**2024 LA TEAM TOURNAMENT TRAIL RULES**

To protect the integrity of the LA Team Tournament Trail and our anglers, all winners shall be subject to a polygraph exam before the prizes are distributed at each event. Contestants must pass the polygraph exam at the tournament site to receive prize money, awards, and points for the event. The refusal of any winner to voluntarily submit to a polygraph exam before the prizes are distributed at each event automatically disqualifies any winner, and his/her team, from being eligible to receive any prize money, awards, points for the event, and any other offered prize and/or award. The tournament director reserves the right to waive any violation, which doesn’t have a predetermined penalty set forth in these rules, disclosed to him/her before the polygraph exam, at his/her sole and absolute discretion. The LA Team Tournament Trail Board and the Tournament Director shall have the sole and absolute right to refuse any application or deny a confirmed application by returning the entry fee of a previously accepted application or disqualifying a contestant.

**OFFICIAL 2024 LA TEAM TOURNAMENT TRAIL RULES**

Decisions of the tournament director are final and are not subject to appeal, unless the decision is in direct conflict with the rules set forth herein. If it is brought to the attention of the tournament director that his decision is in direct conflict with a rule, the tournament director must immediately rescind and announce his decision and fall back on the letter of the rule in question. Interpretation of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director in his/her sole and absolute discretion. Each competitor agrees to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. The violation of the tournament rules may result in loss of weight, the loss of weight up to a specific time during the tournament day, total loss of weight of the particular day, the ineligibility to participate in future LA Team Tournament Trail events or any other penalty deemed appropriate by the tournament director in his/her sole and absolute discretion. Protests must be made in writing within 15 minutes of the official closing of scales at each tournament, and any written protests must be provided to the tournament director in writing within said time period. If a protest is not made in writing within the required 15-minute time period, the contestant waives his/her right to submit a written protest.

**ONLINE REGISTRATION**

All teams must complete the online registration. Payment may be made online or in person. Entry fees are $1,250 per team, which will include entry to all five (5) regular season tournaments. No entries will be taken for individual tournaments. Online registrations and changes to your registration will be accepted through February 16, 2024.

In the event one of the partners can’t fish the season after they have registered the other partner must fish solo. The only exceptions that may be considered are as follows:

1. Death of a team member.
2. Partial or total disability of a team member.
3. A team member qualifies and accepts the invitation from a “Professional” tournament series after registration has been concluded. Professional tournament series includes, but not limited to, Bassmaster Elite Series, Major League Fishing, FLW Tour Boaters and the National Professional Fishing League.
4. Military Deployment.
5. Hardship under pandemic or national emergency situations. If a team member requests a hardship exception under this rule, he/she must provide documentation stating the reason(s) for the hardship application, such as prevention of travel, etc.; and
6. Teams may request consideration of a hardship. If a team makes a hardship request, a signed and dated hardship request must be submitted in writing to the LA Team Trail Tournament Director no later than 30 days prior the date that all changes are due.

**PAYING A DEPOSIT**

Teams may register with a $665.00 refundable deposit. After **December 15, 2023** your deposit becomes non-refundable. The remaining balance must be paid by **February 16, 2024.** There will be $25.00 processing fee for all refunds.

**MEMBERSHIP**

A $40.00 annual membership must be paid by each team member and alternates by February 16, 2024

**WAITING LIST POLICY**

Maximum capacity for each tournament is 100 boats. Teams that register after the 100-boat capacity has been reached, will be put on a waiting list. You will be notified immediately via email if you have been added to the waiting list.

**PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY**

Any angler entering an LA Team Tournament Trail event who is under 18 years of age must have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the official entry form.

Each contestant who voluntarily participates in any LA Team Tournament Trail event voluntarily agrees to abide by LA Team Tournament Trail's Rules, and all applicable state and federal laws.

Each contestant who voluntarily participates in any LA Team Tournament Trail event voluntarily agrees to submit and subject himself/herself to a polygraph exam.

**ALL LA TEAM TOURNAMENT TRAIL TOURNAMENTS ARE TEAM EVENTS**

All LA Team Tournament Trail events are team events, although a contestant may fish alone as a single-person team. If a contestant chooses to fish as a single-person team. LA Team Tournament Trail reserves the right to place an observer in the boat at any given event, and further reserves the right to issue a polygraph, at the sole and absolute discretion of the tournament director, at any given event. Any contestant who refuses to voluntarily submit to a polygraph exam will be disqualified from said event.

A team may assign one alternate partner at the beginning of the year who may fish two regular-season events and allow the team to retain all points earned. ALL alternate partners MUST be assigned by February 16, 2024.

Only registered contestants/alternate, partner or an approved observer may be in the boat during official tournament days.

**ASSISTANCE**

During the off limits period prior to competition, **NO FISHING INFORMATION** may be purchased, bartered, solicited, or otherwise received from any person who entered official tournament waters during the established off-limits periods for all LA Team Tournament Trail qualifying events.

During the hours of competition and official practice for the championship, contestants may not purchase, barter or solicit fishing information from any person or participate in the practice of “hole-sitting.” The use of mobile communication devices such as cellular phones, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc. to communicate fishing information during tournament hours is strictly prohibited. In the event of an emergency situation, competitors should first dial 911 and then notify the tournament director. 

Anyone found in violation of the Assistance rule will be disqualified.

**SAFETY**

Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant is required to wear a fastened (fully zipped and/or all clips fastened) U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running and in gear. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition shut-off device, which must be securely attached to the driver’s body, clothing, or PFD any time the combustion engine is running and in gear. The driver must be seated in the driver’s seat anytime the combustion engine is running and in gear. In the event of inclement weather, the tournament will be held the next day, weather permitting. Competitors are allowed to leave the boat and seek shelter in bad weather, at which time no fishing may occur.

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 two permitted methods of returning to check-in: (1) by both anglers remaining in their boat and being towed by water, or (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one or both anglers entering the boat of another tournament contestant. Under these two conditions both contestants’ catches may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) provided each team’s fish are adequately marked so as to provide clear distinction to the tournament director. Contestants who elect to return to check-in by any means other than those cited 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. Whether or not contestants may be disqualified for improperly “abandoning” a boat is in the sole and absolute discretion of the tournament director.

**PERMITTED FISHING METHODS**

Only artificial lures may be used. Only one fishing rod per angler may be used at any one time. Additional rods may be in the boat and ready for use; however, each cast and retrieve must be completed before another cast is attempted or rod is used. **Trolling with the combustion engine or trolling motor as a method of fishing is prohibited and will result in the loss of the days catch**. Switching or sharing fish with other teams or individuals is a violation of these rules and will result in immediate disqualification. All bass must be caught alive, in a conventional, sporting manner. When sight fishing for bass, all fish must be hooked inside the mouth to be counted as a legal fish. All angling must be conducted from the boat. At no time shall a contestant leave the boat to land a fish, or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. **Alabama rigs or any other umbrella rigs, will be allowed, but will be restricted to no more than five wires and three hooks.** All contestants must comply with all applicable state and federal laws, and any contestant’s failure to comply with all applicable state and federal laws are subject to disqualification and/or other disciplinary action that is at the sole and absolute discretion of the tournament director.

**OFF-LIMITS**

Off-Limits Period of tournament waters for fishing, scouting, locating any bass, including shoreline spotting will begin at sundown on the Sunday night, before a tournament, until two hours prior to starting time of tournament (Monday-Friday). Restriction for the championship will be announced. 

**OFF-LIMITS AREAS**

Off-limits areas are such areas established and announced for each and every LA Team Tournament Trail event. Contestants may not fish inside the established “off-limits” area. Violation of the rule will result in immediate disqualification. Contestants boats must remain in the tournament waters during the event.

**BOAT AND HORSEPOWER REGULATION**

Each boat must have all the required U. S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain properly aerated livewell space to maintain alive the limit of catch of bass. Livewells must be factory installed and cannot be OEM. No surface drive engines. Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition may not exceed the horsepower limitation set by the U. S. Coast Guard in such vessel. Falsifying information on entry forms, or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor, or rating the plate to conceal such limitations will be cause for disqualification from the tournament. No contestant shall have a platform, raised deck, or ladder that is higher than the gunnel of the boat. Standing on the fishing seats or outboard motor is not allowed in LA Team Tournament Trail events. No air or jet boats are permitted during competition days.

**Each team will be restricted to two boats for the year and they must be the boats submitted during registration.** Proof of liability insurance with no “tournament exclusion,” having a minimum limit of $100,000 per occurrence must be provided. The only exception to this rule will be that one of the boats entered during registration is sold and another boat is purchased. If another boat is purchased, and you intend to use it for LA Team Trail events, it must be added to the list and proof of insurance must be provided prior to using it during competition.

**SPORTSMANSHIP AND CONDUCT**

All contestants are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety and conservation. All contestants must comply with all applicable state and federal laws, and any contestants’ failure to comply with all applicable state and federal laws are subject to disqualification and/or other disciplinary action that is at the sole and absolute discretion of the tournament director. Examples of conduct not complying with those standards include, but are not limited to, the following:

 a. **Consumption, possession, or being under the influence** of alcoholic beverages, mind-altering substances, or illegally obtained narcotics during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.

 b. Any previous conviction, arrest, or investigation for a felony, or crime involving moral turpitude, or a crime related to, arising out of, or involving any fishing tournament or event. Exception will be considered with full, prior written disclosure to the tournament director under oath and by affidavit of all facts and circumstances surrounding such conviction, arrest, or investigation so long as those facts and circumstances do not result in the continuing questionability of the contestant’s honesty, integrity, character or qualifications to enter the event.

 c. Actions or words that reflect unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, and fair competition. The LA Team Tournament Trail will not allow bullying by any LA Team Tournament Trail competitor. This includes ALL social media. ANY act of bullying will result in disqualification from the event and any future LA Team Tournament Trail events. ANY DOCUMENTED VIOLATION OF THE SPORTSMANSHIP RULE WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION OF ALL LA Team Tournament Trail EVENTS.

 d. Chemical or substance abuse.

 e. Disqualification from any LA Team Tournament Trail or other fishing organization’s tournament that resulted from unexplained rule violations that result in a contestant’s honesty, integrity, character, and qualifications for entry into an LA Team Tournament Trail event being questionable is in the tournament director’s sole and absolute discretion.

**TRAILERING IS NOT ALLOWED**

All boats must leave the official checkpoint in the order designated at registration. Contestants may launch their boat at a ramp other than the designated take-off location, but all contestants must come through the official checkpoint location before leaving to fish. In the event of severe weather, alternate takeoff instructions will be given at the registration site at the sole and absolute discretion of the tournament director.

**BOAT NUMBER ASSIGNMENT AND OFFICIAL CHECKPOINTS**

Boat numbers will be randomly drawn before each tournament. Your assigned boat number card will be given to you the morning of the tournament.

There will be only two official checkpoints. One for official boat inspection in the morning and one official check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through the checkout in the morning or failure to officially check in at the check-in-point will result in disqualification from such event. During morning checkout, all teams are required to idle a minimum of 100 yards before putting the boat on plane. It is the sole responsibility of each contestant to arrive at the designated check-in location on time. It is the angler’s responsibility to verify his/her provided flight card time. All fishing must cease upon check-in, or upon such other time as may be designated by the tournament director.

**SCORING, MINIMUM LENGTH AND OTHER SIZE RESTRICTIONS**

Scoring will be determined by the pounds and hundredths of a pound of each team’s catch during the tournament. ONLY Largemouth, Spotted, and Smallmouth Bass are accepted species. The limit will be five (5) per team. Any team possessing more than the tournament limit will have his/her catch for the day disqualified. **Once a sixth fish is in the boat, no casts may be made until culling is completed.**

The minimum length all species for 2024 LA Team Tournament Trail lakes, on the regular season schedule, with exception to Caddo Lake, will be 12 inches.

At Caddo Lake all teams with two anglers fishing the tournament, will be allowed to weigh five largemouth over 12 inches that are not within the 14-18 inch slot limit. Any team with only one angler fishing the tournament, will be allowed to weigh five largemouth over 12 inches that are not within the 14-18 inch slot limit, but will be restricted to four largemouth over the 14-18 inch slot limit. Spotted bass will not be subjected to the slot limit imposed on largemouth bass and can be part of a team’s five fish limit, provided they are at least 12 inches in length.

Any deviation from the 12 inch minimum, not prescribed herein, will be announced by the tournament director, prior to the start of any tournament requiring a deviation.

Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit, or fall within a slot limit, will result in loss of that fish and a half–pound penalty to the weight of the total remaining fish. Each contestant’s catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag. The Pro-Rule measuring board is the official measuring board of LA Team Tournament Trail. Bass will be measured with mouth closed, tail compressed and swiped to achieve overall greatest length.

**LIVE FISH**

A half-pound (.5) penalty will be deducted from your total weight for the day for each dead fish presented at weigh-in. Culling a dead fish is prohibited and will result in disqualification. All dead fish must be brought to weigh in for sanitary disposal.

**LATE PENALTY**

Contestants who are not at the official check-in point at the appointed time will be assessed a one-pound-per-minute penalty from their total weight, including any weight to be counted toward a big bass award. Any contestant more than 15 minutes late will forfeit that day’s catch. In the event of a mechanical breakdown, a contestant may return to the check-in location with their catch by receiving a ride from another registered contestant or tournament official only. The contestants must return to the official check-in location by the methods set forth above by their assigned check-in time to avoid a late penalty.

**CLOSING OF THE SCALES**

Scales will close 30 minutes after the last flight is due in. Due to certain weigh-in locations, this time may be lengthened or shortened at the tournament director’s sole and absolute discretion. Any change to the above stated official scale closing time, will be announced during registration, during boat checkout, or during weigh-in. It is the angler’s responsibility to verify the official scale closing time and to be in the weigh-in line by such time.

**TIES**

A tie for 1st place in all 2024 LA Team Tournament Trail events will be broken by the team that has the heaviest fish. All other ties will result in splitting that place and the next place’s money.

Ties in the teams that qualify for the LA Team Tournament Trail Championship will be broken by adding each team’s total weight for the season, and the highest weight will determine a qualifier.

Ties in the teams for the LA Team Tournament Trail Overall Anglers of the Year will be broken by adding each team’s total weight for the season, and the highest weight will determine a qualifier.

**CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIERS**

The Championship will be made up of 75% of the entire field. In the event a team cannot participate in the championship event, the next team in the points standing will be invited.

**POINTS**

Points will be awarded as follows: Points will begin at 200 for 1st Place, 199 for 2nd Place, 198 for 3rd Place, and so on. All teams that do not weigh a bass will receive **50** points less than the last place team that weighed fish in that event. Points will be awarded only to teams that fish an event, if a team does not show up for that event, that team will not receive points.

**ANGLER TEAM OF THE YEAR (AOY)**

2024 AOY will be awarded free regular season entry fees and be boat number 1 for the 2025 season. In the event the AOY team is disqualified from the LA Team Tournament Trail, during the 2025 season, they must forfeit any and all prizes they are entitled to for the remainder of the year.

**INCORPORATION OF 2024 LA OVERVIEW**

The “2024 LA TEAM TOURNAMENT TRAIL RULES” stated above will be strictly enforced and they are rules that every angler must comply to.

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

Championship details are to be determined and will be announced at a later date. There will be a $250 entry fee per team for the Championship.