

South Carolina Bass Federation

Trail Rules 2026



Tournament Details

Join us this 2026 season for your shot at a spot in the 2027 B.A.S.S. Nation National Championship which sends multiple anglers DIRECTLY to the BASSMASTER Classic!

You may participate as either:

- Boater
- Non-Boater

Entry Fees and Payback

Entry Fees will be \$100 for Boater and \$75 for Co-Angler and be broke down as follows:

	<u>Angler</u>	<u>Co-Angler</u>
Payback	\$65.00	\$48.00
Operational Expense	\$15.00	\$9.50
Big Fish Pot	\$10.00	\$8.50
Championship	\$3.00	\$2.00
State Team Fund	\$7.00	\$7.00
Total	\$100.00	\$75.00

**One place will be paid for every five entrants in each division (up to 10 positions per division).
Two Big Fish payouts for each division.**

Schedule

February 14, 2026: Santee Cooper out of Blacks Camp

March 14, 2026: Lake Hartwell out of Green Pond Landing

April 4, 2026: Lake Wylie out of Ebenezer Park

June 14, 2026: Lake Wateree out of Clearwater Cove

Please reach out to Blacks for lodging and have an empty stomach for breakfast at Clearwater!

Winners and AOY Points System

Winner and subsequent standings will be determined by the largest total pounds and ounces after any penalties. 250 points will be awarded to the winners, descending by 1 point per spot thereafter. Those who fail to weigh in a fish will receive 1 point less than the last place finisher. AOY standings are based on your top 3 events. Boater/Co-Angler AOY receives bid to 2027 Bass Nation National Championship.

In case of ties, involving payback or points, in the top ten (10) positions during any tournament the following tiebreakers will apply (in order):

- Angler with the single largest fish.
- Angler with largest number of live fish.
- Angler with largest number of fish.
- Flip of coin.
- Ties in points at the end of the Trail Tournament season will be broken by total pounds and ounces.

Tournament Rules

These rules have been adopted as standard for all tournaments sponsored by or sanctioned by the South Carolina Bass Federation, Inc. All affiliated B.A.S.S. clubs are urged to follow these rules during all interclub and intraclub tournaments to promote safety, sportsmanship, and Bass preservation.

1. **Insurance:** Members using a boat at any South Carolina Bass Federation, Inc. Tournament must have valid liability insurance of at least \$100,000 and must show proof upon request at the pairing meeting.
2. **Participants:** Must be in good standing with SC Bass Federation, National B.A.S.S. Federation, and B.A.S.S. (3 Total memberships)
3. **Polygraph:** All participants are subject to polygraph upon request. Anyone refusing to take or not clearing polygraph will be disqualified. Registration: Must be registered by 5pm the Wednesday before the event.
4. **Off-Limits:** there will be no official practice days, or off limits, including information off limits, for SC BASS Nation Trail Events
5. **Registration:** Registration ends the 5pm Wednesday before the event. There will be no refunds given after pairings are done on Thursday.
6. **Tournament Pairings:** All tournament participants will be paired until all non-boaters are used. All pairings are final, and no refunds will be made after that time. Pairings will be conducted by and in a manner selected by the Tournament Director at registration time. It is the participant's responsibility to meet tournament times and deadlines.
7. **Pre-Tournament Meeting:** All participants must attend the meeting prior to each day's blast-off.
8. **Safety:** All State and Coast Guard requirements must be met by the contestant and their equipment operated in accordance with those laws. A kill switch (safety switch) must be installed and in working order on each boat. Each contestant must wear an approved PFD-3 (chest type) whenever the combustion engine is running. The kill switch must be operational and attached to driver when the combustion engine is running. All auxiliary gas tanks must be permanently mounted. All fueling during the tournament hours must be pumped from a marina

located on the tournament waters. Infraction of these rules may result in penalties or disqualification of the violator.

9. **Sportsmanship:** Sportsmanship is expected of all contestants. Safety and courtesy are essential to a successful tournament. A participant may not discuss fishing with anyone, other than another participant, during tournament hours for a tournament gain or fishing advantage.
10. **Tackle & Lures:** Only artificial lures may be used. No live or prepared bait is allowed except commercial pork baits. Only casting, spinning, and spin casting tackle will be used. Only one rod will be in water and fished at a time. Other rods may be pre-rigged and available for immediate use, no rods over 8 feet will be allowed. Fish must be caught in the accepted conventional manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their days fish disqualified. No Alabama rigs (or other dual bait rigs) may be used. Penalty will be disqualification of days catch.
11. **Non-Boater Requirements:** Must bring own PFD-3; Limit gear to 6 rods and 2 small or 1 large tackle bag. While not a requirement, we strongly recommend our co-anglers compensate boaters for fuel.
12. **Accessory Equipment:** Underwater cameras/video equipment are not allowed, any other electronic equipment may be used. Two-way radios and communication equipment may only be used in case of an emergency and not for tournament gain or a fishing advantage.
13. **Boating Equipment: Boats:** Only boats and motors complying with state laws will be used. Boats powered by any outboard motor (minimum 60HP and maximum 250HP) may be used in South Carolina Bass Federation, Inc. Tournaments. No boat may be powered by an engine exceeding the Coast Guard approved rating plate. All boats must be a minimum of 16-ft in length as recorded on the registration. Only boats equipped with a steering wheel may be used. Each contestant has the option of not riding in a boat where his safety is in question. Trolling as a method of fishing with gas engine is prohibited.
14. **Boat Operation:** Operating a boat in a negligent or unsafe manner or in violation of any State or Federal law may result in penalties or disqualification. Each boat will be provided a means of Tournament identification, which must be displayed upon request during Tournament hours. The angler can only cast from front deck, the co-angler can only cast from rear deck.
15. **Forward Facing Sonar:** One forward facing transducer allowed and a total of 55" of screens that includes your phone or tablet.
16. **Fishing Locations:** First to arrive at a location "owns" that location and all water within fifty (50) yards of their boat in any direction for fishing if trolling motor is up and anchor out. Any off limits will be announced at pre-tournament meeting
17. **Competition Fish:** Only black bass species will be counted. (largemouth, spotted and smallmouth bass) Boaters can only weigh five (5) fish Non-Boaters can only weigh three (3) fish. All fish must meet the minimum size limit set for the lake by the tournament director measured on a flat board by the Tournament officials. Mashed or mangled bass will not be counted.
18. **Lake Headquarters:** Will be designated by the Tournament Director. Boats must leave and return by water to this location. A check-in point will be designated. Each contestant must check-in at the end of the Tournament Day. Failure to check in will result in immediate and final disqualification.

19. **Culling Rule:** When 6th fish is brought into boat, one must be culled to maintain a 5 fish limit before next cast or moving boat. If a competitor determines they have over the limit they must immediately reduce his/her catch to the tournament limit with a bass of their choice from their catch. Each returned bass will result in a 2 pound penalty to be deducted from their daily score. In this case, competitors must attempt to notify tournament officials and if unsuccessful must notify officials at check-in. Use of piercing cull tags will result in disqualification of days catch.
20. **Catch & Release:** All tournament boats must be equipped with an operational live well system capable of supporting two (2) limits of fish under tournament conditions. Fish will be brought to check station in contestants' own bags. A bag that holds water, keeping your fish alive is your responsibility. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN HOW TO FIZZ FISH [Click Here for How-To](#)
21. **Departing Boat:** For any fishing advantage is not allowed. Partners must remain together during tournament hours. Any participant-leaving tournament must weigh fish and sign weight slip at time of departure. Once leaving the tournament, the participants will not be allowed to return to the tournament. In certain circumstances a boater may be allowed to go back out alone if reason for non-boater departure was.
22. **Tournament and Competition Hours:** Will be announced by the Tournament Director. NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES during the Tournament Hours! Tournament hours begin with registration and end after awards presentation. Two-day event tournament hours for first day will end when last contestant weighs their fish. Violation of this rule may result in penalties or disqualification.
23. **Blast Offs:** Numbers of boats per flight will be decided by the Tournament Director at each tournament. Number of boats, water restriction, and weather conditions will be considered in each tournament.
24. **Weigh-Ins:** Will be at Lake Headquarters. A weigh-in deadline will be announced. Partners must remain together at weigh-ins. Fish must be caught by the contestant weighing them in. In case of a mechanical failure, rule #31 applies
25. **Penalties:** Once fish are presented to the officials, the contestant does not have the right to cull his fish. Penalties will be incurred at that point. Fish will be measured and counted. Over 5 fish will mean disqualification. Each fish under the DNR size limit will be culled and incur a penalty of one (1) pound penalty. If your short fish is your only fish negative weight will be applied. A penalty of (4) ounces will be deducted for each dead fish. A one (1) pound per minute penalty will be assessed for each minute late for weigh in or for late check in for two day tournaments, up to 15 minutes. After 15 minutes no fish will be weighed for the late contestant. A one (1) pound penalty will be assessed per occurrence for not observing no wake zones on ALL bridges (marked or unmarked).
26. **Each Contestant:** Must verify their fish weight on a form provided by the Tournament Director. All results are final after contestant leaves the weigh-in table.
27. **Hazardous Weather:** The Tournament Director will determine proper weather and go or postpone accordingly. If postponement of a trail tournament is determined, make up will be the following Saturday. Postponement of tournament will be decided at ramp on day of tournament. Six Man Team and Federation Championship will not be postponed.

28. **Mechanical Failure:** You must compete (fish) with the same partner that you started competition with. If boat becomes rendered useless, you may send or bring your fish to weigh-in with another participant by water in a tournament boat. At that point the competitors of the useless boat competition is ended. Any change of boat must be approved by South Carolina Bass Federation, Inc. Tournament Director.
29. **Enforcement:** The duly appointed Tournament Director will be the final authority for the interpretation and enforcement of these rules and any special circumstances.
30. **Protest:** Any violation or rumor of a violation will be investigated by the Tournament Committee.
31. **Release of Media:** By signing the official weigh in slip each angler agrees to: I hereby waive my rights of privacy or publicity with the regard to the programs of the tournament in which I appear and consent to S.C. Bass Federation, B.A.S.S. LLC, its subsidiary companies or those acting under their permission or authority to copyrighting, distribution, televising, publishing and using in any way the audio, video, photographs or interviews of this event. I shall not be entitled to receive any royalties or other compensation in connection with such use.

Bad Check Policy

Returned checks incur:

- \$30 processing fee plus original amount.
- Cash only after second bad check.
- No checks accepted for 1 year after second offense.

Efforts have and will be made to keep these rules as up to date as possible. If any differences between the rules in The Handbook and the most current rules of the South Carolina Bass Federation, Inc. may exist, the most current years official rules shall prevail, and shall be approved by the Tournament Director or his/her designee.