

**American Bass**  
12340 Seal Beach Bl. Ste B120  
Seal Beach, CA 90740  
(714) 423-4532

## **ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules**

The terms and conditions presented in this document apply between “ABA Kayak Trail” and those persons registering for and participating in ABA Kayak Trail competitive Events (“Competitor”). “Events” include both “Tournaments” (meet-up competition) and any virtual, online-only competition where participants do not congregate. The pronouns “he,” “him,” “himself,” and “his” herein are used as generic, gender-neutral terms and do not restrict or confirm access on the basis of sex.

Each “ABA Kayak Trail” event (referred to herein as “Competition”) is a CPR (Catch-Photo-Release) contest in which each Competitor catches his own fish in places, during times, and by procedures permitted in all pertinent rules and regulations, digitally photographs them according to the standards described herein, and submits the lengths and photographs for verification. These Competitions are conducted according to ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules found in two documents:

ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules (this document) cover about 90% of the terms, conditions and standards common to all ABA Kayak Trail Events.

Event-specific rules located on the ABA Kayak Trail website, which includes details such as dates, locations, times, eligible water boundaries, restrictions, and exceptions to the ABA Kayak Trail Rules Standard,

Together, these two documents comprise the ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules. As a condition of participation in any ABA Kayak Trail Competition, the participating angler (“Competitor”) agrees to read, understand, and comply with all ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules. Failure to comply will result in penalty, which may range from points deductions to submission denial or disqualification.

For each Event, the ABA Kayak Trail Tournament Director will be identified per event. The Tournament or Series Director has responsibility for interpretation and enforcement of the ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules and may amplify or clarify them to make them more relevant or complete. Tournament and Series Director decisions may be disputed, as described in Section 17.1. ABA Kayak Trail management will review the Tournament or Series Director’s decisions and revise the ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules appropriately. Most recent ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules Standard revisions will be summarized in a Revisions Log (above) and highlighted in red in the body of the rules standards. Announcement of the rule changes will also be posted fifteen (15) days prior to implementation on the American Bass website.

### **1.0 Participation and Eligibility**

#### **1.1) ABA Kayak Trail Membership**

— Unless otherwise exempted, to participate in ABA Kayak Trail TRAIL Tournaments, ABA Kayak Trail Membership is required. Membership must be active by 11:59 p.m. on the day before start-of-competition. Non-members who register and compete in ABA Kayak Trail Member-only Events are not eligible for prizes, ranking, and rewards.

#### **1.2) Professional Fishing Guides**

— Professional Fishing Guides may register and compete in Events providing they do not guide-for-pay on Eligible Water within 30 days prior to the Event’s start-of-competition date.

#### **1.3) Event Registration**

— All ABA Kayak Trail Competitions are conducted using a Tournament Management System (“TMS”). Each angler who wishes to participate in such an Event must create a TMS user account before the first day of

competition and must sign up for the Event and pay the entry fee on the TMS or through the ABA Kayak Trail online store, as specified on the American Bass website.

#### **1.4) Entry Fees**

— Entry Fee amounts, administrative surcharges, registration deadlines, late fee exceptions, and refund or transfer restrictions are specified per event.

No Satisfaction Guarantee — Competitor understands and agrees that payment for the Event does not secure a guarantee or promise of satisfaction.

Competitor's failure or inability, for any reason except as otherwise provided herein, to participate in any or all of the activities of the Event does not relieve or suspend the Competitor's obligation to make all payments required by ABA Kayak Trail Rules on a timely basis, nor entitle the Customer to a refund or credit, except as provided below.

#### **1.5) Payment**

— Competitor agrees that once an Event Registration is submitted, the terms and conditions of the ABA Kayak Trail Competition Rules constitute an Agreement that is a legally binding and enforceable obligation of Competitor.

#### **1.6) Competitor's Right to Cancel**

— Any competitor wishing to cancel an Event Registration may do so by emailing the Tournament or Series Director at: [info@americanbass.com](mailto:info@americanbass.com)

Unless otherwise specified, registration cancellations dated more than 15 days prior to the Event incur no administrative fee, and any registration cancellation dated 15 days or fewer before the Event shall result in an administrative fee equal to the lesser of \$25 or 25% of the Event Registration Fee.

For Challenges, if cancellation email is dated more than 1 day (24 hours) prior to the Event, no administrative fee will be charged. Any cancellation dated 1 day or less before the Event shall result in a per person administrative fee equal to 25% of the Event Registration Fee.

Once an Event has started, no cancellations will be accepted, and no refunds will be provided.

ABA Kayak Trail is not responsible for any refunds of expenses related to travel or lodging reservations or other payments involving third parties.

#### **1.7) Pre-Tournament Check-in**

— Each Tournament Competitor is responsible for reviewing the Schedule of Events for pre-event check-in times and location. Each Competitor must check in with official ABA Kayak Trail Competition staff at the time and place designated in the Schedules of Event for verification of eligibility, signing of waivers if required, and rules acknowledgement. Late check-in and registration process (if permitted), event-specific instructions, and Event schedule.

## **2.0 Fish Eligibility**

### **2.1) Species**

— For "Bass" events, ABA Kayak Trail Competitions, only "black bass" are eligible for scoring. That designation includes the three most common species (Largemouth Bass – *Micropterus salmoides*, Smallmouth Bass – *Micropterus dolomieu*, and Spotted or Kentucky Bass – *Micropterus punctulatus*).

### **2.2) Length**

— The minimum length of bass scored in competition is 12 inches. Photos of bass shorter than the minimum will be denied.

### **2.3) Condition**

— Fish must be hooked in the mouth or jaw. It may not appear to have snagged, snatched, or hooked only in the body or a fin. If hooked in the mouth, a second treble hook that snags a gill plate, fin, or body is considered incidental and does not eliminate that fish.

Fish must appear to be alive. If fish appears to be dead, mutilated, frozen, mangled, or otherwise damaged, or it appears to have been mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered, the photo will be denied.

### **2.4) Caudal (Tail) Fin**

— For bass, the tip of at least one lobe of the caudal (tail) fin must be in contact with the measuring board. If the bass' entire caudal (tail) fin is lifted away from the measuring board so that neither tip remains in contact with the board, the photo will be denied.

### **2.5) Eye**

— The fish's left eye must be visible in photo. Violation will result in denial of the photo.

## **3.0 Competition Period**

— 3.1) Competition start and end dates and times are stated per event. Any Competitor who launches (i.e., places his watercraft on the water, occupies it, and goes under way) before the stated "Earliest Launch" time or begins fishing before the official Competition Start Time on any day of competition will be disqualified from the Event. When launch site congestion prevents others from launching safely, Competitors may place their watercraft in the water, occupy them, shove off and then stage (float, drift, or anchor) in the immediate area until the official "Earliest Launch," at which time they may proceed under way. Under no circumstance will a fish photographed outside of the official Competition Start and End times be considered for scoring.

### **3.2) Check-in**

— Tournament Competitors who have already submitted digital photos by upload to the TMS must be in the Judges' Report-in Line at Tournament HQ by the time specified on the American Bass website. Failure to be in or through the Judges' Report-in Line by that time will result in disqualification from the Event.

### **3.3) Early Check-in**

— Tournament Competitors who could not or did not upload their photo submissions to the TMS must report to the Judges' Check-in Line at an "Early Check-in Time" specified on the American Bass website and turn in their digital media (i.e., memory card), camera, or camera phone with USB cable in order for judges or tournament staff to download them to a computer and then manually upload them to the TMS for subsequent evaluation and scoring.

## **4.0) Pre-fishing**

— Practice in Eligible Water is permitted on the day prior to Tournament Competition until the time specified in event-specific rules on the ABA Kayak Trail American Bass website. If no pre-fishing/practice fishing deadline is stated on the American Bass website, then practice may continue up until six hours prior to the Tournament start time. For ABA Kayak Trail events, Competitors may engage in pre-/practice fishing up to competition start time. There are no restrictions regarding areas, type of watercraft, or types of bait used in pre-/practice fishing. Fishing on the event's eligible water after the specified pre-fishing deadline will result in disqualification from a Tournament. (Refer to Rule 6 regarding pre-fishing with a professional fishing guide.)

## **5.0 Competition Area**

5.1) Competitive fishing is allowed only on publicly accessible waters within the geographic area of the lake or waterway. Photos of fish caught outside of eligible water boundaries will be denied.

5.2) Competitors may launch from any public-access shore directly onto Eligible Water or may launch and then paddle or portage to Eligible Water. Crossing restricted property to reach Eligible Water is not permitted. Tributaries, canals, sloughs or estuaries separated from the rest of eligible water by temporary obstructions (e.g., fallen trees, log jams, beaver dams) that, if removed, could be entered by floating/paddling are considered eligible waters in which competition is permitted, and competitors are permitted to drag or portage watercraft over or around such obstructions. Those separated by obstructions of a permanent nature across or through which one cannot paddle/float (e.g., levees, earthen or concrete dams, berms, elevated roadbeds, spillways, waterfalls) are ineligible water, and competition in such areas is prohibited. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

5.3) Competitors are not restricted to fishing where they start out each day but are permitted to relocate to other Eligible Water during tournament hours.

5.4) Watercraft must not be anchored in such a position as to prevent or block access for other watercraft or powerboats. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

5.5) Fish caught in eligible water while wading or walking on the shore are not eligible for submission. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

## **6.0 Cooperation and Assistance**

6.1) Up until the end of the established pre-fishing period, competitors may fish with and receive direct assistance from other anglers and professional guides on the Eligible Water, except as restricted in Rule 6.B. and 6.C., below.

6.2) Within 30 days prior to the Event, a Competitor may not fish on Eligible Water with, nor receive expert advice from, a professional fishing guide who receives payment for those services. Violation will result in Competitor's disqualification from the Event.

6.3) Before and during the event, competitors may

6.2.1) Share gear, tackle and equipment

6.2.2) Assist in photographing a fish for submission

6.2.3) Communicate with and fish in proximity to other people, including other Competitors (except Professional Fishing Guides, as stipulated in Rule 6.2, above); however, Competitors may not receive assistance in catching fish that are photographed and submitted for scoring, including boat positioning, casting, retrieving, hooking, playing, or landing a fish. Violation will result in Competitor's disqualification from the Event.

6.4) Competitors may not submit photos of fish if, at any time from cast to landing of the fish, the competitor or watercraft was in physical contact with another watercraft or person, except an observer occupying the competitor's boat. Violation will result in denial of the photo.

## **7.0 Fishing Tackle, Equipment, and Methods**

7.1) All fish submitted for score must be caught live by the Competitor who submits them for scoring using only equipment and legal methods that comply with all sportfishing statutes and regulations of the states and body of water in which they are taken. Competitors are responsible for research of and compliance with all

applicable fishing and boating regulations. Snatching or snagging fish is not permitted. When visually fishing a bed for spawning bass, to be admissible all bass must be hooked inside the mouth. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event. In California, all bass must be hooked inside the mouth to be eligible for submission.

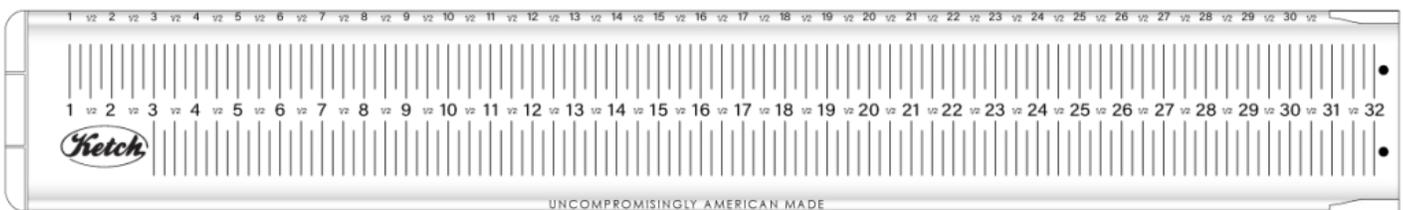
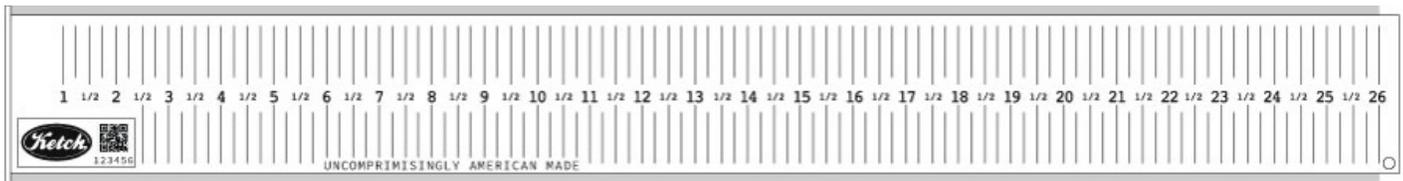
7.2) All fish must be caught by the Competitor on rod, reel, line and hook with artificial lures only. No traps, snares, set lines or other methods of fishing other than rod, reel and line are permissible, even if legal under state game laws. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

7.3) Acceptable measuring boards include the aluminum Ketch Products Measuring Board, the Ketch Karbonate and the Ketch X measuring board.

Measuring boards may be shortened only by removing inches from the upper end (opposite the fence). For example, one may cut off the end of a measuring board at the 26-inch mark in order for it to fit crossways between a watercraft's gunwales. However, it may not be broken, snapped, or cut apart and then reassembled at any point between the two ends. Violation will result, at minimum, in denial of photo.

A crack that does not separate the measuring board into pieces and does not affect the measuring board's accuracy may be repaired and reinforced for use.

A slight flex in a measuring board resulting from a fish's weight is allowed; however, Competitors are prohibited from deliberately flexing or deforming a measuring board by exerting pressure or reshaping it. Any modification of a measuring board that results in misrepresentation of a fish's actual length is grounds for a competitor's disqualification from the event and may result in subsequent sanctions and penalties as described in Rule 11.



7.4) Competitors may share measuring boards.

7.5) A break of the measuring board's fence may be mended for use if the repair is rigid, flat and at a right angle to the measuring surface. The mended measuring board must be submitted to the Tournament or Series Director, personally or by two or more emailed photographs that clearly show (i.) the mended area and (ii.) a side view of the measuring surface and the fence. Violation will result in denial of photo.

7.6) Each competitor must use a mobile phone with camera or a digital camera or video camera capable of producing still photos with memory card and/or download cable to submit digital photographs.

When a Competitor's smart phone becomes inoperable or is lost, he may share smart phones with other Competitors, provided each Competitor logs into his own TMS account in order to submit photos of fish he caught. Competitor under the same circumstances may share digital cameras, provided each Competitor can clearly and positively identify photos of the fish he caught. Violation will result in denial of photo.

7.7) Only artificial lures and biodegradable artificial lures may be used. No live bait, preserved bait, or prepared bait will be permitted during competition, with the exception of pork strips or rinds. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

7.8) Only ONE casting, spin-casting, spinning, or fly rod and reel may be in use at any one time. A rod and reel is considered to be “in use” when a lure attached to it by a line is in or on the water. A hung lure (one snagged in an overhanging tree) that is not in or on the water is not considered in use and the attached rod and reel may be set aside while another is in use.

7.9) Nets and grippers (e.g., Fish Grip, Boga-Grip) may be used for landing fish during tournament competition, but grippers must not remain attached to the fish in photos. Violation will result in denial or disqualification of the photo.

7.10) If a Competitor breaks his line while setting the hook or retrieving a fish, he is allowed to make an attempt with the rod being used or by hand to secure the line and land the fish to be counted as legal. He may NOT hook the line with another lure, rod and reel, or other device. If a Competitor loses his rod and reel while landing a fish he MAY use another rod and reel to retrieve the lost outfit. If after retrieval, the fish is still hooked, it may be landed, photographed, and submitted as a legal fish. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

## 8.0 Watercraft & Propulsion

8.1) Watercraft acceptable for use in ABA Kayak Trail Competition are those manufactured and marketed as kayaks, for which paddling is the primary means of propulsion. Any other watercraft must be submitted to ABA Kayak Trail Administration for review and approval prior to use in competition. Unless approved as exceptions by ABA Kayak Trail Management, the following watercraft may not be used in competition:

- a. Gas- or liquid-fueled motorized or hybrid fuel/electric powerboats or personal watercraft
- b. Sailboats
- c. Jon boats
- d. Pirogues, coracles, and rowboats
- e. Dinghies and skiffs
- f. Float tubes, inflatable rafts, and rigid inflatable boats (e.g., Zodiac)
- g. Pontoon boats, pontoon-style pond boats, twin-hull watercraft, or similar.

Use of watercraft in competition other than those listed above as acceptable or exceptions will result in disqualification from the Event.

### 8.2) Watercraft propulsion is restricted to paddle, pedal, pole, or electric motor.

8.2.1) Unless specifically prohibited per individual event, use of a single electric propulsion unit per watercraft in ABA Kayak Trail-sanctioned competition is approved with the following restrictions:

8.2.1.1) Competitors must comply with all boating regulations pertaining to motorized kayak/electric-propulsion watercraft registration, use, and operating restrictions for the designated fishing area. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

8.2.1.2) Electric motor used to propel a watercraft:

- a. must be attached to the kayak in a safe manner for operation, and
- b. may not exceed the lesser of (a.) manufacturer’s labeled Maximum HP/Thrust Capacity, (b.) 3 HP, or (c.) 155 foot-pound thrust. Violation of either condition will result in disqualification from the Event. (This does not pertain to wattage capacity.)

**8.3)** Towing, transport or relocation assistance from another watercraft, including “mothershipping,” is NOT permitted except in cases of emergency, as when pulling a kayak from a danger zone or restricted area. Once the emergency has ended, the Competitor may resume fishing only if the watercraft was pulled no more than 100 yards from the danger zone. Violation will result in disqualification from the Event.

**8.4)** Trolling (i.e., lure(s) attached to a single rod and towed behind a watercraft while underway) is not permitted in ABA Kayak Trail Competition.

**9.0) Photo Standards—Digital photographs of each fish submitted to judges for scoring must meet these criteria:**

**9.1)** Unique—Each digital photo submitted in each Event must be of a different fish. Subsequent digital photos of the same fish submitted by the same Competitor in an Event will be denied.

**9.2)** Visible/Legible—Each photo must be in sharply focused and clear enough for a judge to:

**9.2.1)** Verify the correct Identifier Form and Event ID Code. Inability of the judge to verify will result in denial of photo.

**9.2.2)** Verify the fish’s condition. Violation will result in denial of photo.

**9.2.3)** Verify the fish’s length. Judge will score fish at the greatest length of which he is certain.

**9.2.4)** Verify whether the bass’ jaw or lip is in contact with the measuring board fence. Inability of the judge to verify will result in a penalty of 1 inch.

**9.2.5)** Except where covered by hand or fingers, the entire fish, from its mouth/jaw to the tip of its caudal (tail) fin, must be visible in photos. If either end is covered or cropped off, the photo will be denied.

**9.3) Centered**

— Camera lens positioned directly over the center of the fish’s body, which contributes to accurate measurement by judges. Photos taken at a low angle so as to obscure an open mouth may be denied or penalized at the Tournament or Series Director’s discretion.

**9.4) First-generation**

— Each digital photo must be a first-generation image (not a photo or screen-shot of another photo). Violation will result in denial of photo.

Photos submitted for scoring that, in judges’ opinions, contain evidence of a possible disqualifying infraction—including photos that appear to have been cropped or modified (e.g. image enhanced or filtered) in such a way as to obscure infractions—will be accepted with a score of 0.01 and a note indicating the nature of the infraction is emailed to the Competitor. The Tournament or Series Director will review all such photos and will make any disqualification ruling. The Tournament or Series Director may also contact Competitors to request submission of original un-cropped, un-filtered photos for further review and verification. Failure by Competitors to respond or refusal to submit the original photo will result in denial of the photo.

**9.5) Identifiable**

— Official ABA Kayak Trail Identifier Form above, below, or beside the fish (not covering any portion of the fish, unless attached to the Competitor’s hand or arm). Neither a hand-drawn form nor an image of the ABA Kayak Trail Identifier Form on a smart phone are permissible. Violation will result in denial of photo.

**9.6) Background**

— Competitor’s watercraft clearly visible in the photograph. Violation will result in denial of photo.

**9.7) Hand Position.**

**9.7.1)** In bass competition, hand or finger(s) may be in contact with the caudal peduncle (fleshy, scaled part

of the bass' body at the base of the caudal fin) but not covering or touching any portion of the caudal (tail) fin. Violation will result in a 1-inch deduction in score.

ABA Kayak Trail bass no-touch no-cover zones 5-10-2020

### **9.8) Mouth**

9.8.1) Bass' lip or jaw must be in contact with measuring board fence (bump board, upright), and the fence must be visible in the photo. Violation will result in denial of photo.

ii. In bass fishing competition, a closed mouth is preferred for uniformity of measurement. If judge considers the mouth to be open 1/4 inch or more, even if it is structurally unable to close, a one-inch penalty will be assessed.

**9.9)** Not "In-possession." In most states, though not all, unless a fish is secured by a restraint device or is placed in a holding container, state regulatory agencies do not consider it to be "in possession" by Competitors, so states' minimum length regulations do not apply for photo submissions. If Event takes place in a state where photographing a fish constitutes "possession," and a photo is submitted of a fish that does not comply with state size limits, the photo will be denied. (Refer to regulatory compliance, Rule 7.A.)

### **10.0) Scoring**

**10.1)** All photos must be submitted during the Designated event hours. There is time provided after the "Lines-Out" time to allow competitors to achieve adequate cell service. It is the competitors responsibility to have all photos submitted by the "Fish must be submitted by" time. Any photos not received by the judge by this time will not be included in the competitor's catch.

**10.2)** Fish length is determined by its caudal fin (tail fin) touching or crossing the manufacturer's quarter-inch mark (e.g., ridges, grooves) on the measuring board. If it falls short of a 1/4-inch factory mark, the length is rounded down to the next lower 1/4-inch mark that the bass' caudal fin actually touches or crosses. In reviewing photographs, judges will visualize as accurately as possible where a 1/4-inch factory mark would be if it extended the full width of a board and use that imaginary line to determine a fish's length.

**10.3)** In bass fishing competition, if any portion of a bass' caudal (tail) fin extends off the edge of a Measuring Board surface, the score will be determined by the highest 1/4-inch measurement reached or crossed by the portion of caudal fin on the Measuring Board. Any portion of the caudal fin extending off the edge of a Measuring Board is not considered in scoring. Alignment aids and attachments to a ABA Kayak Trail-approved measuring board (e.g., a cradle attachment for the Ketch measuring board) will not be considered part of a Measuring Board surface when determining a fish's length.

**10.4)** Tournament ranking, contingency awards, Angler of the Year Points, and Championship qualification shall be determined by the aggregate length of each Competitor's photos remaining on the Leader Board when judging has concluded and the Dispute Period has closed. Unless otherwise stipulated:

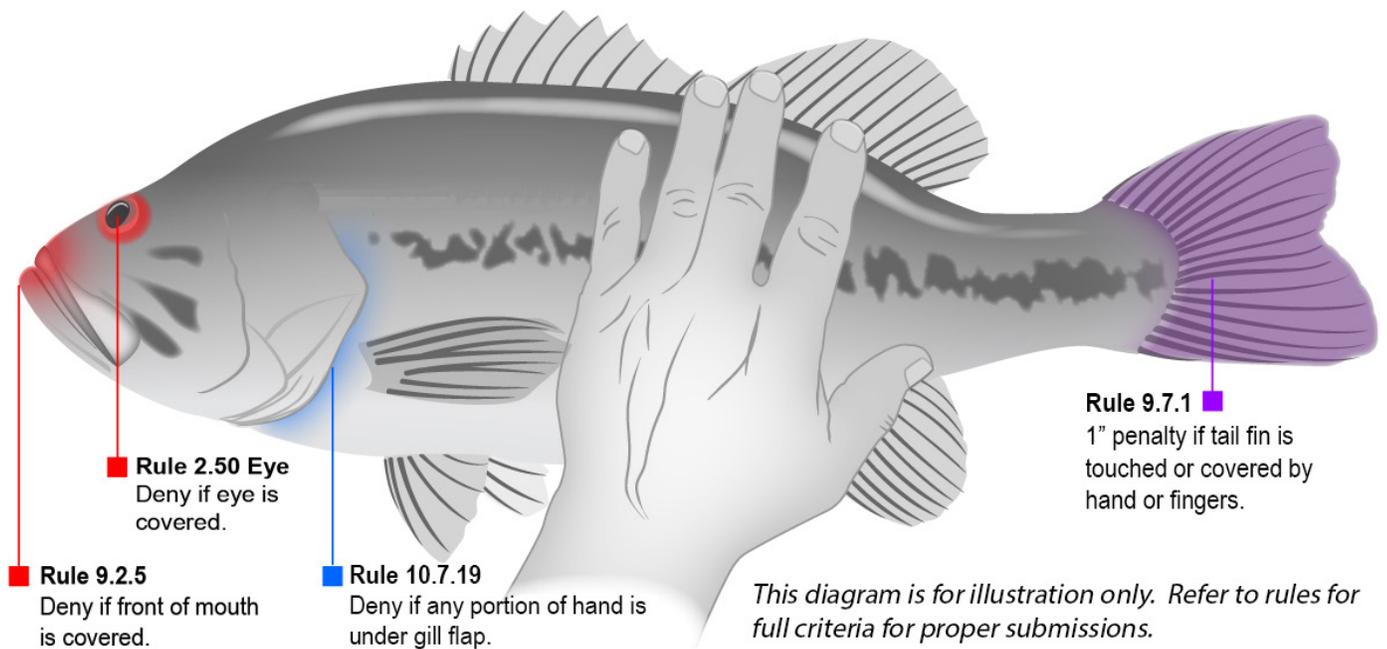
**10.4.1)** In one-day tournaments the scores of the five longest fish on the Leader Board when judging is complete will be combined to determine the aggregate score.

**10.4.2)** In two-day tournaments, the scores of the five longest fish of Day 1 and the five longest fish on Day 2 on the Leader Board when judging is complete will be combined to determine the aggregate score.

**10.5)** If a Competitor's photo is denied by a judge after end-of-competition, it may be automatically replaced by a previously submitted and auto-culled photo; however, no Competitor may submit a replacement photo after end-of-competition time.

**10.6)** In the event of a tie in score, the tied competitors' longest (highest-scored) fish are compared, and the

tie breaks in favor of the competitor with the longest (highest-scoring) fish. If the longest fish are equal, the second-longest fish are compared and determine which competitor wins the tie. If the second-longest are identical, the process repeats for each of the remaining fish. If all of the tied competitors' highest scoring fish are identical, then the tie breaks in favor of the competitor whose last Leader Board photo was uploaded earliest.



**10.7)** ABA Kayak Trail judges apply the following scoring criteria to adjust measurements, approve or deny photos, and to penalize photos by deducting points (length) or disqualifying a Competitor.

Item	Photo	Scoring Criteria	Penalty
10.7.1)	Photo	Blurry photo/length unclear: scored at the highest mark of which there is no doubt	n/a
10.7.2)	Photo	Blurry photo; completely unable to judge	Deny
10.7.3)	Photo	Appears to be second-generation (e.g., screen shot, photo of photo)	Deny
10.7.4)	Photo	EXIF data and other evidence substantiates photo taken outside of Eligible Water boundaries	Deny
10.7.5)	Photo	EXIF data, other evidence substantiates photo was taken outside of competition hours	Deny
10.7.6)	Photo	Multiple digital photos submitted of the same fish; unintentional violation	Deny
10.7.7)	Photo	Multiple digital photos submitted of the same fish; evidence indicates intentionally	Ban
10.7.8)	Photo	Competitor's watercraft not visible in photo background	Deny
10.7.9)	Photo	Entire fish not in picture	Deny
10.7.10)	Orientation	Fish positioned with right side of body toward camera; head pointing right and caudal fin left	Deny
10.7.11)	Orientation	Fish positioned with dorsal fins at bottom of photo, pelvic and anal fins upward	Deny
10.7.12)	Identifier	Official identifier Card missing, counterfeit, or incorrect for event	Deny

10.7.13)	Identifier	Identifier Card is lying on or covering any portion of the fish	Deny
10.7.14)	Identifier	Incorrect Event ID Code for Event or illegible Event ID Code	Deny
10.7.15)	Fish	Secured by restraining device (e.g., stringer, tape, or clip attached to fish)	Deny
10.7.16)	Fish	Photo violates state regulations regarding possession	Deny
10.7.17)	Species	Photo of any species or variety of fish other than that approved for the Competition	Deny
10.7.18)	Body	Photo Bass caudal (tail) fin tip fails to reach 12.00" line on measuring board	Deny
10.7.19)	Body	Any portion of a hand or fingers under the fish's operculum (gill flap or cover )	Deny
10.7.20)	Body	Finger(s) or hand touching or covering a bass' caudal (tail) fin	1.00"
10.7.21)	Body	Entire caudal (tail) fin entirely lifted away and out of contact with the measuring board	Deny
10.7.22)	Body	Left eye covered; not visible in photo	Deny
10.7.23)	Body	Fish appears to have been snagged, snatched, or hooked in the body rather than mouth	Deny
10.7.24)	Body	Fish appears to be dead, mutilated, frozen, mangled, or otherwise damaged	Deny
10.7.25)	Body	Fish appears to have been mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered to increase its length	Deny
10.7.26)	Mouth	Bass lip or jaw clearly not touching measuring board fence (upright end plate)	Deny
10.7.27)	Mouth	Unable to ascertain with certainty that bass lip is touching measuring board fence	1.00"
10.7.28)	Mouth	Mouth open 1/4 inch or more, even if it appears to be structurally unable to close completely.	1.00"

## 10.8) SCORING

**10.8.1)** ABA Kayak Trail events will award 100 points for first place, 99 points for second place and so on at each event. Ten (10) "Show-up" points will be awarded to each angler in attendance at each ABA Kayak Trail event. The "Angler of the Year" title will be determined by the total points from all events in a single region.

### 10.8.2) ABA Kayak Classic Qualification

— All anglers that fish in a minimum of 5 events in a single region are qualified to compete in the American Bass Kayak Classic at the end of that season. An angler may "buy-in" to a maximum of one event per season. To "buy-in" to a tournament, the angler shall pay the full basic entry fee plus all fees that would be paid at that event (no options required). This will give the angler an entry into the event. The angler shall receive the "participation" points only for that event which will be added to their total points in that region. The angler must still qualify under the same qualifying criteria as all other angler.

## 11.0 Penalties

**11.1)** In the event of a rule violation, the Tournament or Series Director may impose such penalties as deemed appropriate, including without limitation, the following:

**11.1.1)** Reduction of score (length) as described above or determined by the Tournament or Series Director

**11.1.2)** Loss of catch for the day or up until the violation has been remedied

**11.1.3)** Disqualification from the tournament in question

**11.1.4)** Any additional penalties determined by the Tournament or Series Director including but not limited to monetary fines and/or reduction of Competitor of Year points.

Subject to the dispute and appeal processes set forth below, the Tournament or Series Director's decisions on violations are final.

**11.2)** Following a review of evidence, a determination by the ABA Kayak Trail Tournament or Series Director and/or Chief Operations Officer of cheating or conviction of fraud will result in permanent revocation of ABA Kayak Trail Membership, suspension from all American Bass competition and ABA Kayak Trail-affiliated Events, and series, and revocation of all ABA Kayak Trail Social Media privileges. The findings will be published on a password-protected ABA Kayak Trail Members-only web page.

**11.3)** Competitor acknowledges that (i.) the use of polygraph tests may be necessary to verify compliance with rules and to settle disputes and (ii.) entry constitutes acceptance of this requirement and agreement to abide by its conclusion. Refusal by a Competitor to submit to a polygraph test is grounds for immediate disqualification from the ABA Kayak Trail Event and prohibition against future participation in any ABA Kayak Trail-affiliated Event. Results of a polygraph test will not be the sole determining factor in a ABA Kayak Trail Management Review of a Competitor's eligibility for awards and qualification for future participation but may be one of several factors considered in such review.

**11.4)** ABA Kayak Trail Tournament or Series Director or Chief Operations Officer shall

**11.4.1)** Have the discretion to determine the need for a Polygraph examination.

**11.4.2)** Be responsible for (i.) selecting an independent expert to administer the polygraph test, (ii.) establishing, in consultation with the expert administrator, the scope of the questions that may be asked during the test examination, and (iii.) interpreting the results.

**11.4.3)** Have sole responsibility selecting the location, date, and time of the test nearest ABA Kayak Trail headquarters with respect to all concerned parties schedule and travel cost.

**11.5)** The Competitor shall:

**11.5.1)** Make himself/herself available at the location selected by the Tournament or Series Director or Chief Operations Officer.

**11.5.2)** Cooperate in all respects with such test.

**11.6)** Competitors may be selected at random to undergo polygraph examinations during or following ABA Kayak Trail competitive Events.

## **12.0 Awarding of Prizes**

**12.1)** Prizes and numbers of positions paid out are addressed per event. Amounts paid per rank are subject to change based on participation (lower value for fewer entries and higher value for more entries) and sponsor provision.

**12.2)** Prizes will be processed after all photos submitted for scoring have been judged, the results reviewed by a separate panel, and disputes have been resolved.

**12.3)** Product prizes (e.g. kayaks, paddles, propulsion units) may require additional processing or delivery time. This allows competitors some flexibility in selection of model, color or style. Product selection may be limited to specific features and models.,

Recipients of sponsor product awards must fill out and submit a Prize Claims Form, found on the ABA Kayak Trail Website.

**12.4)** Competitors are responsible for all applicable taxes on both cash and merchandise awards. Failure to meet those obligations may result in disqualification from all future ABA Kayak Trail events. All prize recipients whose cumulative total for the year adds up to \$600 or more must fill out and turn in an IRS Form W-9 including name, address, social security number, signature and date. These are used to prepare IRS 1099 forms for distribution in January.

### **13.0 Sale of Prizes**

— No prizes won participating in ABA Kayak Trail Events may be advertised or promoted for sale on American Bass Social Media. Violation of this rule will result in ineligibility for all future events and forfeiture of qualification status.

### **14.0 Safety**

**14.1)** During competition, every Competitor must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment, (e.g., light source, whistle or other audible signal device, Coast Guard-approved, chest-type life preserver [PFD]). See [www.uscgboating.org/](http://www.uscgboating.org/).

#### **14.2) PFD Usage**

— At all times while actively engaged in competition, except as described below (Rule 15.C. PFD Wear Exceptions), Competitor must wear a fastened USCG-certified vest-style PFD (inherent flotation or inflatable) or float jacket. A belt-style PFD, even one that deploys as a vest, is not permitted during Competition. When an infraction, as described above, is verified by the Tournament Director, the Competitor is disqualified from participation in the Event.

#### **14.3) PFD Wear Exceptions**

— Competitor assumes responsibility for all consequences of removing his PFD. Competitor may cease competition and remove the PFD while his watercraft is beached, anchored or adrift only if doing so creates no unsafe condition. Competitor must put on and securely fasten the PFD before going underway or resuming competition.

If all of the following conditions exist, Competitor may briefly remove his PFD while afloat (anchored or adrift) in order to change, add or remove articles of clothing:

**14.3.1)** No fishing lines are in the water; and

**14.3.2)** The watercraft is not underway; and

**14.3.3)** Weather and water conditions permit one to do so safely

When finished changing his attire, Competitor must immediately put the PFD back on before going underway, fishing, or engaging in any other competition-related activity.

**14.4)** The Tournament or Series Director has the right to postpone or cancel the start of an official tournament day because of adverse weather conditions or other factors that would jeopardize Competitors' safety. Tournament waters may also be restricted at any time because of bad weather.

**14.5)** In the event of weather emergencies that pose an imminent threat to Competitors, the Tournament or Series Director may terminate Competition before the scheduled end-of-competition time. An Early Termination Announcement with an adjusted end-of-competition time will be broadcast to Competitors via email and group text messaging and will also be posted on the TMS site and social media sites. The Announcement will also specify an adjusted report-in time and location. If safe to do so, upon receiving the Announcement, Competitor should make his way to the specified location at that time. Competitor is required to stop fishing as soon as he receives the Early Termination Announcement. No photos

of fish caught after the adjusted end-of-competition time may be submitted for scoring; however, to accommodate those seeking shelter immediately, Competitor has up to 15 minutes after the Adjusted End Time to submit a photo of any bass caught before the adjusted end-of-competition time/photo submission deadline.

**14.6)** In the event of an emergency situation, Competitor should call 911 first and then notify tournament officials as soon as possible.

**14.7)** Use of alcohol or drugs (other than those purchased over the counter or prescribed by a licensed physician) by any Competitor during an Event will not be tolerated and will be cause for automatic disqualification from this and all future ABA Kayak Trail tournaments. No alcoholic beverages or other non-prescription stimulants or depressants shall be allowed in watercraft during competition days. Chemical substance addiction or abuse, conviction of a felony or other crimes involving moral turpitude, or other conduct reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation and/or for disqualification after circumstances are reviewed by ABA Kayak Trail's Chief Operations Officer. Any disqualification, suspension from, or other disciplinary action regarding any tournament or fishing organization, shall be grounds for rejecting any application for participation in a ABA Kayak Trail tournament, and/or disqualification from a ABA Kayak Trail tournament, after circumstances are reviewed by the ABA Kayak Trail Chief Operations Officer.

**14.8)** Night Tournaments that take place between April 1 and September 30, in which boats leave or return after 10:30 P.M., must comply with the following six stipulations in order for the event(s) to be eligible for Event Liability Insurance coverage provided through the North American Tournament Association's policy.

**14.8.1)** All participant boats must be equipped with working Coast Guard-approved running lights. Running lights must remain on in accordance with the governing state regulations. [Note: Kayaks are categorized by USCG as "oar-driving craft" and meet USCG requirements by having "at hand" an "electric torch" (a.k.a. flashlight) that can be used to signal other boaters. While anchored, all watercraft must display a 360-degree white light. Some states impose additional requirements.]

**14.8.2)** The ABA Kayak Trail Event Coordinator or Tournament Director shall have predetermined the availability of cell phone or radio coverage to assure reasonable communications in the event of an emergency. [Note: All competitors should make sure their cell phone numbers are entered in the TMS and the Tournament Director should have a list of all competitors with cell phone numbers for texting or calls.]

**14.8.3)** The ABA Kayak Trail Event Coordinator or Tournament Director shall have on hand the contact information for emergency rescue and medical services and must maintain the ability to make contact at all times during the tournament.

**14.8.4)** The governing authority, as required by law or ordinance, shall be notified of the tournament date and hours.

**14.8.5)** Competitors are restricted to an on-the-water speed limit of not more than 35 miles per hour between sunset and sunrise.

vi. The Tournament or Series Director shall have in place a system of accounting for the return of all participants. [Note: This includes not only an end-of-competition check-in but also a way for competitors who leave early to notify the ABA Kayak Trail Event Coordinator or Tournament Director.]

## **15.0 Competitor Conduct**

— Competitors participating in any ABA Kayak Trail sanctioned event must observe the applicable rules for the Competition and must conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects favorably on the sport of American Bass, ABA Kayak Trail, its members, officers or representatives, tournaments or sponsors. Competitors are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, integrity, safety and conservation in support of the sport of kayak bass fishing, especially when in the vicinity of non-Competitors who may be on or beside Eligible Water. Any Competitor who violates these principles, intentionally violates ABA Kayak Trail

Competition Rules or regulations (attempts to commit fraud) or behaves in ways that reflect unfavorably upon ABA Kayak Trail efforts to promote fisheries conservation, clean waters and courtesy, may forfeit tournament winnings, face suspension from future ABA Kayak Trail sanctioned events, be permanently banned from competition, or any combination thereof deemed appropriate by ABA Kayak Trail.

## **16.0 Disputes and Appeals**

**16.1)** If a Competitor wishes to dispute a rules violation penalty, a judge's scoring decision, a Tournament or Series Director's decision or other action that materially affected the Competitor's ranking or prize eligibility, he must use the ABA Kayak Trail Dispute & Appeal Form on the ABA Kayak Trail Website [[www.kayakbassfishing.com/ABA Kayak Trail-dispute-appeal/](http://www.kayakbassfishing.com/ABA-Kayak-Trail-dispute-appeal/)] to submit a dispute within 24 hours (one full day) following completion of Event judging. The dispute must include the following:

**16.1.1)** Event title, location, and date

**16.1.2)** Description or identification of penalty imposed, or condition being disputed

**16.1.3)** Reference to pertinent rule

**16.1.4)** Reason for dispute and requested action

Except for situations involving fraud or other law violation, any disputes submitted after the 24-hour dispute deadline will be reviewed without affecting the outcome of an event. No change in rank or reward will result from disputes submitted after the deadline. Only Competitors in the Event where the disputed action occurred may submit disputes. Disputes must be handled privately. All parties directly involved will be provided a copy of the dispute. The Tournament or Series Director (for judge's rulings) or Chief Operating Officer (for Series Director rulings) will review the Competitor's claims, thoroughly investigate the disputed decision, and issue a ruling.

**16.2)** The Competitor who filed the dispute may appeal the dispute results. Appeals of dispute results must be presented to the ABA Kayak Trail Chief Operations Officer (for Tournament/Series Director's dispute rulings) or President (for COO's dispute rulings) using the ABA Kayak Trail Dispute & Appeal Form within 24 hours from the time and date of ruling. An Appeals Processing Fee of \$100 must be paid to ABA Kayak Trail through the ABA Kayak Trail Online Store. The ABA Kayak Trail executive handling the appeal will impanel an appeals committee comprised of one ABA Kayak Trail staff member not involved directly in directing or judging the Event and two ABA Kayak Trail Members who were not Competitors in the Event. Appeals hearings shall take place within seven (7) business days from the date of receipt of the written appeal, and all parties must make themselves available at prescribed time of hearing. The appeals committee will submit its findings and recommendations to the ABA Kayak Trail Executive handling the appeal, whose decisions are final. If the final ruling is in the Competitor's favor and reverses or nullifies a dispute ruling, then the entire Appeal Processing Fee will be refunded; however, if the ruling stands, then the Fee is forfeited.

## **17.0 Public Comments**

**17.1)** The favorable public reputation of ABA Kayak Trail as a sanctioning organization in the sport of kayak bass fishing, the integrity of its officials, and the reputation of its media channels are valuable assets and tangible benefits for ABA Kayak Trail. Accordingly, it is an obligation of Competitors to refrain from comments in public forums and social media or to the news media that unreasonably attack or disparage the integrity of Kayak Bass Fishing tournaments, tournament officials, sponsors, fellow members, fellow Competitors or the ABA Kayak Trail organization. Competitors are encouraged to express themselves and have the right to question the rules officials. Responsible expressions of legitimate disagreement with ABA Kayak Trail policies are encouraged, as opposed to attacks upon the integrity of the rules or officials. However, public comments that a Competitor knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of American Bass, ABA Kayak Trail officials, ABA Kayak Trail members or sponsors, may result in disciplinary action.

17.2) Sponsor contributions will not be devalued by disputes or disagreements in public forums or social media platforms.

17.3) Publicly disputing a judge's ruling or any dispute or appeal decision by a ABA Kayak Trail Tournament Director, Series Director or ABA Kayak Trail Executive will result in participant receiving a warning for a first offense. A repeat of the offense will result in disciplinary action up to disqualification from the current Event and permanent termination of eligibility for future ABA Kayak Trail Events, even if previously qualified. This provision is not intended to discourage legitimate disputes but to ensure that a fair and unbiased approach is used, and the approved challenge and appeals processes are followed in determining the best possible outcome.

## 18.0 Unavailability and Force Majeure

— ABA Kayak Trail will use reasonable efforts to hold the Event; however, under no circumstances will ABA Kayak Trail be held responsible for unavailability caused by circumstances beyond ABA Kayak Trail's control, including flood, fire, hurricanes, earthquakes or other "acts of God," acts of government, civil unrest, acts of terror, strikes or labor problems nor will any Event Registration be cancelled, altered or amended once the Event has commenced on the basis of circumstances beyond ABA Kayak Trails reasonable control.

20. Compliance with Laws — This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Tennessee. All rights and obligations of the ABA Kayak Trail and the Competitor under this Agreement are subject to all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. These terms and conditions shall be deemed revised to conform to applicable statutes, rules and regulations. ABA Kayak Trail may modify the terms and conditions stated herein at any time in its sole and absolute discretion. Competitor shall be bound by the modified Agreement and agree that no other modifications shall be enforceable. This Agreement constitutes the entire Agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior agreements between the parties, whether written or oral. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision hereof shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision. The waiver of any breach shall not constitute a waiver of any subsequent breach.

## 19. Waivers and Releases

19.1) Name and Likeness Release — By registering for this ABA Kayak Trail Fishing Event, the Competitor grants to American Bass the right to use all photographs, likenesses, stories, accounts, details of Competitor contributions, exploits, interviews, bloopers, and information pertinent to the ABA Kayak Trail Event, as well as any video footage, photographs gathered at the Event, for marketing and promotional purposes. This release is granted without expectation for additional compensation upon submission of Event Registration.

B. Waiver and Release of Liability — As a condition of participation in a Competition, and by virtue of registering for the Competition, each Competitor agrees to accept the terms and condition of the ABA Kayak Trail Waiver and Release of Liability Agreement (below). This Agreement absolves American Bass, its officers, staff, and volunteers from responsibility and threat of litigation in the case of injury, loss, or death sustained by a Competitor in the Event. A printed copy of the ABA Kayak Trail Waiver and Release Form (below) is available at the Event HQ Check-in Table and must be signed and on file with American Bass before a registrant is eligible to compete.

---

### ABA KAYAK TRAIL WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY AGREEMENT

#### READ BEFORE REGISTERING FOR ANY ABA KAYAK TRAIL COMPETITIVE EVENT

In consideration of being allowed to participate in any way in the ABA Kayak Trail, and its related competition

and activities, I, the undersigned (or registrant), being at least 18 years of age, acknowledge, appreciate, and agree that:

1. I affirm that my participation in any ABA Kayak Trail Event is voluntary and declare that I am physically fit and capable to participate in such; and
2. I acknowledge that kayak fishing participation and competition involves certain inherent dangers, and hazards; that the risk of injury from the activities involved in this event is significant, including the potential for permanent paralysis and death, and while particular skills, physical fitness, equipment, and personal discipline may reduce this risk, the risk of serious injury does exist; and,
3. I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my participation; and,
4. I willingly agree to comply with the stated and customary Terms and Conditions for Participation. If, however, I observe any unusual significant hazard during my presence or participation, I will remove myself from participation and immediately bring such to the attention of ABA Kayak Trail Officers or Tournament Directors; and,
5. in full recognition and appreciation of the dangers and risks inherent in such activities, I, for myself and on behalf of my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS AMERICAN BASS and its owners, officers, managers, officials, volunteer event staff, agents and/or employees, other participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, event service and technology providers, and, if applicable, owners and lessors of premises used for the activity ("Releasees"), with respect to any and all injury, disability, death, or loss or damage to person or property, whether arising from the negligence of the releasees or otherwise, to the fullest extent permitted by law, and I hereby waive, release, and forever discharge Releasees from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, or causes of action, for costs, loss, expenses, or damages to personal property, or personal injury, or death, which may result from my participation in the ABA Kayak Trail Event.

### **COVID-19**

The World Health Organization has declared the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a worldwide pandemic. Due to its capacity to transmit from person-to-person through respiratory droplets, the government has set recommendations, guidelines, and some prohibitions to which American Bass (the "Organization") adheres.

### **COVID-19 Acknowledgements**

*In consideration of my participation in the foregoing, the undersigned acknowledge and agree to the following:*

1. I am aware of the existence of the risk on my physical appearance to the venue and my participation to the activity of the Organization that may cause injury or illness such as, but not limited to Influenza, MRSA, or COVID-19 that may lead to paralysis or death.
2. I have not experienced symptoms that of fever, fatigue, difficulty in breathing, or dry cough or exhibiting any other symptoms relating to COVID-19 or any communicable disease within the last 14 days.
3. I have not, nor any member(s) of my household, traveled by sea or by air, internationally within the past 30 days.
4. I did not, nor any member of my household, visit any any area within the United States that was reported to be highly affected by COVID-19, in the last 30 days .
5. I have not been, nor any member(s) of my household, diagnosed to be infected of COVID-19 virus within the last 30 days.

### **COVID-19 Declarations**

*Following the pronouncements above I hereby declare the following:*

1. I am fully and personally responsible for my own safety and actions while and during my participation and I recognize that I may be in any case be at risk of contracting COVID-19.ice
2. With full knowledge of the risks involved, I hereby release, waive, discharge the Organization, its board,

officers, independent contractors, affiliates, employees, representatives, successors, and assigns from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever, directly or indirectly arising out of or related to any loss, damage, injury, or death, that may be sustained by me related to COVID-19 while participating in any activity while in, on, or around the premises or while using the facilities that may lead to unintentional exposure or harm due to COVID-19.

3. I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Organization from and against any and all costs, expenses, damages, lawsuits, and/or liabilities or claims arising whether directly or indirectly from or related to any and all claims made by or against any of the released party due to injury, loss, or death from or related to COVID-19. I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Name (Print)

x \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signing

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Age

American Bass  
12340 Seal Beach Bl. Ste B120  
Seal Beach, CA 90740  
(714) 423-4532