

Northwest Wisconsin Bass Circuit (NWBC) Official Tournament Rules 2023

- Participants and Eligibility:** Tournaments are limited to a maximum of 19 boats/teams unless permitted. Registration for these tournaments will be on a first-come, first paid basis. Registration Forms are available at Hayward Bait & Bottle Shoppe. Completed Registration Forms and payment must be received by Hayward Bait & Bottle Shoppe by 5:00 pm on the Friday prior to the Tournament to be included in the random Boat Drawing. If the tourney isn't full at that time, late entries (cash only) will be accepted up until tournament start, but late entering teams must take the remaining launch-order places. Tournaments are open to anglers as two person teams. An individual may compete alone as a team. All individuals fishing the fifth tournament, the September Finale, must qualify by registering and paying for at least 3 of the first 4 tourneys (May-August).
- Fees and Prizes:** The entry fee per team/boat for each of the 5 tournaments is \$125 which includes \$10 for 'Biggest Bass of the Day' (see item 16). \$5 will be used for DNR permits on selected lakes. \$10 or \$15, depending if the lake was permitted, from each entry fee will be held and added to the purse and payouts for the Circuit Finale, which will be the NWBC September Tournament. Big Bag Payouts will be 100% of entry fees that are not reserved for Big Bass and the Club Finale. 2-5 places will payout based on the number of teams participating for the first 4 tourneys. The Circuit Finale will have significantly enhanced purses and 5-8 places will pay based on the number participating. An exact payout schedule will be available at the kick-off rules meetings.
- Hours:** NWBC Tournaments are on Sundays with fishing scheduled from 7am to 4pm for the May and September events, 7am to 3pm. A mandatory kick-off and rules meeting will be held at 15 minutes prior to take-off. Late arrivals will be allowed for paid teams under extenuating circumstances but the late arrival must find another boat fishing the Tournament (look for green flagging tape) to have their boat inspected prior to the late arrival commencing fishing.
- Safety:** Safe boating and conduct must be observed at all times by all tournament competitors. Each competitor is required to wear & have fastened a Coast Guard approved chest-type life preserver while the boat is powered by the main combustion motor. Use of alcoholic beverages or other non-prescribed stimulants or depressants during tournament hours is prohibited. Thunderstorm activity may delay, interrupt or cancel a tournament. When cloud-to-ground lighting is observed within 10 miles, all fishing must be suspended. Participants should take cover. Fishing may resume fishing 10 minutes after the last observed cloud-to-ground lightning strike. For tournaments delayed or interrupted by weather, 4 hours of fishing must be available for the event to be scored. Other severe weather rules and procedures will be briefed at the kick-off meeting.
- Sportsmanship:** Competitors are expected to follow the highest standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, conservation, and clean waters. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of competitors and non-competitors on and around tournament waters.
- Tackle and Methods:** Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared natural bait" will be permitted, with the exception of pork rinds. For example, Gulp products may be used, but dead, preserved, minnows or crayfish may not. Trolling or "Long Lining" is not permitted.
- Official Checkpoint:** There shall be only one official point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon. This is normally at the landing scheduled for the lake. At the time of check-out, all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all rules. Boats will be flagged out in launch order as determined by the random drawing described in #1. Livewell checks will be conducted by Tournament Officials before take-off. **For official landings for each Tournament see Entry Form.**
- Equipment:** All boats and individuals must conform to all State Regulations and licensing. Each boat must use some kind of aerated live well or live box. No stringers or fish baskets are allowed. Underwater Cameras may not be used. Only light-weight fish tally markers may be used. These are the non-piercing plastic clips with nylon colored strings or tubes. Boats will display tournament ribbons.
- Boundaries:** Unless otherwise restricted, fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere accessible by boat except within 50 yards of any marina gas pumps and within 50 yards of any competitor which was first anchored. No such anchored boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within the 50-yard circle claimed by him or her. Contestants must leave and return to the official checkpoint by boat. Contestants may not depart the boat to land fish. Both competitors must remain on tournament waters in the boat at all times during the tournament day with the following exceptions: emergencies, bathroom breaks or lunch break at a commercial or public facility, and to retrieve bait or line.
- Chippewa Flowage Restrictions:** For years we fish the Chipewa Flowage: Fishing is prohibited north/east of Hwy B on the Chief River, Hay and Moss Creeks, and the West Fork of the Chippewa River. Fishing on the East Fork of the Chippewa River is limited to west of East Fork Resort (Lanice Lane).
- Scoring:** Tournament standings, auxiliary awards and final winners shall be determined by the weight in pounds (to the nearest 1/100th pound) of the team's bag the day of the tournament. Only Largemouth and Smallmouth bass are allowed and must be caught on tournament waters during tournament hours. The weigh-in limit shall be a total of **FIVE (5)** of the above species in aggregate **per team**. Fish will be measured with the mouth closed and must measure **14** inches or more to be weighed. An Official Bump Board will be available to all competitors to bump potentially short fish prior to weigh-in. More restrictive DNR species size/bag limits may be observed on some waters if not permitted. Specific size and number of fish will be announced prior to the start of each tournament.
- Dead bass** will be allowed but will receive a 1/4 pound penalty each. A dead fish is defined as a fish that cannot upright itself on its own and swim. Dead fish may or may not be included in the team's tournament bag depending on how many other bass the team has.
- Late Penalty:** Competitors who are not in the official checkpoint area as described in Rule 7 at the appointed times for weigh-in shall be assessed a penalty of 1 pound per minute up to 5 minutes after which the boat/team is disqualified. Exact starting and check-in times will be announced at the kick-off meeting. Emergency exceptions will be determined by the Rules Committee.
- Ties:** In case of ties winners will split the pots—i.e. if there is a tie for 1st, the 1st and 2nd prize money will be combined and split by the two winning teams.
- Pre-fishing:** Tournament waters will be off-limits for all fishing from sunset on the Sunday preceding the Tournament date until start-time on tournament day (one full week). Boating is allowed during this time.
- Release of Fish:** All Bass caught will be **released** on the water or after weigh-in unless "dead". Dead fish must be harvested and included in the participant's individual daily legal bag limit of 5 bass. Dead fish may not be released, discarded, or replaced in the daily legal limit under WI DNR rule. Participants are encouraged to release live fish in the deepest water possible and may re-water their fish and transport fish for dispersal.
- Biggest Bass of the Day:** Pot will be awarded to the Team which weighs in the heaviest Bass. Exact tie weights will split the Pot 50/50.
- Violations of Rules:** Violation of tournament rules or any act of a competitor which reflects unfavorably upon the effort to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for immediate disqualification without refund.
- Anglers of the Year:** The Total weight caught by each Team will be tallied for all 5 Tournaments to determine "Anglers of the Year". Each individual member of the Team will be credited the total weight caught in each Tournament and there will be at least 3 awards issued. This will allow anglers to change partners or fish solo without losing out on the chance to win these awards.