

Stick Marsh Veterans Bass Challenge: Tournament Rules

1. **PARTICIPATION and ELIGIBILITY:** A valid Florida Freshwater fishing license or equivalent is required. Veteran verification requires a valid VA ID or form DD-214 for registration.
2. **PAIRING and REGISTRATION:** Partner pairing and boat position drawing will be held prior to tournament at a time to be determined. To be eligible to fish, entries must be received no later than 14 days prior to tournament date. Each contestant shall check-in with tournament officials at least 30 minutes prior to tournament start time. There shall be only one official checkpoint for check-in at the start of tournament and for check-in at the end of tournament.
3. **SAFETY:** Boat safety is the responsibility of the Boat Captain. Safe boating must be observed at all times. Each contestant is required to wear a type III or type IV life preserver any time the combustion engine is operating. The preserver must be securely fastened until engine is shut off. Boats must be equipped with an ignition kill switch that is securely attached to the driver's body while combustion engine is operating. **Contestants are encouraged to bring a rain suit.**
4. **BOAT and MOTOR:** Boats must be at least 17 ft in length. Any motor may be used that is 9½ hp or larger except that no aircraft motors are acceptable and no motor shall exceed Coast approved maximum size as indicated by boat information plate. Each boat must have all Coast Guard required equipment and is the responsibility of the Boat Captain. Tournament officials have the right to reject any boat they determine to be unsafe for any reason.
5. **BOAT OPERATION:** Partners must discuss in advance, meeting location and boat operation. Boats shall not be operated in an unsafe manner and will subject the team to disqualification. All boats should be in the water 30 minutes prior to official start time. Fishing will be from 7:00am **(or first safe light)** until 2:00pm. Flight start times will be separated by 15 minute intervals and end times will be separated by the same interval. **Flights shall consist of 20 boats.**
6. **PERMITTED FISHING METHODS:** Fishing shall be by Rod, Reel and artificial bait. At no time will alive or previously alive bait be allowed during tournament. No fishing rod shall exceed 8 feet in length and only 1 fishing rod and reel shall be used by contestant at a time, other rigged rods are allowed in the boat for substitution purposed. Boat Captain has the right to limit the number of fishing rods per angler based on safety and space available. Trolling as a method of fishing is prohibited. All fish must caught in a conventional, sporting manner and immediately released after measurement and photograph. Snag hooking of bedding fish is prohibited. **Any fish taken from a bed must be hooked in the mouth and verified by partners. A foul hooked bedding fish shall not be submitted or counted.**

7. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** All contestants are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, fellowship and conservation. No alcoholic beverages shall be allowed in boats during tournament and are prohibited until after final check-in.
8. **PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS:** Contestants may fish anywhere on the tournament waters accessible by boat, but not within 50 yard of another contestant who has anchored and has trolling motor stored, no such boat shall selectively allow other contestants to encroach in their exclusion area. All fishing must be done from the boat and at no time are anglers allowed to leave boat for the purpose of landing a fish or to better fishing position. Boats must stay in tournament waters during tournament hours; contestants must remain in boat except when nature calls or in the case of an emergency or where safety is involved. In an emergency, partners may enter the boat of another competitor or rescue boat. The momentary condition of being out of each other's sight to use the restroom is permissible. If a contestant must violate any of these conditions due to an emergency or any other reason, tournament officials must be notified as soon as possible. Trailering of boats during tournament hours, except by official direction, is prohibited.
9. **SCORING:** Scoring shall be determined by length as measured, on provided tape, with photograph of measurement. Bass may not be placed in livewell, stringered or otherwise kept out of water except to be measured and photographed. At no time shall a fish be kept out of the water more than 2 minutes. Individual winner shall be the contestant with the longest single fish caught. Team winner will be determined by total length of best 5 fish. Each team must present their photos to tournament official at check-in. Contestants should send photos of fish as they are caught during tournament hours for the purpose of scoring and record keeping. Tournament Director will accept no fish unless presented with measurement clearly visible. Scoring will be quarter inch increments. Any Bass that appears to have been mutilated, mashed or stretched to extend length will disqualify the contestant. Every effort shall be made to keep fish alive. Tournament Director shall be sole judge for viability of pictures.
10. **LATE PENALTY:** All competitors must check in at the official check point, at or before official check-in time even if they have no fish. For each 1 minute, or portion thereof, that a contestant is late a 1 inch penalty will be assessed. Any competitor that is 15 minutes or more late will have their total catch disqualified. It behooves all contestants to keep track of time. All fishing shall cease at check-in time.
11. **TIES:** In the event of a tie for any place, the top 5 fish presented per contestant will determine the winner. Should there still be a tie, the largest measured fish presented by the individual will be used. If a tie still exists the total aggregate length submitted by boat will be considered. If a tie is still not broken, a flip of a coin will determine the winner.

12. **DISPUTES, VIOLATIONS, QUESTIONS:** The Tournament Director will rule on all disputes and/or violations, if any, and answer all related questions within 30 minutes of tournament conclusion and prior final winner announcement. All decisions made by Tournament Director are final.

13. **AWARD CEREMONY:** Winner announcements and awards will be held at Bass Pro Shops “Stick Marsh Outpost” in Palm Bay. Teams are encouraged to go directly to Bass Pro Shop immediately after leaving tournament waters. There will be an after tournament cook-out for all contestants at the Stick Marsh Outpost (Bass Pro).

14. **FUN:** The most important rule is for you and your team to have a great day on the water.