
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BLACK BASS TOURNAMENT

ORGANIZERS

Anglers are encouraged to follow the recommendations for Tournament Anglers. Tournament organizers and directors are encouraged to exercise the following to maximize fish survival after a weigh-in:

- Avoid traditional weigh-in angling tournaments when air temperatures exceed 100°F, or surface water temperatures exceed 85°F. We recommend either catch-photo-release (immediate release), early morning, or night tournaments during summer months.
- Use dip tanks (e.g., line tanks, holding basins) when possible. They allow a place for anglers to refresh the water in their holding bags while waiting in line for the weigh-in. This helps to maintain water temperatures and oxygen levels for the fish, reducing the stress on the fish.
 - Partially change water in the tanks throughout the day to remove accumulated dissolved solids. Water should also be replenished periodically throughout the day if there is loss from dip bags or splashing. Ensure water is either lake water or de-chlorinated.
 - Water temperatures in dip tanks should be maintained 10°F cooler than the surface temperature of the lake to reduce thermal stress. During warm summer months, usually April through October, ice and oxygen should be used in tanks.
 - Dip tanks should be operated to recirculate the water continuously in order to obtain maximum water exchange and high oxygen levels. This can be done by using bottled oxygen with individually regulated diffusers or water agitators. Each air hose should have an air stone with a small weight so that air is diffused from the bottom of the tank instead of the water surface.
 - If air pumps are used in place of recirculators, pumps should be rated for the volume of water. Each tank should have its own pump. Back up pumps should be available in case of pump failure.
 - Use only **non-iodized** salt in dip tanks to help reduce fish stress. Do not use water softener salt or iodized table salt (3-4 cups per 150 gallons of water).
 - If dip tanks are used, angler contestants should have perforated or mesh bags. The holes in the bag allow free exchange of aerated water.

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- Require anglers to utilize holding bags free of holes or tears to transfer fish if dip tanks are not used or available.
 - Stagger angler fish weigh-ins to reduce the number of anglers waiting with their fish, especially in warmer months.
 - After weigh-in, release fish into different areas of the lake. Dispersal will minimize concentrating tournament caught fish around launch ramps. A live release boat is an excellent way to achieve this. If using a live release boat, we recommend:
 - No more than 1 pound of fish per gallon of water in the livewell. (Example: If you have a tank that holds 300 gallons of water, you can hold 300 pounds of fish.)
 - **Non-iodized** salt should be added to the tanks (3-4 cups or 24 ounces per 150 gallons).
 - Livewells should be operated to recirculate the water continuously in order to obtain maximum water exchange and high oxygen levels. This can be done by using bottled oxygen with individually regulated diffusers or water agitators.
 - Maintain water temperatures on the release boat at 10°F cooler than the surface water temperature. Monitor temperatures every 15 minutes.
 - If a release boat is not available, at a minimum, have anglers release fish some distance from the weigh-in site to avoid stacking fish in localized areas.
 - Promote to your anglers that when holding a bass, grasp the lower jaw. This usually immobilizes the fish, provides a good, firm hold and allows the angler to display or observe the fish. Never bend the fish's head down or try to hold the fish horizontally by the lower jaw.



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