TBF/SAF expect strict adherence to the following rules by all contestants. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 first and then notify the tournament director.

2026-2027 SAF High School Fishing State Championship, Open and Challenge Event Rules:

1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT • These rules will remain unchanged during the High School Fishing season. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant, coach and boat captain agree to report any suspected rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery. Failure to report a violation may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in, but is not limited to, disqualification from the event, weight loss (in whole or in part, for part of a day or for one or more days, for a heaviest bag, single fish or largest fish, or any combination thereof) or ineligibility to participate in future tournaments. Protests and/or alleged rule violations are to be documented in writing by a witness or boat captain within 30 minutes of the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day. Tournament officials, in their sole discretion, reserve the right to consider rule violations reported or discovered at any time for any reason, by any persons, before or after a tournament has ended and assess penalties for any past or future event including denying entry to compete.

2. PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY • Participation is open to all ninth, 10th, 11th and 12th grade high school students. Participation by one (1) seventh or eighth grade student per team is permitted. Each team will consist of two contestants and one coach. Pursuant to federal law guidelines under the Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, there MUST be three people to a boat at all times. No exceptions. No angler may register or plan to fish alone. In the case of a verifiable, unplanned emergency, where one partner is unable to attend and no time is left to find another partner, only then may a tournament official, at their sole discretion, allow an observer in the boat in place of a fishing partner. The observer may not fish. If this benefit is approved, however, it can only be used once per season, including any championships and regardless of reason. For state championships, each team must compete in the state in which their school is located. Teams from all states can participate in open tournaments and challenge events. If a contestant fishes multiple qualifying events, only the first paired team that qualifies will advance to the National Championship. A contestant cannot qualify for the National Championship as a member of two different teams. With prior approval from the tournament director and mutual consent by both members of a team, a team may forfeit their entry into the National Championship and try to requalify. Contestants must be Student Angler Federation members. There is no entry fee to participate for SAF members. Contestants registering onsite, however, will be charged a $20 late fee. Contestants must have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the entry form. Contestants must have in their possession a valid fishing license for the waters they fish if required by law and a current student identification card from the school they represent or other proof of grade level. Random checks will be conducted at each tournament. Failure to provide proof of a valid fishing license within a reasonable amount of time when requested will result in disqualification for that day and any preceding days in which the license was required for the tournament. Contestants are required to follow all applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws. Any violation of such regulations and laws may result in disqualification. Entries for state championships and challenge events should be made at highschoolfishing.org or by calling TBF at 580.765.9031. Please do not make entry by more than one method. TBF / SAF reserve the right to review team names and reject any names that are deemed inappropriate for any reason. There is no limit to the number of teams accepted into a tournament from each school or club. Accepted teams will be confirmed and notified via e-mail prior to each tournament. Tournament officials reserve the right to reject any application to compete for any reason whatsoever.

3. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION • The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted by contestants, coaches, boat captains or anyone working on a team's behalf within 10 days of the start of any tournament. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification. A team may not pay a boat captain for their services. A team may reimburse a boat captain for actual fuel and travel expenses related to the tournament. However, a team or anyone acting on a team's behalf, may NOT pay or "hire" a Boat Captain for their time or knowledge. Contestants, coaches, boat captains, parents (anyone acting on a team's behalf) may not buy or barter a fishing location from anyone.

4. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE & COMPETITION • There is no practice period or off-limits period prior to the start of onsite registration. There are, however, specific rules defined below that govern practice within 10 days of each tournament. Contestants,

coaches and boat captains may be on tournament waters until the start of onsite registration. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not enter tournament waters to locate bass or potential fishing waters or sightsee after the start of onsite registration except during tournament hours. Testing equipment on tournament waters after the start of onsite registration is permitted only with prior approval from the tournament director. Within 10 days of the tournament no contestant, coach or boat captain may practice with, hire, barter for, or engage in services with, for the purposes of locating or catching bass on the tournament waters, any person who has been a bass guide for hire on the tournament waters within the last 12 months unless such person is the parent or documented permanent legal guardian of a contestant on a team in the event. Written proof of permanent legal guardianship to the satisfaction of tournament officials may be required. Within 10 days of the tournament contestants may only practice with another SAF member that is confirmed in the tournament, their coach, their boat captain or an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister or grandparent) who also meets the above criteria concerning guides or be a registered active participant in a another TBF or MLF sanctioned event during this time frame. Nobody else, except a media representative or official approved by the tournament director, is allowed in the boat. Within 10 days of the tournament and extending through competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except contestants, coaches and boat captains confirmed in the tournament and through publicly available sources. Unsolicited information received at MLF and/or TBF weigh-ins is considered a publicly available source. Quasi-public websites, blogs and/or social media pages, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Periscope, set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are not publicly available sources. Within 10 days of the tournament and extending through competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not follow a noncontestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers, brush or other physical fish attractors by noncontestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. During competition days, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not place brush or other physical fish attractors, including chum of any kind, in tournament waters. Flights over tournament waters, including drones, for the express purpose of locating fish or fishing locations are not permitted on competition days. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

5. REGISTRATION & PRETOURNAMENT MEETING • Unless prior approval is received from tournament officials, both contestants comprising a team and their coach or boat captain must register and check-in at the designated registration site at the times listed in the tournament confirmation. Contestants and/or coaches or boat captains who fail to notify the tournament director and are more than 15 minutes late for registration check-in may not be entered in the tournament. It is mandatory that all contestants and their coaches or boat captains attend the pretournament meeting at the time and place set forth in the tournament confirmation unless prior approval is received from the tournament director. Contestants and/or coaches or boat captains not present for the pretournament meeting may not be entered in the tournament. Virtual pretournament meetings may be held in place of in-person meetings when such meetings are not possible.

6. BOAT ASSIGNMENTS • Takeoff order (boat number) is determined by tournament officials. Most events are random draw. Some events may be based on date and time of entry. Onsite entries may receive the last available boat numbers. Each team must be accompanied on the water by a coach or boat captain who will supply a boat but is not permitted to fish.

7. SAFETY • Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant, coach and boat captain on the water is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved chest-type personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is running. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location with a driver behind the steering wheel or at the tiller in full control of the boat whenever it is on plane or the combustion engine is running and in gear. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation and in gear is not permitted. Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is running. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants, coaches and boat captains. At the discretion of the tournament director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is imminent. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP • All contestants, coaches and boat captains are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy and conservation and to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, TBF, SAF, tournaments sponsors, the school the team is representing, the sport of fishing, and our combined efforts to promote the sport. Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the rules for the current High School Fishing season.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or cannabis products or any kind of mind-altering substance during registration, the pretournament meeting or during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- Conviction of a felony within the past 36 months.
- Suspension/disqualification, probation or ban from any tournament or fishing organization.
- Boat operation in an unsafe or unsportsmanlike manner.
- Violation of a posted no-wake area.
- Publicly criticizing or questioning the integrity of TBF/SAF or their officials, including but not limited to any rules, policies and procedures.
- Dissemination of disparaging content or content that one should reasonably know would harm the reputation of TBF/SAF companies, officials and sponsors.
- Any other words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set forth in the first sentence of paragraph 8.

In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, tournament officials have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete, to disqualify a contestant or impose any penalty outlined herein.

9. BOAT OPERATION • Coaches will supply and drive boats for their teams or arrange boat captains to supply and drive boats for their teams. To qualify as a coach or boat captain, the person or persons accompanying a team must be at least 19 years old and reside in the same state as the students comprising the team or be an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister or grandparent) that is at least 19 years old regardless of residence. For students living near state boarders, coaches or boat captains may reside in a neighboring state so long as they reside within 60 miles of one of the students comprising the team. In the event of boat or engine failure after a team is onsite for a tournament, the tournament director may, at his sole discretion, arrange for a volunteer boat captain to assist a team. Bass guides who operate or have operated for hire at any time during the previous 12 months from the tournament date on the designated tournament waters are not permitted as coaches or boat captains unless they are the parent or documented permanent legal guardian of one of the contestants on a team in the event. A guide is defined as anyone who is paid for their time and knowledge to take someone fishing. Written proof of permanent legal guardianship to the satisfaction of the tournament director may be required. The use of a guide as defined above will result in disqualification. Contestants may operate the trolling motor. Coaches and boat captains may provide assistance, including information about locating and catching fish, but are not permitted to fish on competition days. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not use mobile communication devices of any kind, including but not limited to, phones, tablets, radios, etc., to communicate with anyone about locating or catching fish on tournament waters during tournament hours. Mobile communication devices may be used during tournament hours to communicate with lockmasters about locking, or to communicate with designated tournament officials. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may use smart phones and/or tablets during tournament hours for GPS, mapping, weather, power generation, barge traffic updates, tidal charts, personal fishing notes and related data. At no time during tournament hours may contestants, coaches and boat captains read or discuss social media posts from other contestants. If a special circumstance arises that inhibits a contestant's ability to compete, the tournament director may allow the contestant to withdraw from competition and maintain the weight caught to that point.

10. BOAT & HORSEPOWER REGULATION • All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 16 feet in length. No barges or similarly cumbersome craft will be permitted. Pontoon and tritoon boats that meet all other requirements under this rule are permitted. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated livewell space to maintain alive a limit catch of bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition shall not exceed the horsepower capacity set forth on the "Maximum Capacities" placard described below. Each boat must have a clearly legible "Maximum Capacities" (or comparably titled) placard that includes a maximum horsepower rating affixed to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the maximum horsepower capacity specified on this placard.

By signing the entry form, contestants, coaches and boat captains agree to submit their boat and/or motor to an inspection by tournament officials. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating placard will be cause for disqualification from the tournament and may result in ineligibility to compete in future High School Fishing tournaments. Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment or commercially available aftermarket equipment that is permanently installed in the boat. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks or auxiliary fuel tanks that are securely strapped or otherwise fastened to the boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle. The use of generators, other than solar or wind-powered generators, is prohibited in contestant boats during tournament hours.

11. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS • Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the rod in hand. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. All lures must adhere to state regulations. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Alabama rigs and similar umbrella-type rigs will follow applicable state regulations. Only ONE fishing rod may be used at a time. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. Trolling is defined as operating any combustion engine to extend a cast or lengthen a retrieve or using any mechanical propulsion device to move the boat as the sole means of imparting action to the lure. When fishing for bass you can see with the naked eye, with glasses, flogger or via visual aids such as electronics, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be verified by your partner before being unhooked to be counted as a legal catch.

12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS & BOUNDARIES • Teams may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries defined by the tournament director that are available to the public and accessible by boat except areas designated as "off-limits," "no boats," "keep out," "restricted," "no trespassing" or "no fishing" (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by tournament officials, commercial property owners and/or local, state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a contestant's boat that was first anchored. An anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a weight or by a shallow water anchor with the trolling motor in the up position. All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs after the start of onsite registration and/or the removal of official commercial, local, state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat or gain access for fishing is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament. Teams must leave and return to the check-in by boat. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No tournament boat may be loaded on a trailer before the team using the boat presents their catch for weigh-in, except with the permission of the tournament director. In the event of equipment failure or emergency, the tournament director must be notified as soon as it is safe to do so. There are then three permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both contestants remaining in their boat and being towed by water, (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one contestant entering the boat of another team or (3) both contestants entering a rescue boat so designated by the tournament director. Under these three conditions the team's catch may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) provided each team's fish are adequately marked or separated so as to provide clear distinction of each catch to the tournament director. Teams that elect to return to the check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day's catch to that point in time of the tournament day. Abandoning a boat and leaving it adrift without proper tie-off or anchoring after a mechanical failure may result in disqualification of that day's weight. Any team returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the tournament director or his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of teams to locate the tournament director to request a restart. Teams must remain together at all times and within sight of their coach or boat captain until check-in. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for restroom breaks is permitted. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

13. CHECKPOINTS • There will be only one checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check and checkout in the morning or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. All fishing must cease upon check-in.

14. LATE PENALTY • Teams that are not at the designated afternoon checkpoint at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight. Teams more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight.

15. LIVE FISH • Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated livewell. Eight ounces will be deducted from the total weight for each dead bass presented for weigh-in.

16. SCORING • Scoring is determined by the pounds and ounces of each team's catch during each tournament. Only largemouth, spotted, redeye, shoal or smallmouth bass are accepted species. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a bass. The daily limit will be five bass per team unless conditions dictate a reduced limit or the state or lake limit is less than five, in which case those limits will prevail. After possessing the daily limit, teams must cull immediately upon their next catch. Teams possessing more than the daily limit must notify the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the infraction and reduce their catch to the daily limit by releasing live bass. At no time shall a competitor have in possession more than the tournament limit. Officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision, and in the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, shall cull, starting with the largest bass first, etc., down to the stated limit. The minimum length limit for bass will be 12 inches unless the state or lake limit is more than 12 inches or tournament officials set a longer limit for a specific tournament, in which case, the state or lake limit or longer limit set by tournament officials for the tournament will prevail. Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit will be penalized at the rate of 1 pound for each short bass presented. Bass presented for weigh-in with weight clips attached will be penalized at the rate of 4 ounces for each clip. After competitors check in at the official checkpoint, they must present all fish in possession that meet the tournament size limit to tournament officials to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a team's catch has been presented to tournament officials, that day's catch is final. No one may return to a boat to retrieve a bass mistakenly left behind. After being weighed, each team's catch must be turned over to tournament officials unless otherwise instructed. Each team's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag. The winning team is determined by the day's heaviest catch. The top 10 percent of teams in each state championship and open tournament advance to the High School Fishing National Championship. Tournaments. All participating SAF teams automatically qualify to compete in the High School Fishing World Finals the National Championship runs concurrently with the World Finals and has a separate prize pool. Tournaments held on or prior to the second Sunday of June each season will advance qualifiers to that same years National Championship also held in June. Any teams qualifying after the second Sunday of June each season will advance to the following years National Championship if age and grade eligible.

17. TIES • In case of a tie for champions, awards, prizes or cut positions the following tie-breakers will be used in order: Total number of fish for the tournament, followed by the total number of live fish. If a tie remains, it will be broken by earliest entry for the tournament. Any further ties shall be resolved by means selected by the Tournament Director.

18. LOGO DISPLAY & MEDIA COVERAGE • Contestants, coaches and boat captains may wear their own apparel. Tournament officials reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to prohibit any contestant, coach or boat captain's apparel that is determined to be offensive.

19. ALCOHOL & TOBACCO • During all days of competition any and all alcohol and tobacco logos are prohibited and may not be worn or displayed. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not smoke or use tobacco products during tournament hours, including weigh-in, at any event.

20. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST • Each contestant and coach agrees to submit, by signature on the tournament entry form, to a polygraph or voice stress analysis examination and to abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass an examination will result in disqualification from the tournament. Truth verification tests will be used at the sole discretion of tournament officials, and the determination of the meaning of the results will be made solely by tournament officials.

21. INSURANCE • Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required on all boats used in High School Fishing tournaments. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat. Random checks will be conducted. Failure to provide proof of insurance when requested by the tournament director may result in disqualification.

22. CAPTIONS • The captions at the beginning of each paragraph are intended to facilitate convenience in referring to the various rules. The captions are not part of the substance of the paragraph and should not be used in construction of any paragraph or of this overall set of rules.