



2021

**VPA POLICY AND PROCEDURES
FOR
BASS FISHING**





VPA BASS FISHING COMMITTEE

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POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Please note the points of emphasis do not include all changes to the Policy and Procedures Manual. Please review the manual carefully.

It is the hope of the Bass Fishing Committee that coaches will include anglers in as much of the “decision making” as possible including but not limited to choosing the location to fish, where and when to cast their line, which lure to use, etc.

Schools will only be allowed to enter one boat per team in the State Championship tournament. Schools will only be allowed to enter up to two boats per team in the Classic tournament. The VPA Bass Fishing Committee will be a resource to **assist** in finding a boat for schools entering in their first season; however the school will ultimately be responsible for securing a boat and captain.

- First Date to Practice – Thursday, August 19, 2021
- Roster / Entry Fee Due Date – Monday, September 13, 2021 “Classic”
- Roster / Entry Fee Due Date - Monday, October 4th, 2021 “State Championship”
- Roster / Entry Fee Due Date – Monday, October 11th, 2021 “Twin State”

There must be at least one cellular phone available on all boats to be used in case of emergency. The tournament director will request that information in advance of any scheduled tournament.

Every boat must have an adult captain for driving purposes, and only the captain may drive the boat when the outboard motor is in use. A certificate of insurance for the boat must be presented, indicating a minimum of \$300,000 CSL liability coverage.

Schools may enter one (1) team of up to four (4) anglers in the State Championship tournament. Schools may enter two (2) teams of up to four (4) anglers each in the Classic tournament.

- i. Only two anglers, one coach, and one captain will be permitted on the boat at any time (see tournament info).

All boats must be a minimum of 16 feet in length and have all of the required Marine Patrol safety equipment, functional bilge pump, and working live well(s).

School uniforms must be worn during competitions and weigh-ins. School uniforms must be of school colors and have the name of the school and/or the student's name on them. Any sponsorship the school has secured cannot be displayed on the uniform or the coach/driver of the boat.

A "Live Well" - Live well space, properly aerated, to adequately maintain alive a limit catch of bass by both fishermen using the boat.

Background Checks:

In the event that your school district requires background checks, it is the responsibility of **your school** to conduct the background checks.

II. Divisional Alignments

Bass Fishing shall be aligned into one coed division: Last year we added two teams to the Bass Fishing League and the committee anticipates more growth in the sport this season.

Total number of schools participating last year was 18.

III. Regular Season

A. The season will run from the first date to practice, **August 19, 2021** and end with the last date to play, **October 16, 2021**.

B. Schools can fish from the shorelines, in ponds, lakes, and/or rivers as an alternative to boats during the season.

C. During the regular season, athletes / schools can scrimmage or practice against other schools (live or virtually) or simply practice as a team, in the end each school will need to identify at least two, but up to 4 anglers (two on the boat, and two on shore as substitutes) to go on to the two VPA Tournaments.

D. It is encouraged that any organized scrimmages or co-practices be communicated to the Chairperson of the Committee so that Vermont Fish and Wildlife Authorities can be notified. (Date, Location, Participating Schools, and Times)

Due to the negative impacts that exotic invasive plants and animals can have on VT's aquatic communities, it is imperative that all anglers check their boats and trailers for aquatic invasive species prior to launching **and** when leaving a waterbody. This includes checking boats and trailers for aquatic plants as well as making sure that live wells and other equipment is completely dry after use. Not only is it illegal to transport exotic plants and animals in Vermont, increasing instances of boats arriving at launches with exotic species on them will only make access at boat access facilities more difficult in the future. Additionally, exotic invasive plants have the potential to lead to impacts to native plant communities and the fish that depend on them.

The VT Fish and Game Department is very excited that VT high school students now have the opportunity to participate in fishing as a sanctioned High School Sport and fully supports this endeavor. Have a safe and productive tournament season.

IV. Tournaments

A. Tournament Dates:

i. **VPA Classic High School Tournament** on **Sunday, September 19, 2021** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero (each school may enter up to 2 boats)
7 am to 2 pm – More Details will be provided in advance of the tournament.

(Note: Classic tournament waters off-limits from Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 8:00 p.m. prior to the qualifying tournament until the tournament date)

ii. **VPA State Championship High School Tournament** on **Sunday, October 10, 2021** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero (Each school may only enter 1 boat and a maximum number of 4 anglers (min. of 2) for the State Championship - 2 on the boat at a time. (Substitute anglers may not fish from shore)
7 am to 2 pm – More Details will be provided in advance of the tournament.

(Note: Championship tournament waters off-limits from Thursday, October 7th, 2021 at 8:00 p.m. prior to the championship tournament until the tournament date)

V. Entries, Withdrawal Procedures, and Eligibility:

- A. Participation: Only individuals from VPA Member Schools who have communicated an intent to participate in the VPA Bass Fishing Season may participate in the tournaments.
- B. Tournament Rosters: All participating member schools must submit rosters to the VPA Committee by **Monday, September 13, 2021** for the Classic Tournament. All participating member schools must submit rosters to the VPA Committee by **Monday, October 4th, 2021** for the State Championship Tournament. **Rosters will be completed using the attached google form.**
- C. Roster Changes: Any changes to a roster must be in communicated to the tournament director a minimum of 48 hours prior to the tournaments. Extenuating circumstances will be handled by the committee.
- D. Eligibility: All participants must meet all requirements established by the VPA, as in any sport. This includes having a physical examination as required by the VPA or the local district; whichever is most stringent.
- E. Fees: Entry Fees will be collected for each school / team competing in each of the tournaments. Fee Structure is as follows:
 - a. Volunteer Captains – A \$75 gas offset per event should be paid directly to your boat captain.
 - b. Entry Fee per tournament will be \$50 per team/boat. (Made out to EWSD)
 - c. Entry Fee checks can be submitted to Jeff Goodrich at Essex High School 2 Educational Drive Essex Junction VT 05452 and made out to EWSD.

VI. Tournament Structure and Schedule:

- A. VPA Classic (State Qualifier) Date: **Sunday, September 19, 2021** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero
- B. Rain Date: TBD; the tournament will be held rain or shine if safe and possible.
- C. Schools will be divided into two (2) flights as needed. The VPA shall notify all schools of what flight they will be in, as well as the order in which they will launch boats.
- D. State Championship Round Date: **Sunday, October 10, 2021** @ John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero

- E. Twin State (vs. New Hampshire) Date: Saturday, October 16th, 2021 @ John Guilmette Access in South Hero, VT.
- F. Launch order for the Championship Round will be based off of the Classic tournament results.
 - >Weight will be re-set to zero after the Classic tournament
- G. Volunteers will be meeting at 5:30 a.m. Schools cannot arrive with their boats until after 6:00 a.m. no exceptions.

Flight Itinerary – When two flights are needed / Qualifiers

<p><u>Flight 1</u> 6:00-7:30 a.m. Safety checks for boats will be done on a first come first serve basis. They will be checked for invasive plants and other species.</p> <p>7:30 a.m. Mandatory pre-tournament meeting on shore for all boat captains & coaches.</p> <p>8:00 a.m. Tournament begins</p> <p>2:00 p.m. Participants must be docked</p> <p>2:00 p.m. Weigh-in begins</p>	<p><u>Flight 2</u> 6:30-8:00 a.m. Safety checks for boats will be done on a first come first serve basis. They will be checked for invasive plants and other species.</p> <p>8:00 a.m. Mandatory pre-tournament meeting on shore for all boat captains & coaches.</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Tournament begins</p> <p>2:30 p.m. Participants must be docked</p> <p>2:30 p.m. Weigh-in begins</p>
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Awards shall be presented following the final weigh in.

VII. Tournament Regulations:

- A. The tournament will be set for at least six (6) hours of fishing. This may be adjusted due to weather. The tournament shall be considered complete if half of the minimum scheduled time has been fulfilled; approximately three (3) hours.
- B. All participants must have a current and valid Vermont Fishing License on their person the day of the tournament if they are age 16 or older.
- C. All participants must be back in for the weigh-in by 2:00 p.m. / 2:30 p.m. (depending on the flight). This will vary only if a weather alert has been issued, which might shorten the tournament. It is the participant’s responsibility to ensure their boat is back to the dock by 2:00 p.m.
- D. Permitted fishing locations and off-limit areas shall be established by the tournament manager and will be covered during the pre-tournament meeting of captains and coaches.
- E. There will be a one (1) pound deduction for every minute a participant is late getting back for the weigh-in up to 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, no weight will be allowed for that day. It is the participant’s responsibility to notify the tournament manager in advance of the 2:00 p.m./ 2:30 p.m. (depending on the flight) deadline of any problems that may have occurred.

- F. There will be a six(6) fish per boat limit. The minimum length of a legal bass is 12 inches. Fish may be culled if a participant(s) has six(6) fish in the live well. No more than six (6) fish can be in the live well at any one time. Participants exceeding the fish limit will be disqualified.
- G. All participants must wear a US Coast Guard approved life jacket the entire time they are on the water. If they do not, disqualification will occur. It is highly recommended that participants have available, a full (jacket/pant) rain suit in case of inclement weather.
- H. There must be at least one cellular phone available on all boats to be used in case of emergency.
- I. Student athletes are allowed to use the team gear and or the gear of the captain.
- I. Every boat must have an adult captain for driving purposes, and only the captain may drive the boat when the outboard motor is in use. A certificate of insurance for the boat must be presented, indicating a minimum of \$300,000 CSL liability coverage.
- J. Coaching: The captain/coach of the boat may make suggestions, but may not fish in any respect. This includes but is not limited to tying lures, netting fish, handling fish, or gear. The captain/coach or team participant may operate the electric motor. If the team has only one participant on the boat, the captain/coach may net the fish if asked by the participant.
- K. All fish will be released immediately after the weigh-in. All fish put in the live well must be kept alive. Dead fish will have a ½ pound deduction and cannot count for the largest fish for the boat. Dead fish may not be culled.
- L. Schools may enter one (1) team of up to four (4) anglers in the Championship tournament. Schools may enter two (2) teams of up to four (4) anglers each in the Classic tournament. The VPA will be a resource to assist in finding a boat; however, the school will ultimately be responsible for securing a boat and captain.
 - i. Only two anglers, one coach, and one captain will be permitted on the boat at any time (see tournament info).
- M. All boats must be a minimum of 16 feet in length and have all of the required VT Marine Patrol safety equipment, functional bilge pump, and working live well(s).
- N. The total weight of the six(6) fish limited to a boat would count for the team total for the tournament. Individual weight will also be recorded for the top fish designated by each boat. The heaviest fish award will be given to each participant of the boat that weighs in the heaviest Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass of the Championship Round.

- O. Ties will be broken, if the poundage is equal, in the following manner;
 - i. First tie breaker shall be the number of fish caught.
 - ii. Second tie breaker shall be the largest fish by weight.

- P. No live bait or trolling is allowed at the tournament; artificial lures only. Only one casting, spin-cast, or spinning rod, eight (8) foot maximum, and reel may be used at any one time.

- Q. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional manner. Anyone guilty of catching a fish by means of “snagging” will be disqualified. All bass must be hooked inside the mouth and must be certified by the boat captain to be counted as a legal fish.

- R. Participants must stay in the boat unless they are using a rest room facility or due to some other emergency or malfunction. If an emergency or other malfunction should occur, the boat must contact the local manager or his/her designee prior to leaving the boat.
 - i. All angler substitutions must take place at a designated area to be selected by the committee, and disseminated with the captain’s information prior to the tournament.

- S. Any transfer of fish from one live well to another live well in another boat due to malfunction must be made in the presence of the local manager or his/her designee.

- T. Participants may not obtain fishing patterns or locations from a non-competitor’s boat, follow a non-competitor’s boat or participate in the practice of “hole-sitting”; a practice wherein a non-competitor sits on the fishing spot, holding it for a contestant. In addition, non-participants may not place markers for a school. **All of these acts are prohibited and will result in the immediate disqualification of the boat**

- U. School uniforms must be worn during competitions. School uniforms must be of school colors and have the name of the school and/or the student’s name on them. Any sponsorship the school has secured cannot be displayed on the uniform or the coach/driver of the boat.

- V. Each tournament manager shall appoint (in addition to him/herself) a Tournament Committee of at least three (3) participating coaches or school administrators. The decision(s) of the Tournament Committee shall be final in matters pertaining to the VPA Bass Fishing Terms and Conditions listed.

- W. Unsportsmanlike Conduct:
 - i. All participants must adhere to VPA By-Law Article IX, Sportsmanship. Any participant, coach and/or other person guilty of profane or indecent language or of gross unsportsmanlike conduct shall be disqualified.

- X. One line may be in the water per student angler, no coach nor captain will be permitted to fish at any time of the tournament.

VIII. Tournament Policies:

A. Damage to Property or Equipment:

If contestants or others from any school entered in the tournament are found guilty of maliciously breaking, damaging, or destroying property or equipment belonging to the host site, the school shall be held responsible for costs incurred by replacing or repairing such property or equipment.

B. Media:

- i. Media is welcome to attend and cover the VPA Events. Please contact the Committee Chair for more info / specific instructions.

C. Tobacco Products:

- i. No coach, game official, athletic team member or player of an VPA member school shall use or smoke any tobacco product (smokeless or otherwise) at any VPA sponsored or sanctioned event in which the coach, game official, team member or player is involved.

D. Use of Inhalers:

- i. A student with asthma may possess and use his/her medication during an VPA competition while under the supervision of school personnel, provided the school meets the outlined procedures of self administration in the VT School Code.

E. Alcohol Beverages and the VPA State Events:

- i. The possession, distribution, or sale and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages are prohibited at the site and on any affiliated property of any VPA state contests.

F. Officials:

- i. Official weigh-in supervisors will be assigned by the VPA for the tournament.

G. Awards:

- i. Trophies / Plaques / Medals will be given to the top two schools overall (State Champions and Runner-up) to the coaches / participants (at the state final tournament only.) Other acknowledgements may be made for the following classifications.

- a. Largest by Weight Largemouth Bass – Places 1-2
- b. Largest by Weight Smallmouth Bass – Places 1-2

- H. Spectator Boats: Spectator boats are allowed on the lake the day of the tournament. Spectator boats must stay a reasonable distance from competitors and may not fish or help competitors in any way. Any spectator wishing to launch a boat from the tournament launch site must wait for all participants to launch.

IX. Outdoor Environmental Safety:

Lightning:

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect outdoor athletics. Within the United States, the National Severe Storm Laboratory (NSSL) estimates that 100 fatalities and 400-500 injuries requiring medical treatment occur from lightning strikes every year. The existence of blue sky and the absence of rain are not protection from lightning. Lightning can, and does, strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain shaft. It does not have to be raining for lightning to strike. Additionally, thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment, and its distance from the observer.

The following guidelines are mandatory:

- A. All athletic staff and game personnel are to monitor threatening weather. Establish a chain of command as to who makes the decision to remove a team or individual from athletic sites or events (athletic/site/event director, game officials/umpires, sports medicine staff?). An emergency plan should include planned instructions for participants as well as spectators.
- B. Be aware of potential thunderstorms that may form during scheduled athletic events or practices. Included here should include National Weather Service – issued (NWS) thunderstorm “watches” and “warnings” as well as signs of thunderstorms developing nearby. A “watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a “warning” means that severe weather has been reported in an area and for everyone to take proper precautions.
- C. Know where the closest “safe structure or location” is to the field or playing area, and know how long it takes to get to that safe structure or location.
Safe structure or location is defined as:
 - i. Any building normally occupied or frequently used by people, i.e., a building with plumbing and /or electrical wiring that acts to electrically ground the structure. Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and **do not use** the showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm.
 - ii. In the absence of a sturdy, frequently inhabited building, any vehicle with a hard metal roof (not a convertible or golf cart) and rolled up windows can provide a measure of safety. A vehicle is certainly better than remaining outdoors. It is not the rubber tires that make a vehicle safe shelter, but the hard metal roof which dissipates the lightning strike around the vehicle. **DO NOT TOUCH THE SIDES OF THE VEHICLE!**

D. WHEN YOU FIRST HEAR THUNDER OR SEE LIGHTNING, SUSPEND ACTIVITIES AND GO TO A SAFE SHELTER OR LOCATION. **“IF YOU CAN SEE IT (LIGHTNING), FLEE IT (TAKE SHELTER). IF YOU CAN HEAR IT (THUNDER) CLEAR IT (SUSPEND ACTIVITIES).”** WAIT UNTIL 30 MINUTES AFTER THE LAST OBSERVED LIGHTNING OR THUNDER BEFORE RESUMING ACTIVITIES.

E. If no safe structure or location is within a reasonable distance, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of the feet touching the ground, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact with the ground, because lightning current often enters a victim through the ground rather than by a direct overhead strike. **MINIMIZE YOUR BODY’S SURFACE AREA, AND MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH THE GROUND! DO NOT LIE FLAT!** Stay away from the tallest trees or objects (such as light poles or flag poles), metal objects (such as bleachers or fences), individual trees, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid being the highest object in a field. Do not take shelter under a single, tall tree.

F. All anglers/coaches must leave the water and go to the nearest bus or secure building.