

# 2025 Bass Pro Shops/ Cabela's North American Bass Challenge

## Official TEAM EVENT Rules



**1. OFFICIAL RULES & SAFETY REGULATIONS:** The following rules and safety regulations will remain unchanged, except for special tournaments. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules shall be left exclusively to Tournament Officials. In the event of a rule violation, officials may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate including, without limitation, fines, forfeiture of prizes, disqualification and prohibition from participation in future events. Official's decisions shall be final in all matters and will not be subject to appeal. **Be sure to check each individual events fact sheet for any rules/regulations specific to that particular event.**

**2. PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY:** Annual NABC membership is **NOT required** it is strictly voluntary. There are NO points to track, NO Circuit to follow. HOWEVER, those who DO sign up for an annual membership will be eligible for special discounts and special awards\bonus categories at every event we conduct, so membership is beneficial. Annual memberships \$40 per person and expire on 12/31 each year. Memberships are non-transferable and non-refundable. Any person under the age of 18 must have the signature of a parent or legal guardian on the liability release. No persons under age 12 may participate without explicit approval from tournament officials. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials may be required. Participants must enter as two-person teams (no "Partner TBD" or unknown partner names on entry forms). Each team must complete, sign and submit an official entry form with payment by the due dates. During any "official" tournament days no contestant or team may use a boat unless they have documented proof of boating liability coverage in reasonable amounts on that particular boat. **Proof of insurance must be with the boat at all times. Random checks may be conducted at events.**

We reserve the right to refuse participation in any event, to anyone, for any reason including, but not limited to, suspension, disqualification or banning from this or other events, criminal behavior, violation of game laws, or any unsportsmanlike behavior that would reflect dishonorably on our sport.

**3. ENTRY: CHECK EACH EVENT FACT SHEET FOR FULL EVENT SPECIFIC DETAILS.** Early bird registration for the **35th Spring Sturgeon Bay Open** runs Jan.2 to March 1st, 2025 and is eligible for various prize drawings for that event. General registration for all NABC Team events opens after March 1st. You may enter as many events as you wish. All entry fees including option pot entries (if any) must be made at the time of registration and before registration closes for the event. **Option pots (if listed on the event fact sheet) CANNOT be paid on site at check in.** All final payouts will be announced at the rules briefing prior to the event. Entry deadline for all events is close of business, Monday prior to the event. Tournament Officials reserve the right to discontinue or extend the acceptance of applications prior to or after this deadline.

Entries may be registered online or membership purchased at [northamericanbasschallenge.com](http://northamericanbasschallenge.com) or can be faxed (580-765-2890) or mailed to NABC or taken over the phone at 580.765.9031. Normally entries will be accepted based on a first-come, first-served basis until the tournament is deemed full (based on when received at NABC office, regardless of postmark, online registration is time stamped immediately). Once you are entered into the tournament you will receive an email confirmation. It is your responsibility to confirm receipt of your tournament entry and/or your option pot entries.

**Payment in full for all tournament fees** must be made at the time of entry application. **No refunds will be made nor will credit be extended for any cancellations.** Disqualification from a tournament for any reason will result in forfeiture of entry fee. No refunds or credits are extended if you choose not to fish due to weather or unforeseen circumstances.

Money order, check or credit cards are acceptable payments (VISA, MasterCard, Discover). A \$25 processing fee will be applied to all declined credit cards or NSF checks. Mailing address is NABC, 5998 N Pleasant View Road, Ponca City, Oklahoma. 74601 – P-580.765.2319 - Fax 580.765.2890 register online at [northamericanbasschallenge.com](http://northamericanbasschallenge.com)

The full 2025 NABC schedule of events will be maintained online. NABC may hold other "opens" or special events from time to time so check back often.

**4. PRE-TOURNAMENT PRACTICE, ONSITE REGISTRATION & COMPETITION:** There are no restrictions on how early a team can pre-fish, as long as state law is followed and there are no "official" practice days or off-limits unless otherwise announced in advance for a specific\special event. On the day of onsite registration and rules meeting, all NABC participants must be off plane, within site of the boat launch and no longer fishing by 3pm local time. In case of emergency please contact us immediately on the **NABC tournament hot line** or other designated contacts specified.

At least one (1) member of each team must sign in and register in person with official NABC staff at the appointed time and place prescribed for onsite registration in the tournament's fact sheet. At least one team member must be present for

the mandatory rules and safety meeting held prior to each tournament. In the case of an emergency or unforeseen situation, arrangements must be made with a tournament official if you are unable to attend. (Please call the tournament hot line above) Otherwise, if a team arrives 15 minutes or more late without approval they will be disqualified.

All competitors and teams are subject to official inspection, or a truth verification testing during and after the tournament and agree to facilitate and participate in those inspections at any time so requested. During the official competition day(s) competitors nor teams may not seek, nor accept the advice or assistance of anyone for the purposes of locating or catching fish or otherwise affecting the daily catch of fish for any reason from anyone except from another confirmed competitor or team in the same event. During the tournament hours a competitor may not transmit by any form of communication including but not limited to a cell phone, CB radio, VHF marine band radio, texting, any other type of communication device for the purpose of locating, catching fish or discussing your daily catch of fish nor receive any form of communication to aid you in the locating or catching of fish. Unless prior permission is given by the tournament director, contestants are permitted to transmit by radio or telephone, texting, etc. only in an emergency. During the event officials or representatives may board your boat at any time for any reason. No competitor, team or teams may buy or barter a fish, fishing information or a fishing location.

**5. SAFETY & TOURNAMENT INTEGRITY:** Safe boating conduct must be observed at all times by all participants. Participants must abide by all local navigation laws and avoid restricted areas at all times. Participants are required and agree to wear a Coast Guard-approved type III or greater CHEST TYPE personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running. Officials may restrict tournament waters and reserve the right to delay or cancel the start of any tournament day because of bad weather or other factors that would endanger the safety of the competitors.

In the event of a storm, lightning, severe weather or any unsafe condition, participants should remove themselves from the competition and seek safety or shelter until it is safe to continue. Participants may not leave their boats during tournament hours except in case of emergency. Each boat must have a U.S. Coast Guard rating plate attached to the boat by the manufacturer if required. The horsepower rating of the outboard engine must not exceed the rating specified on this plate. Changing or altering standard factory motor parts to increase horsepower over factory rated horsepower is forbidden and will result in disqualification. All NABC tournaments will have published days of competition, unless delayed or shortened due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. Any boundaries or restricted zones will be announced at the rules meeting and may be further altered if needed, blow days may or may not be added to events at the discretion of officials.

**6. SPORTSMANSHIP:** Participants will conduct themselves in a true sportsmanlike, courteous, safe and ethical manner at all times maintaining professional demeanor in public and in communication with officials. Any unfavorable conduct, speech or action by a participant in our efforts to promote sportsmanship, clean waters and conservation could be grounds for disqualification or rejection of entry. Each competitor is expected to participate in the marshaling of the field to help maintain the highest integrity of competition. Use of or possession in the boat of alcohol or marijuana/cannabis products, ("medical" or otherwise) or any drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any participant during the official event or tournament days or in our weigh-in process area and/or any use by the final day designated "leaders" until any polygraph examinations are complete will not be tolerated and shall be cause for disqualification. Any incidents observed during tournament hours should be reported to tournament officials for investigation. Any violation of these basic sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification.

**7. TACKLE & EQUIPMENT:** Participants must possess all necessary fishing licenses and commit to following regulations. All state rules regarding fishing and fishing methods will be observed unless more stringent regulations are specified at the rules meeting. Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted, with the exception of bio-soft baits and pork strips, etc. Only ONE (1) fishing rod and reel may be used at any one time. All other types prohibited. Other rigs as specified may be in the boat ready to use. All fish must be caught alive in a conventional and sporting manner. Anyone guilty of snatching or snagging visible fish will have their day's catch disqualified. When fishing for bass you can see, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth and *must be verified* by your partner before being unhooked to be counted as legal. No gaffs OR "GRIPPERS" may be used to land bass. Alabama Rigs and other similar type of rigs are NOT allowed. See tournament director if in doubt.

**8. BOAT, MOTOR & SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** All tournament boats must be a minimum of 16 feet in overall length and propeller driven, jet drives are not allowed. Boats are required to have in their possession all Coast Guard-required safety equipment, including but not limited to approved type III or greater CHEST TYPE personal flotation devices, a type IV throw

cushion, fire extinguisher, distress horn/flag/whistle, and display a boat marker (supplied by tournament officials). Great Lakes, Canadian border and some other waters tournaments require flares. Tournament boats are required to have a functioning bilge pump and a emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver anytime the boat is on plane. In addition, it is recommended but not required to have a marine band radio on board.

All tournament boats must be cleaned of all harmful exotic aquatic species, **CLEAN, DRAINED and DRY** prior to entering the water and upon departure from infected waters.

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. Tournament boats will be inspected for functioning and empty live-wells and operating emergency ignition stop switch. Any raised platforms or decks cannot be higher than the gunnel of the boat. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. Any types of AUXILIARY gas tanks that are not installed by the boat manufacturer are prohibited. Additional gas tanks that are factory options and installed by an authorized dealer are legal. Boats that do not have factory installed gas tanks are restricted to a maximum of 18 gallons of gasoline in tanks that meet U.S. Coast Guard regulations. Gas tanks must be properly secured or strapped in a boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility with safe methods and service open to all contenders and/or the public.

**9. BOAT IDENTIFICATION:** Each boat MUST be given, prior to each day's start, a livewell and SAFETY INSPECTION check by a tournament official, also a boat marker, which MUST remain in or on the boat and turned in during check-in at the end of each day. NABC reserves sole discretion to assign boat numbers in any manner.

**10. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Tournament waters shall be established by officials for each tournament. Each competitor must obtain this information from the NABC. Fishing on tournament waters is permitted within the boundaries defined by the tournament director that are available to the public and accessible by boat except: Any water within these tournament boundaries posted "off-limits or no fishing" by local state or federal officials will be OFF-LIMITS the removal of official local, state or federal property or barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited. Also, any live fish release area established by the Tournament Director will be Off-limits and will be announced at the Tournament Briefing. No fishing within 50-yard circle of another contestant's boat that was first anchored in a fixed position with the trolling motor out of the water. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block-and-tackle to access fishing waters, other than when first launching prior to take-off, is forbidden. No contestant may "Buy" or "Barter" a fish, fishing information or a fishing location, this also forbids the practice of "Hole Sitting" or fishing "Artificially Marked Beds." (beds marked with any type of foreign object.) Only that water open to ALL public fishing will be considered tournament waters. Any water closed to public fishing will be closed to tournament contestants. All angling must be done from the boat. On tournament days, participants are prohibited from fishing except during designated tournament fishing hours. Participants should stay off tournament waters before and after tournament hours except to navigate to and from the check-in site and launch facilities. If repairs and/or a test-run are needed an NABC staff member, appointed observer or sponsor service technician should ride along.

**11. CONTESTANTS MUST REMAIN TOGETHER & BREAKDOWN INSTRUCTIONS:** 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 checkpoint by boat. 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\direction of the tournament director. Both competitors must remain in boat at all times except in case of dire emergency, if they wish their fish to be counted for the day. In case of break down or emergency, in which a team is not able to travel back to the weigh-in site under main power, anglers should contact tournament officials. The only legal way to return for weigh-in without your own power is by being towed in by a boat operated by another competitor in the event or a designated rescue boat, or by a team member transferring their clearly marked fish to another competitor's boat and coming directly to the weigh-in with their fish. No fishing is allowed during this time by any involved party. Arriving late, even with the aid of an official boat, as the towed boat or the towing or rescue boat is still late and all late penalties will apply. No exceptions. Both parties (the team with boat trouble and the team lending assistance) should file separate incident reports with tournament officials.

**12. OFFICAL SAFETY CHECK POINT:** There shall be an official safety checkpoint for checkout in the morning/check-in in the afternoon and this point shall be designated at the tournament briefing. At the time of check-out all competitors and their boats shall be in full conformance with all safety and tournament rules set forth by officials. At check-in all boats shall identify themselves to the check in official and proceed immediately to the designated weigh-in area. YOU MUST CHECK-

IN EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FISH. Failure to check in at the end of the day could result in a \$50 fine or prohibition from future participation. It is each angler's responsibility to know what time they are due in.

**13. LATE PENALTY:** Competitors who are not at the official safety check in point as described above at the appointed return time shall be penalized at the rate of one pound per minute to be deducted from the total weight of their catch that day, including any "Big Fish Award". Any competitors more than fifteen (15) minutes late shall lose all credit for that day's catch. There shall be no excuse for tardiness and in no case will a competitor be allowed to make up "lost time." Return time shall be defined as off-plane and plainly visible by the official timekeepers.

**14. SCORING:** Scoring shall be determined by the pound and ounce weight of each team's catch during the tournament. Each team's total weight will determine the final standings. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Bass, Red Eye or Shoal Bass will be weighed where permissible by state law. Length and bag limits of eligible fish will be set for each tournament and will be announced at each event.

All fish weighed must be kept in aerated livewells to keep fish alive and as fresh as possible for release. Any fish mauled, mashed, frozen, stringered, containing foreign or unnaturally placed matter to add weight or showing white gills, soft flesh or other signs of decomposition in the tournament official's sole discretion will result in disqualification. At no time shall a competitor have in possession more than the stated tournament possession limit. Tournament Officials will conduct checks for violations of this provision. In the event a competitor has in their possession more than the stated limit, officials shall cull, starting with the largest fish first, down to the stated limit.

Fish will be measured by a tournament official with fish's mouth closed and longest straight line. Only fish which measure the official length(s) shall be weighed-in. Any fish presented for weigh-in which fails to measure the official length limits shall accrue penalties at the rate of one pound for each non-legal. Once a competitor's catch has been presented to tournament officials, that team may not alter, nor add to their catch or return to their boat until their catch has been weighed and recorded.

**15. PROTESTS & TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS:** RANDOM TRUTH VERIFICATION TESTS WILL BE GIVEN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. Additionally, any witness has a right to protest a team. An official written protest with \$100 fee must be made with a tournament official within 30 minutes of the last flight check in time OR within 10 minutes of the last fish being weighed that day, whichever is latest. The fee will be returned if the protest is found valid. Tournament officials, in their sole discretion, reserve the right to consider rule violations reported or not and 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. Following interviews with concerned parties, a ruling will be made. In the event rules infractions occurred a penalty of daily and/or tournament weight may be applied, and cash, prizes and awards must be returned if so requested. If a protest is found valid, the disqualified party must pay any investigative costs.

Each competitor or participant agrees by their signature on the entry forms and by their participation in the tournament, to submit to a polygraph or voice stress analyzer test (I.E. a truth verification test) should they be asked to for any reason and to abide by its conclusion. Tournament officials shall have sole discretion to select scope, when, where and who shall administer such an exam. Participant will make themselves available at their own expense for testing as scheduled. In the official's sole discretion, refusal to submit to exam or failure to pass a truth verification exam will result in disqualification. Randomly announced truth verification exams WILL BE GIVEN throughout the year.

**16. CATCH & RELEASE:** An 8-ounce deduction will be made for each legal fish presented to the bump master for weighing that is determined to be dead. Every boat must have adequate livewell space, properly aerated, to sufficiently maintain, in a healthy condition a limit catch by competitors using the boat. NABC recommends the use of livewell additive such as G-Juice and ice, in warmer water months to improve oxygen levels and promote a healthy release of fish into natural habitat. Tournament Officials shall have the sole responsibility for determining whether aeration and capacity is "proper and adequate" and for accessing penalty points.

**17. TIES & POINTS:** If a tie occurs at an event, Tie breakers are as follows. 1.) Most number of legal fish weighed, 2.) Most number of legal fish weighed alive, 3.) Heaviest Single days catch, 4.) second heaviest single days catch 5.) Other than for first place, champions, or cut positions, If still tied at this point teams will remain tied and a flip of the coin will award payout/prizes/plaques. 5.) Means selected by tournament officials. However, no cash awards will be given to any zero weights and ties will NOT be combined and split.

**18. NABC Members Only Group:** NABC annual membership of \$40 per person and is NOT required but highly suggested and can be paid at time of your event registration. There are some nice perks and members ONLY awards at select events for highest finishing NABC member and first out of the money if you're a NABC member. NABC members (only) will be allowed to designate a substitute member to be considered for use just in case a team member is UNABLE to attend after the event registration closes. Restrictions: To use a substitute after event registration closes you MUST be a NABC member and the designated substitute must be a NABC member as well or join. Substitutes cannot be nor ever have been a professional guide for Bass, nor won a state, regional or national event on the body of water they are being utilized for. If the substitute is not activated, they may not be in the boat during tournament hours. A spouse or your under-age child who meet all other conditions contained herein may be utilized in a case of sudden unavoidable emergency. Tournament Officials must agree that: a.) the original partner CANNOT attend. b.) The designated substitute is not a "ringer" local expert and must approve a substitution on a case by case basis.

**IF ALL these conditions are met with approval,** a team substitute can replace a team member who CANNOT attend an event after they have registered. Please use this benefit as it is intended which is to help keep you fishing if your partner is UNABLE and CANNOT attend an event, it is NOT intended to give you a substitution to use anytime you wish to gain a competitive advantage and will not be allowed as such. NABC reserves the right to STOP or alter this benefit at any time. Do not attempt to abuse this benefit or it will cease for all anglers and abusers identified.

Because the BPS/Cabela's North American Bass Challenge (NABC) is also a National Bass Anglers Association (NBAA) sanctioned circuit as well. **Eligible\*\*** winners of each Team event, **who ARE members of NABC** will earn advancement (with entry fees paid) to a NBAA championship event, the 2025 NBAA National Championship **as long as** they fish two or more NABC events in the season and meet all NBAA rules eligibility requirements for that event. Some of which are; **ANYONE can fish North American Bass Challenge Team event**, however BE ADVISED if you are offered a qualify spot to advance to the National Bass Angler Association (NBAA) National Championship through a NABC event (where it is offered to members only). That the National Bass Angler Association (NBAA) National Championship event rules prohibit participants, who have fished two or more bass fishing events, in the preceding 12-month period, with an entry fee in excess of \$1,999.00 per event (does not apply to amateur participants in pro/am events) if you met this threshold, you are not eligible to advance into the NBAA National Championship. This does NOT apply to NABC events only to advancement opportunities to a NBAA partner event and ONLY if you win an advancement spot through NABC to that championship event. Other NABC member only benefits will be added as well throughout the year.

**19. PATCHES, SIGNAGE & PROMOTIONS:** NABC has no intention to restrict the use of logos, patches or signage and encourages their use to promote your various supporters. NABC does reserve the right to restrict a logo that is deemed offensive. Realizing we are in a TV\media\sponsorship field that MAY sometimes restrict the use of some signage NABC reserves the right to restrict the use of such signage in our promotional endeavors with as much advance notice as possible. Further all anglers agree to use any and all "Official" products, equipment or jerseys so specified and provided by NABC if asked to in our efforts to promote NABC, youth, conservation and clean waters, if applicable. Further if you are being filmed for television no tobacco products may be used while filming.

**20. Bass CONSERVATION:** As part of our commitment to preservation of habitat and management of fish and wildlife, all NABC events will donate money in support of bass & fisheries conservation where our events are held. Those funds will be earmarked to support NABC Bass support, fish care and local charity and conservation funds. NABC will leverage these funds wherever possible with local, state or federal matching funds to make them go as much as 3 times farther.

**[www.NorthAmericanBassChallenge.com](http://www.NorthAmericanBassChallenge.com)**