

Official Rules Updated 05/05/25

Payback Bass Open Rules

- 1. RULES.** The following rules are the official rules of PayBack Bass ("PayBack Bass Open") operated by PayBack Bass LLC or BigStack PayBack Bass LLC including PayBack Bass Team, Solo Stack, Big Stack and SuperStack/Super Open events. Interpretation of these rules shall be left up to the PayBack Bass Open Tournament Director. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant agrees to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in, but is not limited to, weight loss, the loss of weight up to a particular time in the tournament day, the loss of weight for the entire day, the loss of the heaviest one-day catch, the loss of the heaviest bass for the day, disqualification from the entire tournament. The tournament director reserves the right to cancel or reschedule a competition day and or cancel the trail. **THE PAYBACK BASS OPEN RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ENTRY TO ANY INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM FOR ANY REASON OR NO REASON THAT THE PAYBACK BASS OPEN MAY DEEM APPROPRIATE. A copy of these rules are available at PayBackBass.com**
- 2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY.** PayBack Bass and Super Open Team Tournaments participation is open to anyone 18 years of age and older. Big Stack and Solo Stack singles tournaments participation is by invitation only and contestants must be 18 years of age and older. All contestants must complete an official entry form, sign liability release and pay the proper entry fee and any applicable late fees before the tournament entry deadline. Any contestants not paid in full by the tournament entry balance deadline will be disqualified and will **NOT** receive a refund.
- 3. REGISTRATION AND PRE-TOURNAMENT MEETING.** Each contestant (singles events) or at least one team member (team events), must be present at the rules meeting announced by the tournament director, see Facebook page, Facebook group or call for tournament director for details. Contestants are responsible to know and follow for any information, rules or procedures discussed at the pre-tournament meeting. All entrants must be present half an hour prior to sunrise at the designated boat launch the morning of the tournament for boat inspection. Payback Team and Super Open entries must be **received 10 days prior** to tournament dates. Contestants pre-registered may change up to one member of the team up until the entry deadline if necessary. Entries will **NOT** be considered valid without a completed and signed liability release(s). Entries without a completed and signed liability release will not be issued boat number and will not be included in the early draw. Email liability release forms to PayBackBass@gmail.com
- 4. INSURANCE.** All boats competing in the PAYBACK BASS OPEN shall maintain their own liability insurance during all practice (if any) and tournament hours. Contestants assume all risks of loss and waive any or all claims they may have for injury, property damage, consequential damages, or any damage of any nature against any director, official, sponsor or any contestant or other person connected with the PAYBACK BASS OPEN and related events.
- 5. BOAT LAUNCH AND WEIGH-IN AREA.** PAYBACK BASS OPEN boat launch and weigh-in area will be announced prior to each event, check flier or website/Facebook for details or contact tournament director.
- 6. BOATS. BOATS MUST BE A MINIMUM OF 16 FEET IN LENGTH,** comply with all Michigan DNR and Coast Guard regulations and have an adequate live well capable of keeping a one-day limit of fish alive. All boats shall be equipped with an emergency ignition shut-off device ("kill-switch"). Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition will not to 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.
- 7. BOAT POSITION.** Boat position will be determined by random draw prior to early entry deadline. After early entry deadline, boat position will be determined by order in which entries are received. Boat Position will be discussed at the pre-tournament meeting. Boat position #0 may be auctioned off at the pre-tournament meeting. Boat position is solely determined by the tournament director and is not subject to protest.
- 8. BOAT INSPECTION.** All boats will be made available before the start of competition for inspection. At this time all live-wells, all compartments and storage areas as well as anything in the boat will be made accessible to PAYBACK BASS OPEN inspection personnel. NO boat shall be allowed to compete that has not been inspected the day of competition. All boats will also be made available for inspection before, during and after competition. Any participants who refuses boat inspection by a tournament official will be immediately disqualified and will be ineligible to participate in future PayBack Bass Open events as well as any other events sanctioned by The Bass Federation of Michigan.
- 9. FISHING RULES.** All state, province, Indian reservation or territory rules and seasons regarding fishing will be observed unless the tournament director specifies more stringent regulations. Only those fish caught in normal angling methods will be accepted. **ONLY ARTIFICIAL BAIT MAY BE USED.** Maxscent, Gulp, Gulp Alive and pork trailers are considered artificial bait. **No Live or Prepared Bait allowed!** Entrants must possess any required licenses. Only 1 rod per person may be used at any one-time during tournament fishing. **All fish must be hooked INSIDE of the mouth while sight fishing, any fish hooked outside of the mouth must be immediately released. Use common sense but for close calls along the edge of the mouth "INSIDE of the mouth" is deemed as a penetrated hook point that is not visible when the fish's mouth is closed. Immediate culling required; a 6th fish must be released before fishing resumes. In team events one team member is allowed to fish while the other is in the act of culling. Any team that does not cull and release their 6th fish in a reasonable amount of time will be disqualified. At no time shall a team have in possession more than 5 bass other than when culling the 6th fish. At NO TIME shall a team have more than 7 fish in the boat while culling. No culling after boat check-in or in the launch area. Any contestants with more than 5 fish in their livewell after check-in are disqualified.**
- 10. SCORING.** Scoring will be based on total weight of bass. There will be a 5 fish limit per 2-man team or per contestant in singles events. A minimum length of 14 inches will be strictly enforced. Bass presented for weigh-in which fail to measure 14 inches will not be weighted and shall accrue penalties at the rate of 1 pound for each such bass. DON'T KILL YOUR CATCH a penalty of **0.5** pound will be enforced for each dead fish presented for weigh-in. Fish judged to be improper will not be weighed (i.e. white gill, sunken eyes, missing scales, etc.) Big bass will be awarded to the team who weighs the largest smallmouth or largemouth bass. In the event of a big bass tie, the prizes will be divided between the tied teams. Teams may weigh more than one big bass at the discretion of tournament director, only fish will be recorded in the official scoring.
- 11. BOUNDARIES.** Fishing will be allowed in all legal waters and all connecting waterways unless otherwise noted by tournament director. A 25-yard distance between anchored (powerpole/talon included) boats with trolling motor up will be enforced. Competitors boats may not come into contact with another boat unless in the case of an emergency. The use of a trolling motor while anchored to position the boat, thus blocking other boats is prohibited.

12. TROLLING: No trolling allowed. Also the use of Planner Boards are prohibited.

13. PRACTICE. There is no official practice period pre-tournament practice fishing can be done anytime up until 5:00 pm local time the day prior to the tournament. **All contestants must be off tournament waters at 5:00pm the day prior to the tournament unless otherwise posted by the tournament director on Facebook or Facebook group.**

14. TOURNAMENT HOURS. Blast off will start at Safelight weather permitting, and check-in time will be announced at pre-tournament meeting. **BOAT INSPECTION WILL BEGIN one (1) hour prior to sunrise. Check-in procedure and check-in time will be announced at the pre-tournament meeting. It is the responsibility of the contestants to check in appropriately.**

BOAT CHECK-IN WILL BE AT THE BOAT RAMP!!!! PLEASE LEAVE TIME FOR NO WAKE IDLE!!!

15. PROTESTS. A \$50 protest fee is required to protest another team. Fee will be refunded if protest is deemed valid, this fee can be waived at the discretion of the tournament director.

16. TIES. In case of a tie, the team with the heaviest big bass weight shall be determined as the 1st place winners. This is for the 1st place only. Ties for lower places shall divide the total prizes of tied places amongst the tied teams. (i.e. a tie for 3rd shall add prize money for 3rd and 4th and divide it equally between the teams).

17. LATE RULE. Check-in time will be announced at the pre-tournament meeting by the tournament director. **Any contestants who do not check-in by the designated check-in time & location will be disqualified.** Check-in time, location and procedures will be announced at the pre-tournament meeting. It is the responsibility of the contestant(s) to know and follow the check-in procedure and check-in times discussed at the rules meeting.

18. SAFETY. Safe boating shall be observed at all times. During competition, each contestant shall wear a chest type life preserver anytime the main combustion engine is running and in gear. All boats shall be equipped with an emergency ignition shut-off device ("kill-switch"), which must be securely attached to the driver whenever the main combustion engine is running and in gear.

19. SPORTSMANSHIP. All contestants are required to follow the highest standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, and conservation at all times. Drunkenness will be cause for immediate disqualification at anytime during this contest. The use of illegal drugs will also mean disqualification from this event.

20. SEVERE WEATHER. Under normal conditions, no contestant may leave his/her boat during the tournament hours, except at the weigh-in/launch area. The exception to this rule would be in the event of severe weather or emergency. In the event of an emergency or severe weather, you may leave your boat or seek shelter as you deem appropriate. If you leave your boat you may not locate fish, access new fishing areas or obtain fishing information from non-competitors. If you left your boat during tournament hours the tournament director needs to be notified before your fish are presented for weigh-in.

21. ALCOHOL USE. At no time will there be any alcoholic beverages aboard any tournament boat during tournament hours. There will be no use of alcoholic beverages before start of day's competition.

22. NO WAKE ZONES. Boating safety is a must in this tournament! Any and all no wake zones will be observed. This also pertains to areas near other fishing boats please be courteous.

23. BREAKDOWNS. In the event that your boat becomes inoperable, you may be towed to the weigh-in area or ride in with another tournament participant. You must separate/mark your catch when riding in with another contestant. You may receive a tow from any other boat including U.S. Coast Guard, a non-tournament boat, or a tournament boat. You may not leave your boat unless in the case of an emergency or breakdown. The non tournament participant towboats must not come in contact with your boat in any other way than the towrope. Breakdowns are not an exception to the late rule. All contestants must return via water, anyone traveling on land will be disqualified.

24. USE OF RADIOS OR CELLULAR PHONES. ***We strongly recommend that each boat have an emergency communication system of either a marine radio and/or mobile phone.*** No fishing information may be relayed via radios or phones. Communication between tournament participants via cellular phones or radios is strictly prohibited except in the event of an emergency. Binoculars or cameras with telephoto lenses will not be allowed to be used in tournament boats. The use of drones are prohibited during tournament hours.

25. Cheating: Anyone found to be cheating or suspected of cheating will be suspended from all further tournaments sponsored by Payback Bass and prosecuted to fullest extent of the law. None of the above rules shall prohibit a properly designated tournament official from approaching or boarding any competitor's boat at any time during tournament hours. **Polygraph:** Each competitor agrees to submit to a polygraph test should he be accused of any rule violation. The administration and interpretation of the polygraph test shall be solely the responsibility of the Tournament Director and his agents and shall be used (or not used) at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

26. Big Stack and Solo Stack NO-INFORMATION PERIOD: For Big Stack and Solo Stack events ONLY!!! Starting the Monday 6 days prior to the tournament, contestants may not be on the water or receive any fishing information about tournament waters from non-contestants. Immediate family members and PayBack Bass staff are allowed on tournament waters with contestants during this no-information period but cannot provide fishing information about tournament waters. If you have any questions regarding the NO-INFORMATION period, please call the tournament director. Any violation of this rule will result in disqualification or a weight penalty.