during the 2010 season for all qualifying Mid-States Tournament Association tournaments. Interpretation of these rules shall be left exclusively to the tournament Director. Protests must be made in writing no more than 15 minutes after the end of the tournament. The decision of the tournament director shall be final in all matters. This will be a Pro-Am format where Boater and Non-Boater will be paired together.

2. **ELIGIBILITY:** Participation in the tournaments will be by invitation only. Anyone whose invitation has been accepted, that is 16 years of age or older and has paid the appropriate entry fee by the deadline date is eligible. For specific requirements concerning professional or amateur eligibility, entrants must contact MSTA tournament office. Eligibility does not guarantee ones ability to fish a particular tournament. *See paragraph: PRO-AM Rules*

3. **TAKE-OFF POSITION:** Take off position will be based on the order in which Boater applications and payments are received. The take-off position of the non-boater will be based on the take-off position of the boater with which they are paired.

4. **ENTRY FEES DEPOSITS & DEADLINES:** Entry fees shall be; Boater-\$130; Non-Boater-\$65. Deposits of \$50 for Boater and \$25 for Non-Boater per tournament will be accepted. Entry fee or balance of deposit must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the tournament. Deposits may be transferred to another MSTA tournament during the same year, but are Not Refundable, except for Non-Boaters who remain unpaired for that tournament. Boat position for the Boater division will be determined by entry received date. Non-Boaters who pay the appropriate entry fees or deposits in advance for all six tournaments will have priority over contestants entering less than six tournaments. In addition to tournament entry fees there will be an optional BIG BASS POT. The fee for this will be \$20.00 for Boater and \$10.00 for Non-boater.

5. **REGISTRATION & PARTNER ASSIGNMENT:** A list of participants will be posted on Wednesday prior to each event. It will be the responsibility of the angler to contact tournament officials at Smithville Marine if they or their guarantee are not listed on the participation list. You will not be included in the pairing if your name is not on this list and if Smithville Marine is not contacted by Noon Friday.

Pairing will be done on Friday afternoon and posted Friday evening. The posting will be made at Smithville Marine and on the MSTA web site. It will also be emailed to all participants that have provided their email. It is the responsibility of anglers to make contact and arrangements with their paired partner. It is very important that your entry forms contain correct email addresses and telephone numbers.

For anglers that can't find a guarantee, Smithville Marine will assist when possible in matching you with a Boater/Non-Boater but cannot commit to always finding someone to secure you a place in the tournament. Priority will be given to participants that pre-register for all tournaments.

6. **INSURANCE:** Boat owners must have at least \$100,000 of Boating Liability Insurance. Boat owners must send a copy of their policy, with their entry form prior to the entry deadline.

7. **BOATS AND MOTORS:** Any boat, 15 feet or longer, powered by a motor of 50 horsepower or more with a kill switch will be accepted. All boats must meet B.I.A. and Coast Guard requirements. No Over Powered Boats or Stick Steering will be allowed. Each boat must have a functional bilge pump and live-well space, properly aerated, capable of keeping a limit of 5 fish alive.

8. **SAFETY AND SPORTSMANSHIP:** Safe boating and fishing practices must be observed at all times. Life jacket must be fully zipped and snapped at all times when the big motor is running above an idle speed. Each contestant is expected to follow the highest standard of fairness, courtesy, safety and

conservation. No Alcoholic Beverages are allowed in the boats during official tournament hours. Violation of any of this section shall be cause for disqualification. A properly operating kill switch must be attached to the boat operator any time the big motor is operating above and idle. Each contestant is expected to operate their boat in a manner that does not jeopardize the safety of its occupants and public.

9. TACKLE EQUIPMENT & DIP NETS: Only artificial baits or lures may be used. Pork style baits are allowed. All bass must be caught on a rod and reel. Only one rod and reel in use at any time is allowed. Neither trolling nor use of bugging devices will be allowed. Dip nets will be allowed to assist in landing fish only, but not culling nets in live-wells.

10. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS: Anywhere on the tournament lake except Camp Branch Marina Cove and Little Platte Marina Cove, as defined by the buoy markers indicating the "no-wake" zone of each cove. Also off limits is the area of another contestant's anchored boat, the take-off cove, any area marked off limits by the Corps of Engineers or the Department of Conservation and any area designated by the Director as off limits, which will be announced during the boat check-in meeting.

11. SPECIAL SITUATIONS: Contestants must remain in the boats at all times. Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Contestants must leave from and return to official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must remain in the boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, competitors may be removed from their boat to: A boat operated by other competitors or a rescue boat. Partners must remain together at all times in sight of each other until number of fish for each contestant has been verified by rescue boat operator or a tournament official. The boat owner should stay with the boat while his partner transports both members' fish. After this time the boat may be trailered.

12. PRE-TOURNAMENT INSPECTIONS AND BOAT CHECK-IN: The elimination of the pre-tournament meeting will require check-in at the boat ramp prior to putting boat in water. There will be a pre-tournament inspection of every boat prior to take-off. Live-wells must be empty and kill switch must be properly attached to the contestant operating the boat. In addition, all boats must meet the operating and safety requirements of all local, state and federal boating laws.

13. TOURNAMENT TAKE-OFF AND WEIGH-IN TIMES, LOCATION, OFFICIAL CHECK POINT AND BOAT INSPECTION: Tournaments will begin at safe light on the day of the tournament, with the exact time announced on the partner listing posted on Fridays preceding the tournament. Weigh-in will be at 3:00 P.M. for all tournaments. There will be only one site for take off in the morning and check-in in the afternoon; said location to be announced during the morning meeting. At the time of morning inspection, all competitors must be in full compliance of all rules set forth by Directors. All boats shall identify themselves at the weigh-in site by means of boat number and proceed IMMEDIATELY to the designated weigh-in area.

14. SCORING: Largemouth Bass, Kentucky Bass, and Smallmouth Bass will be counted. Dead fish will result in a .50 (1/2) pound penalty. If dead fish is the largest of the creel, that .50 (1/2) pound will be deducted from your big bass weight. Any bass under the tournament's legal length limit presented for weigh-in will result in disqualification of that fish and two (2) pounds being deducted from total weight of remaining creel. Golden Rule will be the official measure board. Tournament limit will be five (5) bass per boat. No more than five (5) bass will be allowed in live well at any time. Contestants are not allowed to continue fishing until they have culled down to their five (5) bass tournament limit per boat.

15. QUALITY ASSURANCE TESTING: By contestants' signature on entry form and/or participation in these tournaments, the contestants agree to any quality assurance tests if required by the Director. They may include all or part of the following: polygraph test, urinalysis, blood test, and/or observer in or out of the boat. Refusal of anglers to submit will result in immediate disqualification plus subsequent disqualification from future MSTA tournaments. None of the above rules shall prohibit a Tournament Official from observing, approaching or boarding a competitor's boat during official tournament hours. Quality assurance tests will be given as soon as possible after conclusion of official tournament hours.

16. LATE PENALTY: Anglers not at designated check-in site by official designated time will be penalized one (1) pound for each minute late up to a maximum of ten (10) minutes (pounds). Penalized weight will be deducted from the total weight of angler's stringer. After the maximum of ten (10) minutes has been exceeded, angler will forfeit all points/weight for the day's competition, yet will still receive ten (10) show-up points.

17. POINTS: Points will be awarded as follows: 100 to the boater and 100 to the non-boater in the first place boat; 99 for second; 98 third, etc. Individuals will be awarded one (1) point for each pound of weight. Ten (10) show up points will be awarded for each participant.

18. TIES: In case of ties, standings will be resolved by combining the awards equally among the tied contestants. Points will also be awarded equally.

19. CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION: There will be six qualifying tournaments. The top 50% from each boater/non-boater group will qualify for the Championship. In addition to the top 50% qualifiers, MSTTA reserves, at its sole option, the right to name additional teams to the Championship. An optional Big Bass competition will be available at the Championship. The fee will be announced at that time. There will be a 100% payback for the Big Bass competition.

20. WINNING WEIGHT, PRIZES AND AWARDS. During the regular tournament season, prize money will be based on an 80% payback after expenses with cash prizes awarded to one place for every five boats entered. Ten (10%) of paid entries will be held out of each qualifying event for the year-end championship.

Prizes and awards presented during the Championship Fish-off are subject to manufacturer's availability at time of winning awards.

21. PRO-AM RULES: Contestants will be guaranteed entry into each tournament if they sign up with a corresponding boater or non-boater. As contestants register for tournaments, they will be assigned a seniority number. Contestants who register for all five tournaments will have precedence over contestants entering less tournaments. Any remaining contestants will be guaranteed entry if there is a corresponding boater or non-boater available. Boater take-off position will be determined by the date boater entry was received. If either of the guaranteed contestants are unable to attend the tournament, they are obligated to make every effort to find a replacement. Their replacement must attend the pre-tournament meeting and have a completed entry form. Points earned by the replacement are credited to the replacement. Boater shall have complete control of boat operations and waters to be fished. Boater shall not operate boat in an unsafe manner or to deliberately handicap non-boater. Boaters will operate trolling motor at all times. Contestants are expected to follow the highest standard of fairness, courtesy, safety and conservation. Other specific rules may be discussed at the pre-tournament meeting.

22. SIGNATURES: Every contestant must sign the release waiver on the entry form prior to the tournament.

23. KNOWLEDGE OF THESE RULES IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY: Failure to read these rules or ignorance of these rules is no excuse. Any extreme violation of rules will be grounds for disqualification from all future MSTTA events. Any announcement made by the Directors at tournament site takes precedence over written rules