

2026 PTA Rules

www.nationalyouthfishingassociation.com



1. **Preface Rules:** These rules are in effect during all PTA competition days and It is every angler/boater/sponsor's responsibility to know these rules that you will be held accountable for. These rules and regulations remain unchanged during the 2026 season for all PTA events. Interpretation and enforcement of the following rules and regulations is left exclusively to the tournament director and are not subject to appeal. **PRE-Fishing is allowed during the 2026 fishing season!**
2. **Protest:** All protest must be submitted in writing to the tournament director within twenty (20) minutes after the official check in time of the final flight. Tournament Advisory Committee handles all protest, and the Tournament Director shall have final say in all protest matters. Protested parties are subject to a lie detector test upon Tournament Directors say. Once anglers/boater have been notified they are being protested, they may not in return protest the person that protested them.
3. **Youth Angler Eligibility/Rules:** Any student angler male or female, grades 4-12 (public, private, and/or home schooled), from any state. Youth Anglers (16 and Up) must have a valid fishing license in the state where the PTA tournament is held. Youth Anglers must have a parent or guardian sign the release on the membership/registration forms. Youth Anglers must be eligible by school/club regulations and have a (2.0 gpa). Youth Anglers must have an eligible boat captain to fish any PTA tournament. Grades 4-12 Youth Anglers must fish with a partner during PTA events unless certain circumstances should arise and is approved by the tournament director. All Youth Anglers grades 4-12 must take and pass the **Missouri Boaters Safety Course** before being allowed to run the electric trolling motor on a boat during tournament hours. If neither Youth Anglers has passed the Missouri Boater Safety Course, then the boater must run electric trolling motor.
4. **Boat Captain Eligibility/Rules:** Boat captains must be 19 years of age, graduated, or older. PTA reserves the right to refuse any boat captain at any time. Boat Captains must sign the release on the PTA boater registration forms. Boat Captains must meet all state law requirements or have a valid boater's safety card. The boat captain must have knowledge of CPR and First Aid. Boat Captains must have at least a minimum of \$100,000 boater liability insurance and be able to show proof of insurance upon request by PTA. Boat Captains must be aware and trained in any "special medical conditions" of Youth Anglers in the boat. The Boat Captain must carry a fully charged cell phone or other forms of communications for emergencies. Boat Captains must be aware of state boating regulations on waters in which they are boating on.
5. **Safety:** Safe boating must be observed at all times. All Youth Anglers /boat captains must wear a coast guard approved personal flotation device (PFD). The flotation device must be fully zipped/snapped and secured at all times when the combustion engine is running. **Inflatable PFD's are not allowed to be worn by Youth Anglers under the age of 16.** It is recommended that all Youth Anglers/boat captains wear eye protection. ONLY boat captains may operate the combustion engine during tournament hours. All Youth Anglers/boat captains should be seated in the boat recommended on plane seats when the combustion engine is running, and the boat is on plane. **No sitting in elevated seats while boat is on plane or above an idle.** The emergency shutoff lanyard "Kill Engine Switch" must be attached to the Boat Captain when the combustion engine is running. The captain must observe all posted speed limit restrictions. If no restrictions, the "recommended" speed is 55 MPH or less.
6. **Sportsmanship:** All contestants are required to follow the highest degree of Sportsmanship, Courtesy, and Conservation. No alcohol or illegal controlled substances without a prescription may be used or allowed in the boat during tournament hours.
7. **Pre-Tournament Registration/Memberships:** All Youth Anglers and Boaters must be registered members of PTA and have completed all registration forms, paid team membership and team fees before being allowed to fish a PTA tournament. For preferred entry, team fees must be received the **TUESDAY** prior to each event at "NYFA/Teen Anglers, PO Box 297, Rogersville, Mo. 65742" by 7:00 pm. Teams may enter online at www.nationalyouthfishingassociation.com. All online entries must be completed by 7:00pm the **TUESDAY** prior to the tournament. Preferred entry assigns you a boat and flight number. PTA will take entries after and the morning of the tournament, **all late entries will be placed at the end of the take-off field in order received and will be placed in the first weigh-in time for that day, You Are Not Allowed to Switch Boat Captains or change Youth Angler partners once the season begins. However, during emergency situations you will be allowed to have an alternate boat captain that is already affiliated with your club. The alternate boat captain will not be allowed to fish during the event. Youth Angler Teams with the boat captain, may substitute permanently one youth angler during a qualifying event. No Youth Angler Substitutions are allowed at Championships unless substitution has already qualified for the championship. All changes must be approved by the NYFA Tournament Director. A Team Consists of one Boat Captain and one or two Student anglers Grades (4-12). Boat Captains are not allowed to fish by themselves if their Youth Anglers team can not participate.**

8. **ENTRY FEES:** One Hundred (**\$100**) dollars per event is charged per 2 or 3-person team.
9. **Insurance:** Boat Captains must have at least a minimum of \$100,000 boater liability insurance and be able to show proof of insurance upon request by PTA.
10. **Boats and Motors:** All boats must meet B.I.A. and Coast Guard requirements; House boats, barges or other cumbersome crafts are not allowed at the Tournament Directors discretion. All boats must be equipped with an operable ignition emergency shutoff lanyard, "Kill Engine Switch" device. Each boat is required to have a properly aerated live well adequate to maintain alive, a limit catch of bass. Running lights, if required by PTA, must be operational at take-off.
11. **Tackle, Equipment and Umbrella Rigs:** Only artificial bait or lures may be used. Pork style baits are allowed. No live bait or prepared bait allowed. All bass must be caught using rod and reel and only one rod and reel allowed in the water per student angler at one time. If student angler breaks his/her line while setting the hook or retrieving a fish, he/she is allowed to make an attempt with the rod or with hands to secure the visible line and land the fish. Youth Anglers/boaters may not leave the boat to land a fish. Trolling is not allowed. Underwater cameras are not allowed during competition hours. Snagging bass off spawning beds is not allowed and any bass caught off a spawning bed must be hooked inside the mouth or it must be released immediately. All bass must be caught alive and on rod and reel. Umbrella rigs or A Rigs are not allowed. **All multi armed baits and umbrella rigs are banned** regardless of materials used in construction with the exception of **two arm spinnerbaits and buzz baits** which are allowed, provided the arms are no longer than five inches from the "R bend" or line tie to the end of the wire. **Only spinner blades may be attached to the wires, (no teaser baits).** Arms must be above the main body/hook of the bait. **Donkey Rigs are allowed.** Use of prohibited rigs and baits will result in immediate disqualification from PTA events. **Any bait in question should be presented to PTA Officials prior to competition and all rulings by PTA Officials are final.**
12. **Competition Periods:** Tournament hours begin as listed on the schedule unless changed by tournament director. The tournament director reserves the right to change tournament hours if need be. Youth Anglers/Boat Captains must know and observe the official times, dates and rules. During tournament hours, Youth Anglers/Boat Captains may not participate in the practice of hole sitting or follow another competitor's boat to fishing locations. No wake zones and no fishing zones on all lakes must be observed. **Cell phones are for emergency use only.** Youth Anglers/Boat Captains, Coaches/Sponsors may not use any mobile communication devices 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 the tournament director/officials. Boat Captains may use cell phones for business or personal use not related to fishing information. Cell phones may be used to take pictures of fish during tournament hours but **may not** be posted to social media or texted during tournament hours on the water.
13. **Permitted Fishing Locations:** Fishing on tournament waters is permitted anywhere available to the public and accessible by boat except; within 50 yards of a public gas pump or any docks attached to, or within 50 yards of the commercial gas docks, or 50 yards of another competitor's boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position unless that competitor specifically allows any and all tournament boats the right to fish with in the 50 yard radius claimed by him/her; within any "off limit" or "no fishing" area designated by local, state or federal agencies. Core of Engineers Lakes in the White River chain have specific "off limits" in and around concession areas, marinas and commercial docks. Any other off limit no fishing areas will be announced at the pre-meeting take-off or on the website for launch anywhere tournaments.
14. **Special Situations/Break Downs:** Youth Anglers/Boat Captains may not depart the boat to land fish or make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Youth Anglers/Boaters must leave and return to the official check in point by boat unless the lake has been designated as a launch anywhere site. In the event of a boat breakdown, one or both Youth Anglers may be removed from boat into another competitor's boat or a rescue boat. It is the sole responsibility of the Youth Anglers to transfer and keep their fish separated. The fish must be placed in a segregated live well and at least one of the participating Youth Anglers must accompany those fish at all times to the weigh-in site. Must notify a tournament director when appropriate.
15. **Take-Off Announcement & Inspection:** If all boats are taking off from one place, pre-take-off announcements start 10 minutes before take-off. Boats take-off in order of assigned number and flight. No boat allowed to leave until your number has been called and you idle by with operable ignition emergency shutoff lanyard, "Kill Engine Switch" attached and live well lids open. No boat leaves take-off with a faulty kill switch. Running lights must be in and working unless tournament director has instructed no lights. Life Jackets must be fully zipped/snapped and secured when boat number is called, or you will be sent to the end of the tournament take-offline.

16. **Launch Anywhere Tournaments:** If the tournament is a launch anywhere event, you may launch your boat anywhere on tournament waters and run to your first fishing spot. You may not make a cast until your “designated time” determined by flight times. **No Trailing to the Weigh-In, must motor by boat to the weigh-In.** It is your responsibility to be at the weigh in/check in on time. You may only fish on tournament waters.
17. **Check In/Weigh In:** Check in site will be determined by PTA tournament director. Check in instructions for off water weigh in sites will be explained on PTA website before each event. All boats will identify themselves at the check-in site by means of boat number and proceed immediately to the designated weigh in area to weigh fish. **Check in Procedure:** Before weighing in fish, teams must report to the “check in tent”. Teams will identify by boat number and receive a **weigh in card** with names and boat number on the card. **Teams must have weigh in card before being allowed to weigh in any fish.** It is the student angler’s responsibility to know your boat number.
18. **Scoring:** Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted “Kentucky Bass” and Meanmouth “Red Eye” are counted. Five fish per team may be weighed in at each event. The official length limit will be determined by the Tournament Director and announced before the tournament. Bass should measure on a flat board with mouth closed and the tail of the fish must touch the legal length line to qualify. A **SHORT FISH** results in a complete loss of your weight for the day. A dead fish results in a one (1) pound penalty per fish. At no time during tournament hours shall a boat possess more than a 5-fish limit or weigh in more than a 5-fish limit. Anyone bringing more than five (5) fish to the weigh in scales will not be allowed to weigh in any fish. All fish must be brought to the scales in an official weigh-in bag. **A dead fish may not be weighed in for big bass.**
19. **Culling:** Culling must be done immediately. Youth Angler or Boat Captain may put 6th bass in the live well before getting the cull fish out of the live well as long as the cull fish comes out immediately after doing so. **You may not cull a dead fish and all fishing must stop until culling is complete.**
20. **Late Penalty:** If late to check in, a team’s weight will be disqualified for that day and they will not be allowed to weigh in their fish.
21. **Ties:** If a tie occurs, PTA Officials will combine and divide equally the prizes between the spots that are tied. Any trophy position shall be decided by entry position on ties.
22. **Points:** Each paid registered team receives **100** points at each event. Points start at **400** for 1st place and descend 1 point for each place dropped. Each team receives fish weight as points. Points earned remain with the team for TOY points and championship eligibility during the season.
23. **TOY Award “Team of Year: \$1,000 (\$500 Cash/\$500 Scholarships):** The most points accumulated over a team’s regular season tournaments and the Championship will determine the “TOY Award”.
24. **Championship Qualifications:** from qualifying events in your Division, you must finish in the top **(40%)** of the field in points, to qualify for the Championship. All final decisions will be made by Tournament Director.
25. **Payback:** 70% payout of all paid entries. One (1) Place paid for every five (5) paid entries. To a maximum of (20) Places. Two Big Bass Awards. 1st \$200 Gift Cards/2nd \$100 Gift Cards.

Championship Paybacks:

CASH/GC: \$4,000-(1st\$1,400/\$200GC)/(2nd\$1,000/\$200GC)/(3rd\$600/\$200GC)/(4th\$200/\$200GC)
Scholarships: \$3,000 -1st \$1200/2nd \$800/3rd \$600/4th \$400

26. **Quality Assurance Testing:** By his/her signature on entry form and/or participation in the PTA tournaments, Youth Anglers or Boat Captains agree to any quality assurance test if required by the Tournament Director. They may include all or part of the following: CVSA, Polygraph, Urinalysis, or Blood test. Refusal of any angler or boater to submit to the test will result in the loss of winnings, immediate disqualification, plus subsequent disqualification from future tournaments.

For Questions Call: 417-689-4066 or 417-689-1108

THANK YOU For Helping a Child Continue Their Education Through the Sport of Bass Fishing