

**Cope's Tackle and Rod Shop**  
**Customer Appreciation Tournament**  
**OFFICIAL RULES**  
**2024**

**1. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY**

- A. All person's are eligible to fish as long as one member from the team registers in person at Cope's Tackle and Rod Shop between the valid registration times.
- B. Registration shall take place during shop business hours through September 18<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. No signups will be accepted at the lake.
- C. Liability insurance of no less than \$300,000 must be obtained, up to date and evidenced by providing proof of each boat entered into a club sponsored event. A copy of the proof of insurance must be readily available upon request.

**2. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE**

- A. There is no off limit days prior to tournament date.
- B. After the tournament begins, fishing the tournament waters is prohibited except during tournament hours.
- C. Each competitor agrees to submit to a polygraph test by virtue of his/her entry, should he/she be accused of any rule violation.

**3. SAFETY**

- A. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times. Contestants ticketed for any lake (on the water) Violation will automatically be disqualified for that tournament.
- B. Each competitor is required to wear a Coast Guard approved life vest anytime the combustion Engine is operation, provided that you are not operating in a 5 M.P.H. area.
- C. Kill switch will be worn at all times when the big motor is in operation. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

**4. SPORTSMANSHIP**

- A. Competitors 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.
- B. Use of alcohol or drugs (other than over the counter or prescribed drugs) during the tournament Fishing hours shall be cause of automatic disqualification for this and all future Cope's Tackle and Rod Shop tournaments.

- C. Courtesy casting distance is to be observed by tournament competitors.

## **5. TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT**

- A. Only artificial lure may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted with exception of cork strips, rinds, etc.
- B. Only ONE casting, spin casting or spinning rod (10 foot maximum length from butt of handle to rod tip) and reel may be used at any one time. All other types are prohibited. Other rigs as specified above may be in boat ready for use, however, only ONE is permitted in use at any given time.
- C. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner.
  - 1. No gaffs or grippers may be used to boat bass.
  - 2. Dip nets are acceptable.

## **6. HORSEPOWER REGULATIONS**

- A. Maximum horsepower for all motorboats used in official practice and in tournament competition will not exceed the horsepower limitation rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer.
- B. Any boat manufactured prior to November 1, 1972 must adhere to the ratings set the U.S. Coast Guard for similar boats.
- o. Each competitor agrees to submit, by entry, the boat and outboard motor used in the tournament to an inspection by factory-trained personnel, if there is any reason to suspect the horsepower is in excess of the rating.

## **7. BOAT AND MOTOR**

- A. For the safety of all contestants, ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH A TYPE OF IGNITION KILL SWITCH.
- B. Fishing boats may be used that 14' or more in length.
- C. A small electric motor may be used for slow maneuvering.
- D. Trolling, as a method of fishing, is prohibited.
- E. Boats that do not have factory installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations.

## **8. BASIC BOAT EQUIPMENT**

- A. Every boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. In addition, it must have a Functional bilge pump and LIVEWELL SPACE, PROPERLY AERATED, TO ADEQUATELY MAINTAIN A FIVE LIMIT CATCH OF BASS.
- B. Tournament officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aerations and capacity is "proper and adequate".
- C. Upon blast-off, all boats must have both front and rear lights on when idling through the gate. If both lights are not displayed, the boat must idle to the nearest bank and fish for 15 minutes before proceeding.

## 9. SCORING

- A. Tournament standing, auxiliary awards, and final winners shall be determined by the pound and fraction weight of each competitor's catch during the competition days of the tournament. The tournament officials' call will be final.
- B. Only Largemouth, Spotted, Red Eye or Smallmouth bass will be weighed.
- C. The limit shall be five of the above species and varieties per day, unless prevailing limit is less than five, or a special limit is established for a particular tournament by the tournament officials, in which case the state limit, or special limit, shall be the tournament limit. The prevailing statutes and regulations of the state bind all competitors.
- D. At no time shall a competitor have in his/her possession more than the limits described above. Tournament officials may conduct checks for violation of this provision, and in the event a competitor has more than the above described limit in possession, shall cull the largest bass first, down to the limit described.
- E. The official length for bass will be 13 inches - lying flat on a flat board, open mouth swing the tail.
- F. Only bass as described above, which measure the official length or more, lying flat on a flat board, shall be weighed-in.
- G. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure the official length shall not be weighed and accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each such bass. This penalty shall be deducted from the total score of the competitor.
- H. Any bass that appears to have been mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered, will be weighed and credited only at the discretion of tournament officials.
- I. Each competitor must present his catch to the weigh-in officials.
- J. Once a competitor's catch is measured, counted and verified by the tournament official, the contestant will receive a copy of his/her official weights. Should a competitor believe an error was made where scale weight and the written weight do not agree, he/she must call it to the attention of the weigh master **immediately** before fish are returned to the water.
- K. Bass must not be stringered at any time during the tournament. It has been determined that stringing decreases the chance of a bass' survival, and bass thus handled in this manner may be disqualified. Specially designed bags, which increase survival rate, will be furnished by the Tournament Committee, and these bags must be used for the weigh-in.

## 10. PENALTIES

- A. For each legal dead bass presented to weigh-in officials, the competitor shall be penalized .20 lbs. of weight, to be deducted from his daily score. If a competitor uses a dead bass to represent his big fish, the .20 lbs. penalty will not be deducted from the big fish weight. The .20 lbs. penalty will always be deducted from the total daily catch.
- B. The Tournament Director and his designated appointees shall have sole authority for assessing penalty points.

## 11. LATE PENALTY

- A. Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area at the appointed time shall be disqualified.
- B. There shall be no excuse for tardiness, and in no case shall a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time".  
Exception – Late penalty of ½ lb / .50 lbs per minute up to 5 minutes then a DQ (Disqualification) will ensue.
- C. Competitors must remain on the water, in their boats, and at the check-in point. Any competitor who leaves the water at the check-in point prior to proper recognition and instruction for weigh-in procedure will be disqualified.
- D. After proper recognition at the check-in point, competitors will be allowed ample time to proceed to the weigh-in site, however, all fishing must cease upon check-in.

## **12. SHORT FISH**

- A. There will be no excuse for attempting to weigh-in a short fish. The short fish will not be weighed and a penalty of one pound (1 lb.) will be deducted from the day's catch.

## **13. TIES**

- A. In the event of a tie pertaining to total weight, it will be broken by the "Big Fish". If they tie a second time in the "Big Fish", the person who had the earlier draw for blast-off will be accorded first place standing. In the event of a tie for the "Big Fish", first and second place money will be combined and split evenly between the two contestants. Day one blast-off order (for two-day events) will be used to break any ties, regardless of if the draw is reversed for day two, in the event two contestants or more are still tied after comparing big fish.

## **15. TOURNAMENT ENTRY FEE**

- A. Tournament entry fees will be a total of \$150.00 per team.
- B. Payback (one place for every five teams).
- C. Total paybacks 100%

## **16. RULE VIOLATIONS**

- A. Rule violations are grounds for disqualification from any tournament. Rule violations Include, but are not limited to the following:
  - 1) Addition of weight to any fish.
  - 2) Accepting fish from another competitor or any other person to bring to the weigh-in and any other act a competitor may engage in to unfairly enhance the weight of fish weighed in at any club event.
  - 3) Lake Permit stickers must be in place and will be checked during live well inspections. Failure to so will result in a disqualification.
- B. Such violations will be grounds for disqualification from any tournament if the violation is discovered prior to weigh-in, the rule violator will not be allowed to weigh any fish. Should the violation be uncovered after weigh-in and award presentation completed, a violator's catch will be disqualified and no points given. Should the rule violator have placed and received any cash award for their catch, all monies will be returned to tournament officials who will then adjust the standings and allocate the awards based on the new tournament rankings.
- C. Further actions may be taken against any competitor who violates club rules for tournaments. Knowingly violating tournament rules are grounds for removal of the violators any future Cope's Tackle and Rod Shop Tournament. The tournament officials shall review any case of rule violation brought to the attention of the tournament director. Tournament officials shall then decide on the severity of measures to be taken against the violator and/or violators. All decisions and actions by the tournament director are final.
- D. In addition, any competitor who has received a cash award and is found to have knowingly Violated rules in an effort to receive such an award, will be turned into the proper authorities for prosecution should he/she not immediately return such cash award to the tournament officials.

## 17. OTHER

- A. **Breakdowns/Emergencies:** Anglers are not permitted to leave their boats nor touch another boat, with the exception of an emergency, major equipment failure, or to use the restroom. In case of a breakdown, it is permitted to have your boat towed. You may have your fish transported to the weigh-in by another tournament boat only and must be authorized by the tournament director. At no point can the other team's catch and your catch be inside the same live well. At least one team member must stay with your fish at all times and neither angler is permitted to fish while under the assistance of a fellow contestant.
- B. **Landing Fish:** When landing or attempting to land a fish, both team members must have both feet in the boat at all times.

