Participation in GHSA bass fishing does not restrict students from participating in non-GHSA competitions or from participating on non-school teams at any time. For GHSA competition, however, student contestants must be part of a GHSA member school team and members of the TBF Student Angler Federation (SAF), which includes both TBF and MLF membership.

TBF/SAF, MLF and GHSA expect strict adherence to the following rules by all contestants. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 first and then notify the tournament director. MLF and TBF recommend the use of livewell additives like T-H Marine G-Juice to help promote the healthy release of bass. MLF and TBF recommend the use of EPIRBs and Personal Locator Beacons. The tournament director should be notified as soon as possible prior to weigh-in if you use a mobile communication device for any purpose other than related data as outlined in rule 9.

2026-2027 GHSA Regional & State Championship Rules:

1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT • These rules will remain unchanged during the season. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant, coach and boat captain 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, disqualification from the event, weight loss (in whole or in part, for part of a day or for one or more days, for a heaviest bag, single fish or largest fish, or any combination thereof) or ineligibility to participate in future tournaments. Protests and/or alleged rule violations are to be documented in writing by a witness, contestants, coach or boat captain within 30 minutes of the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day. Tournament officials, in their sole discretion, reserve the right to consider rule violations reported or 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.

2. PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY • Participation is open to ninth, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. All participating students must be submitted for eligibility through the GHSA office. Each school shall enter all GHSA eligible students on the electronic roster. This roster may be revised throughout the regular season and shall serve all roster purposes in these rules. Each boat entered in regional competition will consist of two to four student contestants and one boat captain. You must register with a minimum of two eligible students, you cannot plan to fish alone. If in the case of a last minute unavoidable emergency where one student cannot participate with their team all efforts to find a eligible replacement must be exhausted. Only then may a team utilize a GHSA approved observer one time and only for one event each season. Pursuant to federal law guidelines under the Youth Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, there MUST be three people to a boat at all times in a youth event. No exceptions. Student contestants must be Student Angler Federation (SAF) members. SAF membership provides:

- Insurance coverage through TBF/SAF for all affiliated circuits and clubs, their official functions, students, boat captains, coaches and volunteers while competing in GHSA, MLF, TBF and any SAF-sanctioned events. This includes the option to add approved additionally insureds such as schools and affiliated homeschool clubs.
- Tournaments professionally organized, operated and sanctioned by TBF/SAF and MLF.
- Access to the largest volunteer angler network in the nation.
- Proven fundraising programs to make participation virtually cost free for students and schools.
- A digital subscription to MLF Bass Fishing magazine & discounts on MLF merchandise at MajorLeagueFishing.com.
- Access to free SAF online fishing education courses and Youth Safe Sports Act of 2017 training for all participants through highschoolfishing.org.
- For students 16 and older, eligibility to win great prizes in monthly MLF giveaways.

Students under age 18 must have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the liability release form that must be turned in at on-site check-in. Students 16 and older must have in their possession a valid fishing license

for the waters they fish and a current student identification card from the school they represent or other proof of grade level. Random checks may be conducted at each tournament. Failure to provide proof of a valid fishing license within a reasonable amount of time when requested will result in disqualification for that day and any preceding days in which the license was required for the tournament. Contestants are required to follow all applicable federal, state and local regulations and laws. Any violation of such regulations and laws may result in disqualification. Entries for GHSA regionals should be made at highschoolfishing.org. There is no limit to the number of students each school can have on their team roster. Each school may enter up to six boats in each regional competition. Schools can enter boats into multiple GHSA regional competitions. The top 15 boats from each regional advance to the state championship. One additional boat will advance from each regional for every 10 boats that compete over a minimum of 100 boats in the regional. Boats will advance to the state championship from the first event in which they qualified. If a boat has already qualified for the state championship, the next eligible boat will advance. There is no limit of State Championship qualifiers from a member school. Each boat may have up to four student contestants, only two of which may be in the boat at any one time, assigned from the team's roster. No student may be assigned to more than one boat. During competition, a boat with more than two students assigned may return to the takeoff site and exchange students under the supervision of the tournament director. No unsupervised exchanges are permitted. No changes may be made to boat assignments once a regional tournament has begun. No regional entries will be accepted after 5pm Central time the Monday prior to each GHSA regional competition.

3. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION • The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted by contestants, coaches, boat captains or anyone working on a team's behalf within 10 days of the start of a regional or state championship tournament. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification. A team may not pay a boat captain for their services. A team may reimburse a boat captain for actual fuel and travel expenses related to the tournament. However, a team or anyone acting on a team's behalf, may NOT pay or "hire" a Boat Captain for their time or knowledge. Contestants, coaches, boat captains, parents (anyone acting on a team's behalf) may not buy or barter a fishing location from anyone.

4. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE & COMPETITION • There is no practice period or off-limits period prior to the start of onsite check-in. There are, however, specific rules defined below that govern practice within 10 days of each tournament. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may be on tournament waters until the start of onsite check-in. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not enter tournament waters to locate bass or potential fishing waters or sightsee after the start of onsite check-in except during tournament hours. Testing equipment on tournament waters after the start of onsite check-in is permitted only with prior approval from the tournament director. Within 10 days of the tournament no contestant, coach or boat captain may practice with, hire, barter for, or engage in services with, for the purposes of locating or catching bass on the tournament waters, any person who has been a bass guide for hire on the tournament waters within the last 12 months unless such person is the parent or documented permanent legal guardian of a contestant on a boat in the event. Written proof of permanent legal guardianship to the satisfaction of tournament officials may be required. Within 10 days of the tournament, contestants may only practice with a teammate that is confirmed in the tournament, their coach, their boat captain or an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister or grandparent) who also meets the above criteria concerning guides or be a registered active participant in another MLF or TBF sanctioned event during this time frame. Nobody else, except a media representative or official approved by the tournament director, is allowed in the boat. Within 10 days of the tournament and extending through competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except contestants, coaches and boat captains confirmed in the tournament and through publicly available sources (quasi-public websites, blogs and/or social media pages, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and Periscope, set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are not publicly available sources). Within 10 days of the tournament and extending through competition, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not follow a noncontestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers, brush or other physical fish attractors by noncontestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone. During competition days, contestants, coaches and boat captains may not place brush or other physical fish attractors, including chum of any kind, in tournament waters. Flights over tournament waters, including drones, are not permitted on competition days. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

5. ON-SITE CHECK-IN & PRETOURNAMENT MEETING • Each boat must turn in a liability release at the pretournament on-site check-in meeting. The liability release must be signed by each student contestant, the boat captain and the parent or legal guardian for each student under age 18. Bring this completed form with you. Unless prior approval is received from tournament officials, all contestants (two to four anglers) comprising a boat and their coach or boat captain must check-in at the designated pretournament check-in site at the times listed in the tournament confirmation. Contestants and/or coaches or boat captains who fail to notify the tournament director and are more than 15 minutes late for pretournament check-in may not be entered in the tournament. It is mandatory that all contestants and their coaches or boat captains attend the pretournament meeting at the time and place set forth in the tournament confirmation unless prior approval is received from the tournament director. Contestants and/or coaches or boat captains who did not receive prior approval from the tournament director and who are not present for the pretournament meeting may not be entered in the tournament.

6. BOAT ASSIGNMENTS • Takeoff order (boat number) is determined by random draw. Any late entries permitted by GHSA under special circumstances will receive the last available boat numbers. Each boat (two to four students) must be accompanied on the water by a boat captain who will supply and drive a boat but is not permitted to fish. Boat captains may offer fishing suggestions, operate the trolling motor if needed and net fish but are prohibited from fishing or tying on tackle. If a contestant needs assistance with a backlash or malfunctioning tackle, the boat captain can assist, but he or she must be seated in the passenger area of the boat, behind the steering wheel or adjacent to the tiller and the reel must be removed from the rod. Boat captains may assist with culling.

7. SAFETY • Safe boating must be observed at all times. Boat captains must observe all posted state and local speed restrictions for the competition waters. Each contestant, coach and boat captain on the water is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved chest-type personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is running. All persons in a tournament boat shall remain seated in a manufacturer-recommended on-plane seating location with a driver behind the steering wheel or at the tiller in full control of the boat whenever it is on plane or the combustion engine is running and in gear. Sitting on pedestal seats while the combustion engine is in operation and in gear is not permitted. Contestants are not permitted to drive the boat when the combustion engine is running, except while assisting with loading and unloading of the boat at the ramp. Safe boat conduct must be observed at all times by contestants, coaches and boat captains. At the discretion of the tournament director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is eminent. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

8. SPORTSMANSHIP • All contestants, coaches and boat captains are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy and conservation and to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, TBF/SAF, MLF, GHSA, tournaments sponsors, the school the team is representing, the sport of fishing, and our combined efforts to promote the sport. Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the rules outlined here.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any kind of mind-altering substance during pretournament on-site check-in, the pretournament meeting or during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- Conviction of a felony within the past 36 months.
- Suspension/disqualification, probation or ban from any tournament or fishing organization.
- Boat operation in an unsafe or unsportsmanlike manner.
- Violation of a posted no-wake area.
- Publicly criticizing or questioning the integrity of GHSA, MLF and/or TBF/SAF or their officials, including but not limited to any rules, policies and procedures.
- Dissemination of disparaging content or content that one should reasonably know would harm the reputation of GHSA, MLF and/or TBF/SAF their officials and/or sponsors.

- Any other words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set forth in the first sentence of paragraph 8.

In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, tournament officials have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete, to disqualify a contestant or impose any penalty outlined herein.

9. BOAT OPERATION • Coaches will arrange boat captains to supply and drive boats for their teams. Coaches may also serve as boat captains. To qualify as a boat captain, the person accompanying students on the water must be at least 21 years old and pass a criminal record check to the school's satisfaction. Boat Captains are solely responsible for the safe operation of the boat at all times and for the safety of all passengers in it. In the event of boat or engine failure after a boat is onsite for a tournament, the tournament director may, at his sole discretion, arrange for a volunteer boat captain to assist a team. Bass guides who operate or have operated for hire at any time during the previous 12 months from the tournament date on the designated tournament waters are not permitted as boat captains unless they are the parent or documented permanent legal guardian of one of the contestants on a boat in the event. A guide is defined as anyone who is paid for their time and knowledge to take someone fishing. Written proof of permanent legal guardianship to the satisfaction of the tournament director may be required. The use of a guide as defined above will result in disqualification. Contestants may operate the trolling motor. Coaches and boat captains may provide information about locating and catching fish, but are not permitted to fish on competition days. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not use mobile communication devices, including but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc., 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 lockmasters about locking, or to communicate with designated tournament officials. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may use smart phones and/or tablets during tournament hours for GPS, mapping, weather, power generation, barge traffic updates, tidal charts, personal fishing notes and related data. At no time during tournament hours may contestants, coaches and boat captains read or discuss social media posts from other contestants. If a special circumstance arises that inhibits a contestant's ability to compete, the tournament director may allow the contestant to withdraw from competition and maintain the weight caught to that point.

10. BOAT & HORSEPOWER REGULATION • All boats must be propeller-driven and a minimum of 16 feet in length. Traditional pontoon or tritoon boats designed for fishing are permitted. No barges or similarly cumbersome craft will be permitted without review and permission by the tournament director. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated livewell space to maintain alive a limit catch of bass. Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition shall not 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. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the maximum horsepower capacity specified on this placard. By signing the entry form, contestants, coaches and boat captains agree to submit their boat and/or motor to an inspection by tournament officials. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating placard will be cause for disqualification from the tournament and may result in ineligibility to compete in future tournaments. Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks or auxiliary fuel tanks that are securely strapped or otherwise fastened to the boat. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle. The use of generators, other than solar or wind-powered generators, is prohibited in contestant boats during tournament hours.

11. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS • Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the rod in hand. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. All lures must adhere to state regulations. Only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Alabama rigs and similar umbrella-type rigs are limited to a maximum of five wires with a maximum of five spinners, five lures and three hooks (single or treble) unless state regulations are more restrictive, in which case state regulations prevail. Only ONE fishing rod may be used at a time. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. Trolling is defined as operating any combustion engine to extend a cast or lengthen a retrieve or using any mechanical propulsion device to

move the boat as the sole means of imparting action to the lure. All bass caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth and immediately shown to your boat captain for verification.

12. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS & BOUNDARIES • Contestants may fish anywhere on tournament waters within the boundaries defined by the tournament director that are available to the public and accessible by boat except areas designated as "off-limits," "no boats," "keep out," "restricted," "no trespassing" or "no fishing" (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by tournament officials, commercial property owners and/or local, state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a contestant's boat that was first anchored. An anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a weight or by a Power-Pole, Talon or similar shallow water anchor with the trolling motor in the up position. All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs after the start of onsite check-in and/or the removal of official commercial, local, state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat or gain access for fishing is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament. The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament. Contestants must leave and return to the check-in by boat. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No tournament boat may be loaded on a trailer before the contestants using the boat presents their catch for weigh-in, except with the permission of the tournament director. In the event of equipment failure or emergency, the tournament director must be notified as soon as it is safe to do so. There are then three permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both contestants remaining in their boat and being towed by water, (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one contestant entering the boat of another team or (3) both contestants entering a rescue boat so designated by the tournament director. Under these three conditions the boat's catch may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) provided each boat's fish are adequately marked or separated so as to provide clear distinction of each catch to the tournament director. Contestants that elect to return to the check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day's catch to that point in time of the tournament day. Abandoning a boat and leaving it adrift without proper tie-off or anchoring after a mechanical failure may result in disqualification of that day's weight. Any contestants returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the tournament director or his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of boat to locate the tournament director to request a restart. Contestants comprising a boat must remain together at all times and within sight of their coach or boat captain until check-in. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for restroom breaks is permitted. Violation of this rule may result in disqualification.

13. CHECKPOINTS • There will be only one checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check and checkout in the morning or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. All fishing must cease upon check-in.

14. LATE PENALTY • Boats that are not at the designated afternoon checkpoint at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight. Boats more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight.

15. LIVE FISH • Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated livewell. Eight ounces will be deducted from the total weight for each dead bass presented for weigh-in.

16. SCORING • Scoring is determined by the pounds and ounces of each boat's catch during each tournament. Only largemouth, spotted, redeye, shoal, or smallmouth bass are accepted species. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a bass. The daily limit will be five bass per boat unless conditions dictate a reduced limit or the state or lake limit is less than five, in which case those limits will prevail. After possessing the daily limit, boats must cull immediately upon their next catch. Boats possessing more than the daily limit must notify the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the infraction and reduce their catch to the daily limit by releasing live bass. Boats possessing more than the daily limit will be penalized 2 pounds for each bass over the limit. The minimum length limit for bass will be 12 inches unless the state or lake limit is more than 12 inches or tournament officials set a longer limit for a specific tournament, in which case, the state or lake limit or longer limit set by tournament officials for the tournament will prevail. Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit will be penalized at the rate of 1 pound for each short bass presented. After boats check in at the official checkpoint, they must present all fish in possession that meet the tournament size limit to tournament officials to be counted, measured and weighed. Once a

boat's catch has been presented to tournament officials, that day's catch is final. After being weighed, each boat's catch must be turned over to tournament officials unless otherwise instructed. Each boat's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag. The winning boat is determined by the day's heaviest catch at regionals and the day's heaviest catch at the state championship. The boat with the heaviest weight of bass at the end of each tournament, with ties broken as outlined below, is declared the winner. A trophy and individual medals will be given to the winner and runner up at reach regional and the state championship. Additionally, medals will be presented to the big bass winners at each regional and the state championship. A bass will only be weighed for big bass if, at the discretion of the tournament director, it is likely to break the established big bass weight for the tournament.

17. TIES • Ties at regionals will be broken first by total number of bass and then by total number of live bass. If a tie remains, the boats will remain tied. Ties at the state championship will be broken first by total number of bass and then by total number of live bass then by heaviest one-day catch. If a tie for the win remains at the state championship, it will be broken by a fish-off.

18. UNIFORMS, LOGO DISPLAY & MEDIA COVERAGE • Contestants must wear school jerseys during competition. Jerseys may display the school name and/or logo, the student's name and sponsor logos supporting the team, except for alcohol and tobacco logos. Sponsor logos may also be displayed on boats used during competition. Coaches and boat captains may wear their own apparel so long as the apparel worn while on the water is distinct from that of the student contestants to limit concerns as to who is fishing. Tournament officials reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to prohibit any contestant, coach or boat captain's apparel that is determined to be offensive.

19. ALCOHOL & TOBACCO • During all days of competition any and all alcohol and tobacco logos are prohibited and may not be worn or displayed by contestants, coaches or boat captains. Contestants, coaches and boat captains may not smoke or use tobacco products during tournament hours, including weigh-in, at any event.

20. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST • Each contestant and coach agrees to submit, by signature on the tournament entry form, to a polygraph or voice stress analysis examination and to abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass an examination will result in disqualification from the tournament. Truth verification tests will be used at the sole discretion of tournament officials, and the determination of the meaning of the results will be made solely by tournament officials.

21. INSURANCE • Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required on all boats used in High School Fishing tournaments. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover all passengers in the boat. Random checks will be conducted. Failure to provide proof of insurance when requested by the tournament director may result in disqualification.

22. CAPTIONS • The captions at the beginning of each paragraph are intended to facilitate convenience in referring to the various rules. The captions are not part of the substance of the paragraph and should not be used in construction of any paragraph or of this overall set of rules.