

2010 U.S. Anglers Choice Pro-AM Rules

1) RULES: Interpretation and enforcement of U.S. Angler's Choice rules shall be left exclusively to the tournament director. Tournament directors may impose sanctions as deemed appropriate for rule infractions without limitation e.g., disqualification, forfeiture of prizes, entry fee and prohibition from participation in subsequent tournaments. Federal, state, local and lake laws and rules must be obeyed at all times and shall supersede U.S. Angler's Choice rules when in conflict. It is the responsibility of each entrant to know and obey all rules listed below and any lake or river specific rules. All decisions of the Tournament Director are final and may not be appealed.

2) PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY: Membership is required to participate in U.S. Angler's Choice tournaments. Tournament eligibility and entry is open to all members in good standing. Each angler is responsible for signing a waiver absolving U.S. Angler's Choice, its employees and sponsors from any responsibility for any damage or personal injury caused as a result of their participation in the tournament or associated activities. Any angler under age 18 entered into a tournament must have written consent and release of liability from parent or guardian. In no case shall the "Pro" be less than 16 years of age.

3) ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND DRUGS: During tournament hours no contestant shall be under the influence of, or in possession of alcohol or any illegal substance in his or her boat. An infraction of this rule shall result in immediate disqualification for the offending party.

4) SPORTSMANSHIP: All entrants in U.S. Angler's Choice tournaments must follow standards of sportsmanship, safety and conservation at all times. Displaying poor sportsmanship and bringing unfavorable publicity to the sport of bass fishing shall be grounds for sanctions or disqualification. The use of profanity or obscene gestures anytime prior to, during and after the event in the host marina or headquarters will not be tolerated. Amateur anglers may not share information with their pros regarding locations, methods, lures or techniques used by their pro partner from the previous day. Likewise, a Pro may not ask their amateur partner to share information regarding locations, methods, lures or techniques used by the pro partner from the previous day. A partner or other contestant that witnesses these violations is obligated to inform the other contestant of the violation and that if it continues will be reported to a tournament official. Anyone protested and found to have committed a violation of this rule shall be disqualified from the event. Anglers are highly encouraged to cooperate with media or promotions personnel by granting photography, accounts or interviews. Material gathered shall be used in the promotion of the U.S. Angler's Choice organization or the sport of bass fishing in general.

5) CITATIONS: A contestant cited by law enforcement authorities for violation of local, State or Federal fishing or boating regulations jeopardizes his daily catch and may be subject to disqualification by the Tournament officials.

6) APPEARANCE & DRESS: It is the responsibility of all contestants to dress and conduct themselves in a presentable manner at meetings & weigh-ins. Tank tops and shower sandals are not considered appropriate apparel when weighing in before the observing public. Contestants approaching the weigh station barefooted or without a shirt will be required to return to the boat for proper dress.

7) EXPENSES: Amateur anglers do not choose fishing locations nor do they operate the trolling motor except with the approval of the Pro contestant. In addition, they are not required to share expenses for the day's fishing. However, the Amateur contestants are encouraged to contribute some financial assistance to the Pro towards the day's expenses.

8) BOATS & MOTORS: All boats entered must be a minimum of 16 feet powered by an engine no less than 75hp. There is no horsepower limit, however, no engine may exceed the BIA horsepower rating for the boat in use. All boats must meet US Coast Guard and state regulations. All boats must have a working emergency kill switch and must be attached to the driver whenever the outboard motor is running. Kill switch lanyards must not be longer than forty-eight inches (4 feet). All boats must have an aerated livewell suitable to sustain a tournament limit in releasable

condition. All boats must have working running lights, which will stay on until the first stop of the day. Boats without properly working running lights will be held and will go out last. Extra gas tanks must be secured and must meet US Coast Guard specifications. Boats used in U.S. Angler's Choice tournaments must have an insurance policy in effect with a minimum of \$100,000.00 liability coverage. Proof of insurance must be provided when asked by tournament officials.

9) SAFETY: It is the Tournament Director's discretion to make any changes deemed necessary when contestant(s) safety is of concern, including delaying tournament hours due to fog or other weather factors. Boating safety must be observed at all times during practice and competition. A U.S. Coast Guard approved chest type life preserver (PFD) Type III or higher, must be worn and properly fastened any time the combustible engine is operative and the kill switch must be attached to the driver with a lanyard no longer than forty-eight (48) inches. SOSpenders are allowed if approved by the Coast Guard. All contestants returning from their day on the water are required to check in with tournament officials by closing of the scales, regardless of having fish to be weighed or not.

10) TACKLE & EQUIPMENT: Trolling with the aid of combustion or electric motors is not permitted. Only artificial lures may be used. No live bait or prepared bait permitted with the exception of pork rinds or commercially produced biodegradable soft baits. Liquid fish attractants are allowed. Only one (1) rod may be used at any one time. Other rods may be in the boat and ready for use, however, every cast and retrieve must be completed before another cast is made. Rods may not exceed nine (9) feet in length. Landing nets possessed on the tournament boat during official tournament hours may not have a handle length longer than 8 feet. The use of underwater cameras are allowed during practice periods. They are not allowed during competition. No SCUBA diving or snorkeling is allowed on tournament waters 30 days prior to the event. Use of a CB or VHF marine band radio, cellular phone, texting, or any electronic communication device for the purpose of locating or catching bass during tournament hours is strictly prohibited. Aforementioned devices may be used for emergency purposes only during tournament hours.

11) LICENSES: Each contestant must have in possession a valid and current fishing license with appropriate stamps governing the fishable waters of the event. Penalty for such an offense is disqualification of the day's catch.

12) PROTESTS: A written protest, accompanied by a \$50.00 fee, must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Director before official closing of the scales on the day of the alleged infraction. The \$50.00 fee shall be returned if a protest is found to be valid.

13) POLYGRAPH: All contestants are subject to a polygraph testing. Failure to submit is grounds for disqualification. Any contestant who has failed a polygraph test for cheating in a bass tournament or whose results are found to be inconclusive shall not be eligible to compete in U.S. Angler's Choice tournaments. Polygraph and voice stress testing are performed at the discretion of the tournament director.

14) OFFICIAL BOATS: Official boat(s) may be on the water for boat inspection, observation and filming during tournament hours. All entrants shall cooperate with all reasonable requests from official boats.

15) SCORING FISH: a tournament boat (Pro and Am) may weigh-in five (5) fish per day, a minimum of 13 inches in length, unless state or lake limits are greater, measured on a flat board with mouth closed and tail compressed. Any team weighing-in a fish shorter than the legal tournament length will be assessed a one-1 lb. penalty plus the loss of the short fish. Any angler bringing more than five (5) fish to the scales will be disqualified. A penalty of .20 lbs. per dead fish will be deducted from the total weight. A penalty of 1.00 lbs per short fish will be deducted from the total weight with the short fish not being counted in the total weight. The weighmaster and/or tournament director will be the sole judge on making the decision as to whether or not a fish is considered as dead or short. Only Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Bass will be scored.

Any team returning to the checkpoint late will be disqualified for that day and forfeit their catch. The official measuring board of U.S. Angler's Choice is "The Judge" by Lakeborne Tackle.

16) CULLING FISH: It is the responsibility of each Pro/Am to keep no more than a maximum of five (5) fish in a live well. If more than five fish are present in the live well during the event you will be subject to disqualification. No culling is allowed in the host marina. No culling of dead fish is allowed.

17) PERMITTED FISHING WATERS: No fishing is allowed inside the host marina area. All fishing must be done from a previously inspected boat. No tube or wade fishing allowed. No fishing is allowed within 50 yards of a "Gas dock". No fishing is allowed within 25 yards of another anchored or tied tournament boat with trolling motor out of the water, without the anchored boat's permission. Anytime two or more docks are within the 25-yard area a contestant may only claim one side of one dock for their fishing area. Only contestants may be in the boat during the tournament hours. Having a non-contestant sit on a hole for you shall not be tolerated. Hole sitting will not be tolerated. Boats may not be trailered to weigh in during the tournament hours unless under the direction of the tournament director. Contestants must be able to get the boat into and out of the fishing area without getting out of the boat. Navigable waters are the only waters to be fished during the tournament. Contestants may not leave the boat to land a fish.

18) SIGHTFISHING: This rule concerns "sight or bedding" bass and is in effect at any time either of these conditions exist, and is designed to eliminate illegal snagging of bass. Intentional snagging of fish will not be allowed. A sight or bedding fish is defined as one that can be seen and watched as it approaches the lure. Fish caught under these conditions must be caught by hook and line and by the fish ingesting the lure. Any bass caught that is either a "sight" or "bed" fish must be caught "hook in mouth with the hook point entering from the inside of the mouth" - and must be verified as a legal catch by the angler's in-boat partner. Any "sight" or "bed" fish caught by snagging or with hook starting from outside the mouth shall be deemed an illegally caught fish and must be released. This same fish may be caught again by the legal method - with the hook starting from inside the mouth. Any angler catching a fish under these conditions and not verifying the hook location with the other person in the boat may be disqualified from the tournament. Standing on seats, or motor or the use of ladder or raised platform for the purpose locating or fishing for bedding fish is not permitted.

19) FISH TRANSPORT: Restricting natural movement of fish by any means such as but not limited to: use of nets, tanks or dams will result in immediate disqualification. Restricting access to waters normally accessible to anglers by any means such as but not limited to: felling of trees or placement of obstructions will result in disqualification. Transporting live fish taken in one area and releasing them in another area for the purpose of establishing a population in the new area during the practice period, during the tournament, or thirty days prior to the tournament is strictly prohibited and grounds for disqualification.

20) PRACTICE/OFF-LIMITS/GUIDES: There is no off-limits period prior to a U.S. Angler's Choice Pro-Am event. Official tournament pre-fish opens on Thursday and continues until 3:00 pm on Friday, unless otherwise designated for that particular tournament. All tournament rules are in effect from the start of official pre-fish throughout the tournament. Contestants may not fish during official pre-fish hours with an individual who possesses a guide license for that body of water, but is not entered into the tournament.

21) STANDINGS/TIES: Final standings in any event will be determined by the heaviest cumulative weight for the prescribed tournament period. The cumulative total will reflect actual weight of fish caught, less assessed penalties, if any. Pro and Amateur will score the total weight of each daily boat catch. Their two-day scores will be added, placing Pros and Amateurs in their own division. In the case of a tie, prize money and points will be awarded in the following manner: For cash awards, the designated moneys for the given tied positions will be added together and split among those tied for a given place. (Example: A two-way tie for fifth place would split the cash awards designated for both 5th and 6th places and each would receive 5th place points.

22) CONSERVATION: Adequate live wells are mandatory on each boat. They must provide aeration to sustain a limit of fish in a good and releasable condition as possible. All contestants participating in events in California should possess multiple weigh bags. Contestants may not bring a cumulative weight of more than approximately five pounds of fish per bag to the scales. Single bass over 5 lbs. are an exception and should be housed in their own bag. Bags should be filled with an adequate amount of water to sustain the fish. Once weighed and unless requested by members of the media, anglers should immediately refill their bag(s) with water and return the fish to the live release boat as quickly as possible. Contestants are responsible for providing their own weigh bags.

23) BREAKDOWNS/EMERGENCIES: In the case of a breakdown on the water, the fishing partners may accept assistance in the form of a tow from or a return ride with any other boat on the waters. While in tow or riding, those contestants accepting assistance are not permitted to continue fishing. However, other contestants, if rendering assistance, may continue fishing. Should one of the contestants decide to stay with the troubled craft, he may send his catch with his partner to the weigh-in. The contestant choosing to remain behind may not continue to fish. Contestants with fish to be taken to the weigh-in may only be transported via another tournament contestant's boat or a method approved by the Tournament officials. In the event that a Pro contestant faces boat problems, and an alternate boat is not available, both the Pro and his/her regularly drawn Amateur partner will be retired from the tournament, but will keep their "official" checked weight, if any.

24) REGISTRATION: Any Amateur registering for the tournament with a Pro contestant shall receive guaranteed status in the tournament. To ensure guaranteed status, the Amateur entry form and appropriate entry fees must accompany those of the Pro, and be received in our office before the tournament entry deadline. In any other situation, Pro entries will be matched against available in-house Amateur entries. Such matching of entries is based on a first-come; first-served basis by date entry is received in our office. Should the Pro's Amateur not show up for the tournament; the Pro loses his/her guaranteed status.

25) DEPOSITS/REFUNDS: A \$100 Pro or \$100 Am deposit will hold a spot in any USAC Pro Am tournament up to the cutoff date prior to the contest when the balance of fees is due. There is no provision for refunding tournament entry fees or deposits; however, entry fees or deposits may be transferred to another like event. A \$25 fee will apply to all cancellations. A \$20 fee will be charged on all returned checks. Persons that have had returned checks may enter only with certified funds. No entries shall be accepted after official practice has started for any tournament.

26) RULES/PARTNER PAIRING MEETING: All contestants, unless excused by the tournament authority through prior arrangement, are required to attend the tournament Rules and Partner Pairing meeting on evening prior to the tournament. Unauthorized absence will result in weight or start penalties as directed by the tournament officials.

27) PARTNER "NO SHOW" RULE: After the pairing of partners is completed, it is the responsibility of the Pro to insure his Amateur partner is available for the morning start. Should the Amateur partner not show for the start, the Pro may be required to wait until the last flight has departed. The tournament officials (if possible) will make an effort to find a replacement, but are under no obligation to secure a replacement or locate the missing partner. However, the Tournament Director may, at his discretion, allow the Pro to fish alone. Further, if a no-show occurs on the second day of the event to the tournament leader, he will not be allowed to go solo under any circumstances. Should the Pro boater fail to show for the start, the Amateur partner will have to withdraw from the day's fishing.

28) AWARDS CEREMONIES ATTENDANCE: While it is generally recognized that attendance at presentation of awards ceremonies is an act of respect for others, it is not always possible for all to attend. Those not attending the awards ceremonies will forfeit any claim to trophies or merchandise earned in competition. Tournament Officials will mail the purse share. Another party may not pick up purse checks.