



Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation Team Series 2023 Overview and Rules

The IBN Team Series is a great opportunity for bass anglers to pair up with a buddy and fish competitively as a team for attractive payouts at 7 regular season tournaments, while also pursuing two separate paths to qualify for the Bassmaster Classic, and a chance to fish the IBN Team Series Classic which typically has a guaranteed purse of \$5,000 for a field limited to 20 boats.

The 2023 IBN Team Series Season will include seven regular season tournaments and one Classic. The dates and locations for the seven regular season tournaments can be found on the IBN's website: www.Illinoisbassnation.com. The IBN Team Series Classic date is also available on the website, but the location for this event will be withheld until the weigh-in for our last regular season tournament.

Register and Pay Tournament Entry Fees on Website: Our website (www.Illinoisbassnation.com) now provides anglers with opportunity to register and pay tournament entry fees online.

End of Season Point Totals: In an effort to increase participation in the IBN Team Series, which means better payouts and better potential to send multiple teams to the Bassmaster Team Series Championship (which is one of two potential paths from the IBN Team Series to the Bassmaster Classic), we will be revising the formula for season point totals as follows. Points will accrue for each of the seven regular season tournaments as usual, but this year each team's season points total will reflect only their **Five best** tournaments.

We realize life is busy, and scheduling conflicts arise (work obligations, family obligations, etc.), so it isn't easy for fisherman to commit to a tournament series trail when just one unforeseen conflict could potentially ruin an otherwise successful season. Our new policy of only counting each team's best five finishes provides greater flexibility for tournament anglers. On top of that, current rules already allow for teams to fish one tournament alone (meaning either the Boater or the Non-Boater can fish one of the seven tournaments alone, on behalf of the team), and the rules also allow teams to fish one tournament with a substitute angler (replacing either the Boater or the Non-boater). With all that flexibility, there's no reason not to give the IBN Team Series a try this year. Again, our intention with this new policy is to increase participation. More teams means bigger competitor fields, better payouts, and greater potential to send multiple teams to the Bassmaster Team Series Championship.

Determining Take-Off Positions: Take-off positions for each of the seven regular season tournaments will be determined as follows: All take-off positions will be drawn at check-in on the morning of the tournament. Teams that pre-paid for an event will draw their take-off position from a priority pool of numbers for the top take-off positions. For example, if 10 teams pre-pay for an event, those 10 teams will be drawing from a priority pool for take-off positions 1 through 10. Teams that did not pre-pay will receive take-off positions in order as paid. Please note that in order to qualify as “pre-paid” for any tournament, payment must be confirmed received no later than 24 hours prior to any tournament.

Benefits of Fishing the IBN Team Series:

2 POTENTIAL PATHS TO QUALIFY FOR THE BASSMASTER CLASSIC

Path 1: Regional Championship > National Championship > Bassmaster Classic.

At the end of our regular tournament season, the top 3 eligible teams will be awarded 6 of the 20 available positions on the next years Illinois State Team. 3 of the 6 awarded positions will be Boater positions, and 3 will be Non-Boater Positions. In order for a team to be eligible, both team members must maintain a membership with an IBN sanctioned club throughout the season.

If a qualifying Boater or Non-Boater is unable to attend the Regional, the resultant open position will be filled as follows: if the open position is a Boater position, then it will be filled by the next available Boater in order of priority by eligible team with next highest point total. Likewise, if the open position is a Non-Boater position, then it will be filled by the next available Non-Boater in order of priority by eligible team with the next highest point total. Members must maintain a membership with an IBN sanctioned club throughout the season.

State Teams go on to fish the B.A.S.S. Nation Regional Championship where the top finishing Boater and Non-Boater from each state qualify for the National Championship where the top 3 finishers win a berth to the Bassmaster Classic.

Path 2: Bassmaster Team Championship > Bassmaster Classic

For every 20 teams that participate in our Team Series over the course of our regular tournament season, the IBN will send one team to the Bassmaster Team Championship, where one angler will win a berth to the Bassmaster Classic.

The number of teams the IBN will send in any given year may vary in number (i.e. we may only send 1 team, or we could send multiple teams depending on how many total teams participate in our regular season tournaments). Regarding eligibility, while there is no requirement here for teams to maintain an IBN club membership, only teams that consist of the same two anglers that began the season as a team together are eligible. Once we determine how many teams we will be sending, the team positions will be awarded in order of priority to the eligible team(s) with the most points. In the event a qualifying team is unable to attend the Bassmaster Team Championship, the open position will be offered to the next eligible team with the most points until it is filled.

THE ILLINOIS B.A.S.S. NATION TEAM SERIES CLASSIC

While it may not be the Bassmaster Classic, the IBN Team Series Classic is a great event with a limited field of 20 teams and typically has a guaranteed minimum purse of \$5,000. The IBN Team Series Classic will be held in October at a location that will be withheld until the weigh-in of our final regular season tournament. The field for the IBN Team Series Classic will be limited to a maximum of 20 potential berths as follows:

- Classic Qualification:

Top 20 teams

Total accumulated points (Based on best 5 IBN Team Series tournaments)

Rules and Regulations

Angler Teams:

Tournament format will be a "Team" or "Buddy" event. The combined weight for the boat will be the official weight for the team and will be used to determine the standings. A "Team" consists of 2 anglers.

- 1. A team may substitute a partner (Boater or Non-Boater) for only one individual tournament.** Substitutes may be any eligible person that is not already a declared Boater or Non Boater on another competitor team.
- 2. One team member (Boater or Non-Boater) may fish alone for only one individual tournament.**
- 3. All teams must declare which team member is the Boater and which team member is the Non-Boater.** These declarations shall remain throughout the series. If for some reason a team member is forced to get a new partner (Boater or Non-Boater), this may be approved once during the series. All circumstances concerning a partner change must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Director, reviewed and approved prior to the next tournament. The Tournament Directors decisions are final. No Partner changes will be allowed after the 3rd tournament of the series.
- 4. The tournament series is open to any 2 angler team. Each Non Illinois BASS Nation member must pay a one-time \$25 Registration fee prior to fishing any tournament.** The one-time Registration Fee covers a participant's entry into the series, and eligibility to qualify for the Bassmaster Team Championship. All teams with properly registered participants will be recognized as a Bassmaster Team Series competitor by the IBN and by B.A.S.S.

Eligible Participants

Any person that is at least 16 years old, and is not a professional angler. For example, Bassmaster Elite Series, MLF and FLW tour pros are not eligible participants. In addition, the Tournament Director may determine a person's eligibility and is at Tournament Director's sole discretion.

Point System

All Teams will receive 50 points for participation. Points will be based on finish. 100 -1st, 99 – 2nd, 98 – 3rd, and so on. Each team's point total for the season will reflect only their best **five** regular season tournaments (excluding the IBN Team Series Classic).

Pay outs

Payouts will be based on the size of the field for each individual tournament. One hundred dollars from each entry received will be used for payouts. The balance of each entry fee goes toward the classic purse and towards operational/incidental costs to run the tournaments. In each of the regular season events, we will pay one place for every 5 entries received. Final determination will be made by the tournament director at each event. The IBN will always pay at least 3 positions.

Bassmaster Team Championship

For every 20 teams that participate in our Team Series over the course of our regular tournament season, the IBN will send one team to the Bassmaster Team Championship, where one angler will win a berth to the Bassmaster Classic.

The number of teams the IBN will send in any given year may vary in number (i.e. we may only send 1 team, or we could send multiple teams depending on how many total teams participate in our regular season tournaments). Regarding eligibility, while there is no requirement here for teams to maintain an IBN club membership, only teams that consist of the same two anglers that began the season as a team together are eligible. Once we determine how many teams we will be sending, the team positions will be awarded in order of priority to the eligible team(s) with the most points. In the event a qualifying team is unable to attend the Bassmaster Team Championship, the open position will be offered to the next eligible team with the most points until it is filled. The \$500 per team entry fee for the Bassmaster Team Championship will be paid by the IBN, from the IBN Team Series proceeds.

Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation Team Series Classic

The IBN Team Series Classic will be held in October at a location that will be withheld until the weigh-in of our final regular season tournament. The field for the IBN Team Series Classic will be limited to 20 potential berths as follows:

IBN Team Classic Entry Fee and Payout

The Entry Fee and Payout for the Classic will be based on the success of the five regular season tournaments of the IBN Team Series, and will be announced at the weigh-in for the final regular season tournament .

Insurance

DURING THE OFFICIAL COMPETITION DAYS, NO COMPETITOR MAY OPERATE A BOAT UNLESS THAT COMPETITOR HAS DOCUMENTED PROOF OF A MINIMUM OF \$300,000 BOATING LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERING THE BOAT BEING USED IN THE TOURNAMENT. PROOF OF INSURANCE MUST BE WITH THE BOAT BEING USED AND MUST COVER THE COMPETITORS USING THAT BOAT. RANDOM CHECKS WILL BE CONDUCTED AND ANY COMPETITOR WHO DOES NOT HAVE PROOF OF IN-FORCE INSURANCE WITH \$300,000 COVERAGE MAY NOT BE ALLOWED TO COMPETE.

Official Rules & Procedures

1. Official Rules: Great effort, study and research have gone into the formulation of these rules. The following rules of this tournament will remain unchanged. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may impose such sanctions, as he deems appropriate, including, without limitation, disqualification, and forfeiture of any and all prizes. The decision of the Tournament Director and tournament officials shall be final in all matters.

2. Participation & Eligibility to compete in the IBN Team Series events: All IBN Team Series events are open to any and all anglers wishing to participate. Contestants are not required to be a member of the IBN.

3. Tournament Entry Fee: \$150 if registered with payment or deposit received no later than 24 hours prior to the tournament. \$175 if registering at the actual event.

Anglers can register online at www.illinoisbassnation.com or by sending in an entry form post-marked no later than 10 days prior to the date of each tournament. Registration can also be completed the morning of the tournament at the launch site with cash only; no other form of payment will be accepted at that time.

The Tournament Director may impose a cut off for number of boats an event boats based on our permit allowance for that location, in which case teams will be registered on a first-come-first-served basis. All teams are encouraged to preregister for events they intend to fish.

4. Safety: Safe boat conduct must be applied at all times by all competitors. During the official competition each competitor must possess a Coast Guard-approved chest type life preserver. This preserver must be strapped, buckled, or zippered securely while on the boat and maintained in that condition at all times when the combustion engine is running. Violation of this rule shall be reason for

disqualification. Tournament officials have the right to delay, shorten or cancel the start of an official Tournament Day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the contestants and tournament committee. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek safe shelter in bad weather where danger may be imminent. Tournament waters may also be restricted because of unsafe conditions including but not limited to bad weather. The Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation has the right to impose speed limits on any and all tournaments. Whether or not to impose a speed limit, the area covered by the speed limit and/or the actual speed limit imposed shall be left exclusively to the discretion of the Tournament Director. In case of an emergency the competitors shall dial 911 FIRST and then notify the Tournament Director.

5. Sportsmanship: Competitors are expected to follow HIGH STANDARDS of sportsmanship, safety, and conservation. Any infractions of these fundamentals may be deemed cause for disqualification. Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by licensed physician) by any competitor during the official tournament will not be tolerated and shall be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future IBN Tournaments. Maximum courtesy must be practiced at all times, especially with regard to boating and angling in the vicinity of non-competitors who may be on tournament waters. Any act of a competitor, which reflects unfavorably upon efforts to promote fisheries, conservation, clean waters, and courtesy shall be reason for disqualification. The prevailing statutes and regulations of the State of Illinois bind all competitors. No alcoholic beverages, stimulants, depressants, or otherwise shall be allowed in the boats during the official competition days, registration, pre-tournament meeting or when in the weigh-in area. Chemical-substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition, and compliance with tournament rules shall be ground for rejecting any application for participation and for disqualification.

6. Horsepower Regulations: Maximum horsepower for all outboard motors used in tournament will be limited to the rules pertaining to the body of water where the event is being held. It is the responsibility of the Boater to abide by these regulations.

7. Boat & Motor: For the safety of all contestants, ALL BOATS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH SOME TYPE OF OPERABLE IGNITION KILL SWITCH. This device must be attached to the driver's body at any time the combustion engine is operating. Anytime the combustion engine is operating and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat. *** All teams moving forward to the Bassmaster Team Championship will be required to operate a console steering boat. No tiller drive boats will be allowed.

8. Basic Boat Equipment: Every boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment.

9. Boat Identification: Each boat MAY be given, prior to the day's start an inspection check by a tournament official. All boats will be tagged for identification purposes. The team will be given a numbered plate or Key fob which MUST remain with your boat until turned in at the official check-in.

10. Permitted Fishing Locations: Tournament waters shall be established by the Tournament Director. Each competitor must obtain this information from the Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation Tournament Director. Fishing is permitted anywhere on tournament waters except within 50 yards of another competitors boat which was first anchored or secured in a fixed position with the trolling motor out of the water. Power poles are considered to be a fixed position device. All such boats are required to advise any other competitor when such boat believes that the competitor's boat is close to being in this 50-yard radius. A

competitor has the right to navigate through this 50-yard radius to get to fishable waters. No such boat shall permit selected competitors to fish within this 50-yard circle claimed by him/her to the exclusion of any other competitor. Any water within boundaries posted off limits or NO Fishing by State or Federal agencies will be OFF-LIMITS. All angling must be done from a boat. Competitors wishing to change fish habitat by placing an object in tournament waters may do so if such action does not violate state or federal regulations.

11. Contestants Must Remain In Boat: Contestants must not depart the boat to land fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament days. Contestants must leave and return to official check-in by boat. In case of an emergency, competitors may relocate from their boat to: A BOAT OPERATED BY ANOTHER COMPETITOR OR A RESCUE BOAT. If a competitor must violate any of the above conditions, with safety as a first priority, if possible, competitors should first contact a tournament official by phone or other means or to report an emergency or breakdown. In such an emergency or breakdown, both competitors must cease fishing at this point and their catch must be verified by a tournament official in order to be counted in the tournament. If after the emergency situation is resolved by the tournament officials and enough time is left for the competitors to resume fishing, a RESTART will be allowed and the competitors may continue and their catch will be counted. This applies only to dire emergency situations. The trailering of boats during the tournament hours is prohibited except by the direction of the Tournament Director.

12. Official Check Point: There shall be only one official check point for check-out in the morning and check-in in the afternoon and this point shall be designated by the Tournament Director. At the time of check out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all the rules set forth by the Tournament Director. At check-in all boats shall identify themselves by means of numbered plate or Kay fob and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. At least one team member should stay with the team's catch until they have completed weigh-in.

13. SCORING: Tournament standings and final winners shall be determined by the pound and hundredth of a pound weight of each Teams catch during the competition day of the tournament. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth, Spotted, Redeye or Shoal bass will be weighed. The limit shall be 5 of the above species and varieties per day, unless the prevailing state limit is less than 5, or a special limit is established for a particular tournament by the tournament officials, in which case the state limit, or special limit, shall be the tournament limit. At no time shall a competitor have reduced its catch in possession to more than the tournament limit. Tournament officials will conduct checks for violation of this provision, and in the event a competitor has possession of more than the tournament limit,, such competitor may be disqualified, or at the discretion of tournament officials such competitor shall cull down to the limit described, in order of priority beginning with largest bass first, and each largest fish thereafter until the catch is reduced to the limit amount. The official length for bass shall be determined by the Tournament Director and announced at the tournament briefing. In most cases it will be the longest state limit covering the tournament waters. Only bass as described above which measure the official length or more, shall be counted at weighed-in. Any bass that appears to have been intentionally mangled, mashed, mauled or otherwise altered by a competitor to meet the legal length will only be weighed and credited at the discretion of the tournament officials. After competitors check-in at the official checkpoint they MUST present all LEGAL bass fish in their possession to the tournament official at weigh-in. Competitors are expected to keep their catch alive by use of a properly functioning live well system. All competitor's catches must be transported from the boat's live well to the weigh-in station in the special bags provided by the IBN at each tournament, and each bag must be filled with enough water to insure survival of the catch. Failure to reasonably comply with this requirement may result in

disqualification. No stringers or penetrating cull tags may be used during the tournament. Any use of penetrating cull tags or stringers during any part of the tournament will be cause for disqualification.

14. PENALTIES:

Dead Fish Penalties: Teams shall be assessed a penalty of one pound for each legal dead bass presented at weigh-in. For example:

- 1 Dead Fish = a total penalty of (1 lb)
- 2 Dead Fish = a total penalty of (2.00 lbs)
- 3 Dead Fish = a total penalty of (3.00 lbs)
- 4 Dead Fish = a total penalty of (4.00 lbs)
- 5 Dead Fish = a total penalty of (5.00 lbs)

CULLING OF DEAD BASS IS PROHIBITED and may be cause for disqualification.

A DEAD BASS MAY BE WIEGHED AS PART OF A TEAM'S TOTAL CATCH BUT MAY NOT BE INDIVIDUALYY WEIGHED FOR ANY BIG BASS AWARD.

Short Fish Penalties: Competitors that present a bass atweigh-in that fails to measure the prescribed length of a legal fish for the tournament waters (as determined by a tournament official) will not be weighed. In addition, any team presenting short fish shall be penalized at the rate of one (1) pound for each non-legal bass presented.

Late Check-in Penalties: Prior to take-off, tournament officials will set forth the procedure for official check-in time and official check-in location. Teams that fail to check-in by the official check-in time at the official check-in location will be penalized at the rate of 1lb. per minute late, up to 10 minutes. Any Team more than 10 minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's weight.

The total of all assessed penalties shall be deducted from the team's total catch for that day of competition. The Tournament Director or his duly authorized tournament officials shall have sole authority for assessing penalties and/or disqualifying contestants. In addition, the Tournament Director, or his/her duly authorized tournament officials, may reduce tournament hours or tournament limits for fish care purposes.

15. TIES:

In the case of a tie for first place in any tournament, the tie will be broken in order of priority based on the following:

- 1.) First place will be awarded to the team with the largest individual bass by weight. (for this reason, all teams are encouraged to weigh their largest bass). It is not the scale official's responsibility to remind them. If a tie remains, then
- 2.) First place will be awarded to the team with the largest number of legal fish weighed-in during the competition. If a tie remains, then
- 3.) First place shall be awarded to the team with the largest number of legal LIVE fish weighed-in during the competition.

4.) In the unlikely event that a tie remains then a flip of a coin will be used to determine winner(s) and the combined monetary prize for 1st and 2nd place will be equally split by the two tied teams. For the record, and for any trophy, plaque or other physical award/prize at stake, the two tying teams shall be considered co-champions, and the Tournament Director shall determine proper discourse.

Ties for lesser positions in any tournament shall be resolved by pooling the monetary prize allocable to the tied position(s), and the monetary prize shall be split equally among the tied teams for that position. For example, if two teams are tied for a 2nd place position, no tie breakers will be applied. The two tying teams will simply split the monetary prize total for 2nd and 3rd place.

In the case of a tie in points at the end of the regular season that affects qualification for another tournament, qualification ties will be broken in order of priority based on the following:

- 1.) priority will go to the team(s) with the largest aggregate catch weight for their 4 best tournaments of the regular season. If a tie remains, then
- 2.) priority will go to the team with the largest aggregate number of legal fish weighed in their best 4 tournaments of the regular season. If a tie remains, then
- 3.) priority will go to the team with the largest aggregate number of legal LIVE fish weighed in their best 4 tournaments of the regular season during the competition.
- 4.) In the unlikely event that a tie remains then a flip of a coin will be used to determine priority for qualifications, and the Tournament Director shall determine proper discourse for any other related matters.

16. Inspections. Duly authorized Tournament officials may approach or board any competitor's boat at any time during the official competition day.

17. PROTESTS:

- All protests concerning the tournament must be in writing and signed by the protester and presented to the Tournament Director within 10 minutes of the end of weigh-in time (Scale is closed). The IBN will supply official protest forms which will include a copy that will be provided to the submitter of the protest, and another copy for the angler against which the protest is being filed.
- Protests will not be accepted unless the person(s) filing the protest were directly involved.
- If there is evidence of extreme rule violations uncovered at a later time, the board reserves the right to review and take whatever actions it deems necessary.
- All protests will be reviewed and testimony will be taken at a special meeting of the Tournament Committee. All involved parties will be given at least 7 days advance notice. The date, time and location of this meeting will be at the sole discretion of the Tournament Committee. Only involved parties (individuals not TEAMS) will be allowed at the meeting. No proxies or substitutes will be allowed. Failure to appear at this meeting will be grounds for dismissal of the Protest (if the submitter is not present) or admission of the violation (if the accused is not present).
- EACH CONTESTANT AGREES TO SUBMIT TO A POLYGRAPH TEST SHOULD THAT COMPETITOR BE ACCUSED OF ANY RULE VIOLATION. The costs of the polygraph test will be the responsibility of the party submitting to the polygraph test. Failure to submit to (and pay for) a requested polygraph test will be grounds for disqualification from the tournament and all future IBN events and membership.

18. Media (Written, pictures and information): Results of the Tournament will not be official until results are reviewed by the Tournament Officials. By participating in this competition contestants agree to waive their rights of privacy or publicity with regard to the programs of the tournament in which they appear and consent to Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation, B.A.S.S., LLC's (and their parent, affiliated and subsidiary companies, and those acting under their permission or upon their authority), copyrighting, distributing, televising, publishing and using in any way the audio and visual portions of any television videotape, film and photographs of any interviews, scenes or other sequences in which the contestant may be included, and any reproduction thereof, anywhere at any time through medium or media for advertising, promotion, trade, television programming or other lawful purpose whatsoever, and shall not be entitled to receive any royalties or other compensation in connection with such use.

Any issues not specifically addressed in this document will be ruled on by the IBN board and / or Tournament Director / Committee. All decisions will be final.

By completing a tournament entry form you agree that you are familiar with and will abide by all of the rules and requirements in this document.

**Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation Team Series
Tournament Director Committee
Kris Gaertner / Mike Towe / Jim Blumenstein**