

OFFICIAL 2015 FISHING FOR FREEDOM RULES

To protect the integrity of Fishing For Freedom and our anglers, all winners will be subject to a polygraph exam before the prizes are distributed at each event. Contestants must pass the polygraph exam at the tournament site to receive prize money and awards for the event. The Tournament Director reserves the rights to waive any violation of these rules that are disclosed to him before the polygraph exam, in his sole and absolute discretion.

1. Rules: Decisions of the Tournament Director are final and are not subject to appeal. Interpretation of these rules will be left exclusively to the Tournament Director in his sole and absolute discretion. Each competitor agrees to report any rule violation to the Tournament Director immediately upon discovery of the violation. The violation of a tournament rule may result in weight loss, the loss of weight up to a specific time during the tournament day, total loss of weight for that particular day, the ineligibility to participate in future Bass Champs events, or any other penalty deemed appropriate by the Tournament Director in his sole discretion. Protests must be made in writing within 10 minutes of the official closing of the scales.

2. Participation and Eligibility:

- Participation is open to all amateur anglers who are 18 years old and older. Any person entering the Fishing for Freedom Tournament under the age of 18 years must also have the signature of their parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the official entry form.
- The Fishing For Freedom Tournament is open to all anglers except professional anglers. A professional angler is defined as:
 - Any angler that has entered more than one bass tournament that required an entry fee greater than \$2,500 in the immediately preceding six months prior to the date of the Fishing For Freedom event being entered.
 - Any angler that has guided for Bass (as defined in Rule 14 below) on tournament waters within 30 days of the official event for any method of compensation.
- All Contestants must have a valid fishing license(s). The St. Lawrence River spans two countries, know where you are fishing at all times and obey the rules and regulations of the country under whose jurisdiction you are fishing. A New York license is needed in American waters and an Ontario license is required when fishing in Canadian waters.

3. Off-Limit Period: Contestants may not be on the St Lawrence River or connected waters for the purpose of fishing between:

- 8:00pm Friday, September 11th, 2015 thru 6:00am Saturday September 12th, 2015

4. Fishing Times: Competitors may launch from any ramp on the St. Lawrence River. Fishing will begin at 6:00am on competition day. The scales will open the top ½ of every hour beginning at 8:00am. Scales are closed the bottom ½ of each hour. The final weigh-in will begin at 2:00pm and end at 2:30pm competition day.

5. Registration Times: Each contestant must register in person at Bonnie Castle Resort in Alexandria Bay, NY during the official registration hours: 10:00am-8:00pm Friday September 11th or tournament morning Saturday September 12th beginning at 5:00am. A completed and signed entry form must be received before the start of competition.

6. Safety: Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant is required to wear a fastened (fully zipped and/or all clips fastened), U.S. Coast Guard approved, personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is in operation during official tournament hours. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition shut-off device, which must be securely attached to the driver's body any time the combustion engine is in operation. The driver must be seated in the driver's seat anytime the combustion engine is engaged in gear. Tournament day may be shortened or canceled due to unsafe weather or any conditions that would endanger the safety of the competitors at the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek shelter in bad weather, at which time no fishing may occur.

7. Permitted Fishing Methods: Only artificial lures may be used with the exception of Berkley Gulp products. Only one fishing rod per angler may be used at any one time. Additional rods may be in the boat and ready for use; however, each cast and retrieve must be completed before another cast is attempted or rod is used. Trolling with the combustion engine as a method of fishing is prohibited. All bass must be caught alive, in a conventional, sporting manner. When sight fishing for Bass, all fish must be hooked inside the mouth to be counted as a legal fish. All angling must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish, locate bass, or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Bank fishing is not permissible.

8. Sportsmanship and Conduct: All contestants are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. Examples of conduct not complying with those standards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- o Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any mind-altering substance during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure;
 - o Any previous conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation for a felony, a crime involving moral turpitude, or a crime related to, arising out of, or involving any fishing tournament or event, except with full, prior written disclosure to the Tournament Director under oath and by affidavit of all facts and circumstances surrounding such conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation at least ten (10) days before the event being entered, and thereafter subject to the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion that such conviction, charge, arrest, or investigation does not result in the Contestant's honesty, integrity, character or qualifications to enter the event being unreasonably questionable.
 - o Actions or words which reflect unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, and fair competition;
 - o Chemical substance abuse or addiction.
 - o Disqualification from Bass Champs tournaments or other fishing organizations that resulted from unexplained rule violations that result in a contestant's honesty, integrity, character, and qualifications for entry into a Bass Champs event being questionable in the Tournament Director's sole and absolute discretion.
- Upon review of the circumstances by tournament director, Bass Champs, Inc., and the Tournament Director shall have the right to refuse any application, or to deny a confirmed application, by returning the entry fee of a previously accepted application, or disqualifying a contestant. Bass Champs reserves the right to place an official observer in a contestant's boat at any time during competition hours.

9. Assistance: During hours of competition, contestants may not receive fishing information from non-competitors or participate in the practice of "hole sitting." The use of mobile communication devices such as cellular phones, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc., to communicate fishing information during tournament hours is strictly prohibited. In the event of an emergency call "911" first and then contact tournament officials at 817-439-3274.

10. Boat and Horsepower Regulation: Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated live well space to maintain alive a limit catch of bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition may not exceed the horsepower limitations as set by the U. S. Coast Guard in such vessel. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating plate to conceal such limitations will be cause for disqualification from the tournament.

11. Permitted Fishing Locations: Contestants may fish anywhere on navigable waters accessible by boat that are open to ALL public fishing on St. Lawrence River and all rivers, creeks and canals connecting the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. Any waters closed to public fishing will be closed to this tournaments contestants. You may not lock through the Eisenhower Lock at Massena, NY or fish in waters above this lock. No fishing may occur in areas designated as "off limits" or "no fishing" by state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a competitor's boat which was first anchored (an anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a weight with the trolling motor in the up position), or

within 25 yards of a non-anchored competitor's boat unless otherwise agreed upon by the other tournament angler. The act of moving bass from one area of the river to another confined area of the river at any time, whether or not during practice days or competition day, is not permitted. Contestants may not leave the boat to land a fish.

12. Number Of contestants in boat: Boats may have up to 3 paid entrants aboard. Non-contestants are not allowed in any competitors boat.

13. Trailering is allowed: Trailering is allowed throughout the competition day. Anglers may launch and leave from any available location as defined in rule number 11 "Permitted Fishing Locations".

14. Scoring: Only Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass are accepted species. One bass only is allowed to be weighed in during any Tournament hour per contestant. There is no limit on the number of hours an individual may submit their catch to the scales. Bass entered in the Big Bass of the Hour contest do not carry forward from hour to hour. Your biggest bass is registered into the final overall standings. No contestant may possess more than **3 bass** at any time during the tournament. Any contestant who possesses more than the tournament limit at any time will have their catch for the day disqualified. Only Bass caught during official tournament hours may be presented to the scales. Switching or sharing fish with other contestants and/or individuals is a violation of these rules and will result in immediate disqualification. Any artificially weighed, preserved, or altered bass will be disqualified and that contestant will be subject to prosecution under federal laws.

15. Live Fish: Only live bass will be weighed-in during the event. Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated live well. The use of chemical live well additives made by Sure-Life which promote the healthy return of bass to their natural habitat are recommended. No dead bass will be weighed.

16. Length Limit: The minimum length for all Bass will be 12 inches. Bass will be measured with mouth closed, tail compressed and swiped to achieve overall greatest length.

17. Ties: A tie for the overall biggest bass of the event will be determined by the contestant's second largest bass weighed-in during tournament hours. In the event that a winner may not be determined by the above stated method, the winner will be determined by which angler weighed-in the winning fish first. All other ties will be resolved by splitting equally all money involved in the tie.