

**2017 by-Laws
Bergen Bassmasters
updated March 20, 2017**

ARTICLE I - NAME AND PURPOSE

Section I: Name

This chapter shall be called the Bergen Bassmasters of Oradell, New Jersey.

Section II: Purpose

To stimulate public awareness of bass fishing as a major sport. To offer our state conservation department our organized moral and political support and encouragement. To promote full adherence to all conservation codes and call public and political attention to high crime. To improve skill as bass anglers through a fellowship of friendly exchange of expert bass-catching techniques and ideas, and to promote and encourage youth fishing, and a love for this great recreation. To function as a dynamic and effective link with other chapters of the New Jersey Bass Federation embracing the principles and purposes of The Bass Federation.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

Section I: Number of Members

The chapter shall begin with and maintain at least six members (family members excluded). Maximum membership will be 36 with approximately two-thirds (24) being boaters.

Section II: Requirements for Membership

To become a chapter member, the person shall:

- (a) Voluntarily express a genuine interest in membership.
- (b) Membership to The Bass Federation is mandatory for insurance purposes.
- (c) Be recommended by a member in good standing at a regular monthly meeting.
- (d) Be voted on by the membership. Vote shall be by secret ballot and affirmation must be 2/3 of the members present.
- (e) Full membership shall be awarded and membership credentials awarded.
- (f) Must be 18 years of age.
- (g) Attend 2/3 of meetings and 2/3 of the club functions each year (exceptions are made in cases of senior members, the board will decide on exceptions).
- (h) Probationary, or junior members MUST attend 75% of functions in the first two years of their membership to remain in good standing.

Section III: Membership Dues

- (a) The annual membership fee will be \$335. A non refundable deposit of \$75 of the \$335 must be paid at the November meeting. The remaining balance may be paid at any time up until, but no later than, the April meeting.
- (b) Included in the membership fee is \$15 which is payable to The Bass Federation for their mandatory insurance, \$35 for FLW dues and also \$10 which is designated as membership dues to the New Jersey Bass Federation (all revenue x number of Bergen members paid via New Jersey Bass Federation).
- (c) The Bass Federation Insurance, FLW and New Jersey Bass Federation dues are one time, annual charges. Members paying those fees through another The Bass Federation club are not required to pay those fees again.
- (d) Membership fees are non-refundable
- (e) Members in good standing over the age of 65 will receive a 10% discount off the membership fee excluding any fees payable to The Bass Federation or the New Jersey Bass Federation.
- (f) Members not paying their enrollment fee in November will be ineligible to vote or to qualify as a candidate for any office or committee position.
- (g) Observer dues: Registered club observers will be required to pay an annual membership fee of \$40.

Section IV: Open Enrollment Period

- (a) There will be an open enrollment period for membership from the November meeting up until the April club meeting. By April, all membership spots should be filled and membership fees paid for the entire year. Any spots vacated during the year will not be filled until the next open enrollment.
- (b) Anglers may register as an observer at any time during the year and there is no specified open enrollment period for club observers.

Section V: Leave of Absence

Leave of absence will be permitted to all members for up to a maximum of one year. Leave of absence may be taken during any open enrollment period and expires at the following November meeting.

Terms of Leave:

- (a) The member taking the leave must pay his \$40 enrollment at the November meeting. No additional fees will be required for the duration of the leave.
- (b) The member will be placed atop the waiting list barring no other member is on leave. From there, roster spots will be filled during the open enrollment period on a first out, first in basis.
- (c) If a member on leave becomes eligible and wishes to rejoin the membership during the open enrollment, he is responsible for the balance of the membership fees for that year.

Section VI: Member Benefits

- (a) The New Jersey State Team Tournament representatives (6) will receive up to \$100 each for hotel and gas expenditure.

ARTICLE III - OFFICERS, ELECTIONS, VACANCIES AND ELIGIBILITY

Section I: Officers and their Duties

The officers of the chapter shall consist of:

PRESIDENT: Preside over all meetings and direct all official business. Appoint and be ex-officio member of all committees. Supervise all club functions.

VICE PRESIDENT: Act as program chairman, co-chairman of committees, assist the president in duties and preside in the absence of the president.

SECRETARY: Maintain accurate minutes of all regular and special meetings as called for by the chapter president. Maintain regular liaison between the chapter and The Bass Federation and the New Jersey Bass Federation Chapter Federation.

TREASURER: Collect and disperse all monies. Maintain accurate financial records and present a current balance report at each regular meeting. Prepare an annual audit for review by the Chapter Board of Directors.

Section II: Elections

Nominations for officers will be heard annually during the October meeting. The elections of officers shall be held annually at a regular meeting during the month of November. Elections shall be by simple majority of members present. Election for each officer shall be held separately in order listed in ARTICLE III, Section I.

Section III: Eligibility of Vote

Each member in good-standing is entitled to one vote provided his dues for the following year are paid. Proxy votes are not permitted.

Section IV: Term of Office

- (a) The term of office is for one year, which shall begin on January 1, and end on the last day of December or until the successor assumes office.
- (b) No one office may be occupied by the same member for more than five consecutive terms.

Section V: Vacancies

In the event of an office becoming vacant the president shall appoint a member to fill the unexpired term of the individual vacating the office.

Section VI: Eligibility for Holding Office

To be eligible for an office, a member must:

- (a) Have been a member in good standing for at least one full year.
- (b) Have attended at least 2/3 of the chapter meetings and 2/3 of the chapter functions.
- (c) Have shown an active interest in all chapter functions.
- (d) Not hold the office(s) of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Tournament Director concurrently in another fishing club.

ARTICLE IV - STANDING COMMITTEES

All standing committees will serve for one year or until a new one is appointed. The terms of the committee members will coincide with that of the president.

(a) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This committee will consist of eight members: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President, Tournament Chairman, Editor and one member elected at large by majority at the December meeting.

- (1) The President will call all meetings of the Board of Directors and preside at such meetings.
- (2) The Secretary will record the minutes of these meetings.
- (3) The Board will decide and rule on violations of the By-Laws of the chapter when appropriately received.
- (4) The Board will review and rule on all appeals after the judgements have been made by the Tournament Committee.

(b) YOUTH COMMITTEE

The purpose of this committee is to plan, organize, and implement a Chapter youth project; to introduce young people to the goals of The Bass Federation; to give them a basis for respect of our National Heritage, an appreciation of the basic rules of honesty, integrity, fair play and good sportsmanship, and to give them an introduction to the sheer joy of fishing.

(c) CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The purpose of this committee shall be to protect our National environment from harmful change; to document and report to the proper authorities violations of local, State and Federal anti-pollution laws, statutes, regulations, ordinances and other regulatory devices; to take legal action where appropriate; to undertake informational and educational programs to bring public awareness to threats to our environment; and to take a leadership role in repairing the harm that has already been done to the life-giving waters of America.

(d) **TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the committee shall be to plan, organize and operate all Chapter Tournaments. The tournament committee will draft rules which then must be approved by the general membership. The committee will keep tournament records, enforce all tournament rules and investigate all protests concerning tournaments and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. The tournament Committee Chairman shall be elected by the general membership and be a member of the Executive Committee. From a roster of volunteer candidates, the tournament Committee Chairman will select four or five committee members. Each selection requires majority ratification by the general membership.

(e) **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

This committee shall consist of three members elected from and by the membership at the regular September meeting. They shall propose a slate of officers for the election to be held in November. This slate will be presented at the regular meeting in October.

ARTICLE V - REVOCATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A member may be dropped from the membership role for the following:

- (a) Failure to pay dues.
- (b) Any action which would reflect dishonor and disgrace on this chapter.
- (c) Failure to attend 2/3 of the chapter meetings, 2/3 of the chapter functions, and at least one major community event during a 12 month period, with exception to a senior member of more than two years receiving approval from the Executive Board Members.
- (d) Violation of the rules of the assembly hall.

ARTICLE VI - AFFILIATION

Section I: Requirements for Affiliation

- a. Approval of chapter charter by The Bass Federation.
- b. Update The Bass Federation with a Chapter membership roster once each year, immediately following election of Chapter Officers and Directors.
- c. Names and addresses of new members joining the chapter during the year must be submitted to The Bass Federation as they occur. The necessary forms are included in The Bass Federation handbook.
- d. Maintain 100% The Bass Federation membership for insurance reasons.
- e. Support State Federation conservation and youth programs. Any additional requirements that the State Federation establishes for Chapters, such as membership dues, attendance at meetings, etc., would be necessary in order for the Chapter to participate in State Federation qualifying sponsored tournaments or events.

ARTICLE VII - LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Section I: Qualification Requirements

- (a) Must have been an active member for at least five years.
- (b) Must never have been on probation or in bad standing at any time.
- (c) Must be nominated by the Executive Board and approved by the membership.
- (d) Any member having remained in good standing for 25 years will automatically become eligible for lifetime membership status upon leaving the club.

Section II: Benefits

- (a) Entitles a member to all club activities with observer standing.
- (b) Member receives the highest priority to club events.
- (c) There is no membership cost to the life member. However, he will not be included on The Bass Federation roster nor the Federation roster unless he chooses to pay those fees.

ARTICLE VIII – BY-LAW AMEMDMENTS

Section I: Amendment Process

- a) A motion needs to be made and seconded. After being presented to the membership via some form of written communication (notice or website posting) and at least 1 month's time, a vote will be taken on the motion. A quorum (majority of registered member) must be present and a 2/3rd vote is required of those present to pass.
- b) All By-Law changes can be voted on beginning in November but must be able to be voted into acceptance no later than April in order to be effective for that membership year.
- c) Motions to change the By-Laws from the general membership can be made from October through March. Only the Executive Board may motion a By-Law change outside that timeframe and should only be done so on an as-needed basis

BERGEN BASSMASTER - 2016 TOURNAMENT RULES

ELIGIBILITY:

- a) Any member not under tournament suspension.
- b) Observers and life members may fish, but are eligible for lunker only.

ENTRY FEE:

- a) There will be no entry fee per tournament for members. As part of the annual membership fee, all members are invited to participate in the tournament at no charge. Each member is eligible for tournament winnings, lunker and 6 pound lunker pool.
- b) Since there are no fees for entering a tournament, no refunds will be given for those members who cannot attend.
- c) Observer Entries:
 - 1) Observers are eligible to participate in club tournaments on an invitation basis.
 - 2) Observers are eligible to win the tournament lunker pool and the observer lunker pool. They are not eligible for the tournament payouts or the six pound lunker pool.
 - 3) Observer entries will be \$10 per tournament. This will entitle them to observer lunker pool and the tournament lunker pool. Observers can win the observer lunker pool but not necessarily the tournament lunker pool. In order for an observer to win both pools, they must have lunker for the entire tournament.
 - 4) Refunds will be given to observers who are forced to withdraw from an event.

TOURNAMENT DRAW:

- a) The drawing of boat numbers and partners will be done at the pre-determined meeting and handled only by the tournament committee.
- b) During the regular season, two anglers will not fish more than one tournament together unless no other options exist. If this case arises during a draw, the boater retains his boat number and another non-boater is drawn.
- c) Boater members paired with observers owning boats retain the right to use his own boat unless an agreement is made to use the observer's boat.
- d) Partner draws are final. No substitutions will be made for any reason. Anyone refusing to fish with his drawn partner will be disqualified from the tournament.

BOAT INSPECTION:

No boat will be allowed to participate unless first being inspected by a committee member for:

- a) Coast Guard approved life jackets for each angler.
- b) Livewells are empty and in working order.
- c) Running lights, if needed, are in working order.
- d) Each angler is responsible to have in possession a valid license for the state.
- e) Each boater and/or person operating the boat must have a proper boating license and Coast Guard approved certificate.

BOAT QUALIFICATION:

In order to qualify for use in a tournament, a boat must meet the following requirements:

- a) Have at least 1 working livewell and be capable of keeping 2 limits of fish alive.
- b) Must be 14' in length, trailered and powered by at least 25HP.
- c) Have a working kill switch to be used whenever the gas outboard is running.
- d) Must not be powered by an engine exceeding the maximum rating for the boat.

NO SHOWS:

- a) Any entrant failing to show up for a tournament and fails to notify his partner and the tournament committee, shall be held liable for half his partners expenses for that tournament. Failure to make such payment will result in automatic club suspension until such payment is made.
- b) If a boater fails to show up, his non-boater partner will receive only his consolation points unless other arrangements are made.
- c) Excessive lateness and no shows may result in club probation and possible tournament suspension.
- d) Unless a substitute rider (non-boater) is found, any rider who drops out with less than 3 days (72 hours) notice is liable for ½ of the boater's expense.

BOAT OPERATION:

- a) Each partner is entitled to half of the tournament time in selecting of fishing waters. The boater is not required to surrender operation of the boat.
- b) Each contestant is required to wear a chest type life preserver any time the combustion engine is in operation.

BOAT EXPENSE:

- a) Each partner is responsible for half of the operating expenses including gas to and from the site, tolls, launch fees, gas and oil for the boat.
- b) If a non-boater fails to make arrangements for payment, the boater must notify the tournament committee within 24 hours. The non-boater will be put on tournament suspension until payment is made.
- c) If the non-boater feels the boater is asking an unfair amount, he is to pay the amount and notify the committee within 24 hours. The committee will review the case and make ruling.

OFF LIMITS:

- a) Unless proposed by the tournament committee and ratified by the regular membership, there is no "off limits" before a tournament.
- b) Being found on the site during a ratified "off limits" period will result in an automatic disqualification.

SIX POUND POOL:

- a) A six pound largemouth (final weight after "dead fish" penalty if applicable) or five pound smallmouth (final weight after "dead fish" penalty if applicable) qualifies.
- b) If more than one fish qualifies, the fish most over the benchmark wins the pool (i.e., a 5 pound 6 oz smallmouth will beat out a 6 pound 2 oz largemouth).
- c) The six pound pool will increase by \$36, or by \$1 per roster member, prior to each point's tournament.
- d) The six pound pool will be capped at \$1000.00 and any additional money will carry over to a second six pound pool. The second six pound pool will become eligible at the next regular points tournament.

AM/PM CHECKPOINTS:

- a) Each member must clear a livewell check and must check in at weigh-in to receive any points.
- b) An angler missing the AM blastoff must find a member in good standing and have his livewell checked PRIOR to fishing in order to be included in the tournament field. Until checked, no fish will be counted in the tournament.

LATE PENALTY:

- a) Official time will be announced at blast-off by blast off boat agreed to by Tournament Director. Check-in time will be sharp according to official time determined by Tournament Director. Lateness will be rounded UP to the next whole minute and penalty applied.
- b) Late penalty will be 1 (one) pound of weight per each minute late.
- c) Lateness of more than 10 minutes or when a penalty exceeds the angler's total weight, the catch is disqualified and the angler will receive only show-up points.
- d) Any angler not checking in at weigh-in will be disqualified and receive no points for the event.
- e) Each angler is responsible to check with blast off boat to verify official time.

RULES OF SPORTSMANSHIP:

- a) No fishing within 100 feet of an anchored tournament boat.
- b) No fishing within 50 feet of the tournament launch site.
- c) No one may leave the boat to catch or land a fish.
- d) Only one rod is to be used at one time.
- e) No natural bait is permitted.
- f) Trolling is not permitted.

Failure to abide by rules of sportsmanship will be reviewed by the tournament committee and a possible disqualification or penalty may result.

All state and federal laws and regulations on boating and fishing apply.

Use of alcohol or drugs will result in disqualification.

No one will be permitted to fish alone without the permission of the tournament committee.

Any angler offering or accepting a fish to/from anyone else will be immediately disqualified. Club suspension follows until the case is reviewed by both the Executive and Tournament committees.

PROTESTS:

- a) All protests and reporting of rule infractions must be made verbally to the tournament committee within 30 minutes after weigh-in.
- b) Identity of protesting members will remain confidential.
- c) The accused party will be invited to state his case at the next tournament committee meeting.
- d) The tournament committee will review the protest, make all judgments and apply any penalties.

COMMUNICATION ON THE WATER:

a) Unless for emergency use, cell phones and other electronic devices used to communicate between anglers during a tournament, are prohibited.

b) During tournament hours contestants may not obtain or receive assistance from non-competitors, follow a non-competitor's boat or have any body place markers in the water to mark fishing spots for them.

POINT'S TOURNAMENT CANCELLATION POLICY:

A tournament may be cancelled at any time prior to the start of the tournament.

- a) Before tournament day: After consulting with other officials, President and Tournament Director will make final decision and communicate the information to all members.

- b) At the launch: Tournament Director and President will solicit consensus from all in attendance and then make the call.
- c) All members scheduled to fish shall receive show up points for the cancelled event.
- d) An alternate date for possible cancelled tournament will be added to the tournament schedule. Normally, it will fall on the first or second Saturday after the 7th point's tournament. Exact date to be identified in the final tournament trail schedule.

CLASSIC QUALIFICATION:

To fish the Classic, a member must be in good standing as outlined in the BY-LAWS. Space permitting, registered observers may fish the Classic at their own lodging and food expense (for lunker money only).

CLASSIC EXPENSE:

- a) All expenses will be split between drawn partners.
 - 1) Day 1 partners split travel to location.
 - 2) Day 2 partners split travel from location.
- b) On the water & launch expenses are split daily.
- c) Whatever the means of travel, an angler is in no way to split expenses with anyone other than his drawn partners.
- d) Angler's entry fees will be for \$10 per day for lunker pool. This will entitle them to individual lunker pool per day. No angler is committed to entering lunker pool.

CLASSIC PAYOUTS:

- a) Trophies/Plaques will be awarded to the top five individual finishers in the event.
- b) Cash pay out of \$500 will be evenly awarded to members of 1st Place Classic Team

TOURNAMENT SCORING:

- a) Scoring will be determined by creel weight.
- b) Minimum length is 12 inches unless a higher state legal limit applies.
- c) A person with a fish in question of the minimum length (closed mouth, pinched tail) must ask for a courtesy check PRIOR to handing his bag to the weigh-in official. Legal fish count, shorts are returned to the water. Failure to announce a potentially short fish PRIOR to handing over your bag will result in a 1 pound penalty.
- d) A 4 oz penalty will result for each fish brought to the weigh-in that is unable to be released alive
- e) Culling of a dead fish will result in an automatic disqualification.
- f) Each fish caught by an angler is considered to be in his possession. Culling of fish is to be immediate. If at any time, other than culling, an angler is in possession of more than the legal limit, he will be disqualified and receives no points for the event.
- g) Dead lunker bass are subject to 4 oz. penalty (**Points and Classic**). Potential lunkers, including Six Pound award winners, that are dead, will be penalized 4 ounces from final gross weight. As part of total catch, the penalty remains the same, 4 ounces per dead bass. For **Bergen Open Tournaments** – lunker bass must be released alive.

STANDINGS:

- a) The Bergen points trail should consist of 7 tournaments with the final YTD (AOY) standings based on the best 6 tournaments of each member.
- b) All ties are broken by highest total weight.
- c) State team tournament representation will be the TOP 6 anglers in standings.

- 1) The three highest finishing boaters are guaranteed boaters.
- 2) Next three finishers are deemed alternate boaters or non-boaters.
- 3) Alternates to the team tournament are subsequent finishers from the prior year's standings.

POINTS SYSTEM:

- a) First place will receive 40 points.
- b) Places are counted down in one (1) point intervals.
- c) Four (4) consolation points will be awarded to those not weighing in fish.

AWARDS:

- a) **ANGLER OF THE YEAR** (boater/non-boater): Awarded to the member compiling the most combined points for his category.
- b) **HEAVIEST CATCH** (boater/non-boater): The anglers weighing in the largest catch for his category in a regular points tournament.
- c) **LUNKER OF THE YEAR**: Awarded to member who weighed in the largest lunker at a regular points tournament.
- d) **ROOKIE OF THE YEAR**: Is awarded to the member fishing his first FULL season who accumulates the highest point's total of all other rookies.
- e) **MOST IMPROVED**: Awarded to the angler the tournament committee feels has improved in ability and standing the most over the past season.
- f) **SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR**: As voted on by the members.

PAYOUTS:

- a) All Tournament Payouts, including the lunker prize will be fixed and guaranteed regardless of number of participants.
- b) Payout distribution is as follows:

1st Place	\$200
2nd Place	\$125
3rd Place	\$100
4th Place	\$75
5th Place	\$50
Lunker	\$150

Observer Lunker – Based on number of observers per tournament.
(\$5.00/observer + \$5.00/tournament)
- c) A separate \$25 payout will be awarded to the top finishing angler fishing as a non-boater providing that angler did not already place in the tournament's top five finishers.

AMENDING THE TOURNAMENT RULES

- a) A motion needs to be made and seconded. After being presented to the membership via some form of written communication (notice or web posting) and at least 1 month's time, a vote will be taken on the motion. A quorum (majority of registered members) must be present and a simple majority approval is required of those present to pass the motion.
- b) All tournament rule changes can be voted on beginning in November but must be able to be voted into acceptance no later than April in order to be effective for that membership year.
- c) Motions to change the tournament Rules from the general membership can be made from October through March. Only the tournament chairman, with approval from the Executive Board, may motion a rule change outside that timeframe and should only be done so on an as-needed basis.

These rules apply to all members and observers participating in Bergen Bassmaster tournaments regardless of status or position and will be strictly enforced. The interpretation of these rules and selection of tournament sites and dates will be at the discretion of the tournament committee. The decisions of the committee will be final.

TOURNAMENT ETHICS

The sport of bass fishing has experienced phenomenal growth in the last two decades. During the season, it is difficult to find a lake not hosting at least one tournament a weekend. The popularity of tournaments is due in part to publicity generated from competitive bass tournaments, but the growth can also be attributed to a desire by many anglers to add a new dimension of competition to the sport of bass fishing.

Bass fishing as a sport began in 1967. As "professional" tournaments developed in size and prizes, anglers and others in the marine and tackle industries, began developing innovations to gain an edge over other competitors. The advancements in boats, motors and fishing tackle and techniques have introduced the sport to millions of people. Today, an estimated 27 million anglers consider themselves bass fishermen.

But with the increasing number of bass fishermen and tournaments, it has become imperative that all anglers, especially tournament anglers, develop a greater awareness of and concern for the resource on which we all depend. One of the best ways to demonstrate that concern is to ensure the live release of bass caught by competitors in tournaments.

We, as an organized charter of The Bass Federation must recognize the importance of Catch and Release, safety on the water, preservation of our resource and environment and sportsmanship to our fellow friends and anglers. This must be so, not because we are told to do so, but because we owe it to ourselves and to future generations.

The success of any sport in terms of both participant appeal and public image is often related to the good conduct and sportsmanship of competitors. Underlying the spirit of fair play are codes of ethics or unwritten rules which guide conduct. These rules can be judged as "gentleman's agreements" and preserve the integrity of the sport. With the advent of "high stakes" competition, many "hot spots" or productive fishing areas quickly draw a crowd after their locations become known to competitors. A contestant should not go back to his partner's fish unless the partner gives him permission to do so. And, if an angler is catching bass in a certain area, other contestants should seek other places to fish.

In our tournaments, each participant has control of the boat and/or selection of the fishing waters for half of the fishing day. A discussion should be held prior to blast off to determine the distribution of fishing time.

In discussions of where to concentrate their efforts, each partner should be as candid as possible about the quality of fish found in practice. Sincere communication results in easier selections of where to fish and when to fish there.

It is customary for partners to share boat operating expenses. Non-boater partners must also consider the costs a boater faces that aren't noticeable on tournament day such as oil for the outboard, insurance costs, catch and release formula (if used) and the time spent afterward cleaning the boat and charging batteries.

Let's all remember, we are all competing against the bass and not just against each other.