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## **2023 ETXLA TOURNAMENT RULES**

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### **I. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY**

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- A. Any female with a minimum age of 16 and in good health, and whose membership is current, is eligible to participate as a boater or co-angler of the East Texas Lady Angler (hereinafter ETXLA) trail. The following exceptions apply:
  - B. Any female angler, who turns 16 during the calendar year with which she wishes to compete on the ETXLA trail, can participate as a co-angler ONLY, with the written consent of their legal guardian.
  - C. All anglers must sign a liability release/waiver form and a publicity and likeness release prior to the start of competition.
  - D. All anglers are required to display the ETXLA logo on the front of their jersey. In the event, they do not have a jersey, they may display the logo by wearing a patch, visor, hat or shirt with the ETXLA logo.

### **II. REGISTRATION AND ENTRY FEES**

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- A. Registration will open as soon as the season schedule is released, and anglers may register for a single tournament or for all three tournaments.
  - B. Any angler cancelling more than 30 days of a tournament date will receive their total entry fee back. Any cancellations less than 30 days of the tournament date will incur a \$50 cancellation fee and the remaining portion will be rolled over to the next event.
  - C. An angler's registration time stamp holds their spot in the tournament for which they are registering.
    - 1. Boaters and Co-Anglers pairings and order will be randomly selected for all tournament events.
  - D. Failure to register within 30 days prior to tournament date will result in a \$50 late registration fee.
  - E. Payments may be made in one of the following manners.
    - 1. Cashier's Check, Money Order, Personal Check- to be made payable to ETXLA and sent to Renee Key Johnston, 410 Boone Ct. Deer Park, Texas 77536; ATT: ETXLA;
    - 2. Credit Card/Debit Card- online registration @ <http://www.ReelGirlsFish.net/ETXLA>.
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F. Any co-angler who is on the waiting list and finds a non-current ETXLA member to enter the tournament as a boater will be automatically entered in that event.

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G. ETXLA membership fee is \$50 (existing LBAA members and students are \$25).

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H. All entry fees will be \$225 for Boater and \$125 for Co-Angler.

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H. ETXLA will pay a portion of all angler fees that qualify for the ETXLA Championship through the three regular season tournaments.

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### **III. INSURANCE**

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A. During practice and competition days, no competitor may operate a boat unless that contestant has documented proof of a minimum of \$300,000 per occurrence boating liability covering the boat being used in the tournament.

B. Proof of insurance must be with the boat being used and must cover the competitors using that boat. (Specifically, the Declaration Page)

C. Tournament officials will conduct random insurance checks with boat numbers identified at the tournament briefing

D. Failure to provide the appropriate insurance documentation prior to take-off of the first day of competition will result in the angler being detained until appropriate insurance documentation is provided.

### **IV. TOURNAMENTS**

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A. The ETXLA season will consist of three (3) regular season tournaments; and the season ending with an ETXLA Championship Tournament.

B. Angler of the Year Awards points will be based on the total points accrued for all three (3) events during the season.

C. Angler's finishes during the regular season will count toward qualifying for the ETXLA Championship and for Angler of the Year honors. The top ten (10) in AOY Points qualify for the ETXLA Championship.

D. If the 10-boat field is not met by the above rules, the next angler in each division in the AOY point totals will qualify; and so on until the field is filled.

E. If the tournament schedule must be revised due to circumstances beyond our control, the schedule and rules will be revised to reflect the most current circumstances. (i.e., Hurricane, Pandemic, etc.)

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### **V. TOURNAMENT RULES**

Interpretation of the following ETXLA rules will be left exclusively to the tournament officials. The decision of the tournament officials will be final in all that matters with infractions on any rule that can potentially results in disqualification.

#### **A. PRACTICE/ PRE-FISHING**

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1. There will not be any official practice period or “dead water” period. Anglers must be off the water in time to check in at the registration/briefing meeting by 5:00 PM. (Unless another time has been designated for regular season events.)
2. Anglers may not obtain information related to locating or catching fish from anyone other than fellow competitors within 5 days prior to the tournament and extends through the conclusion of the tournament. This includes but is not limited to information that spouses, parents/guardians and approved practice partners may garner during the same time frame. Only information from public sources may be obtained. Competitors may share information with one another based upon their own findings.
3. No licensed guides and/or paid guides may be used or in the anglers boat within 15 days of the tournament.
4. No flyovers of tournament waters, and no scuba diving, skin diving or snorkeling in tournament waters during practice or tournament.
3. Once the tournament begins, and until the close of the scales on the final day, competitors may not obtain or share information related to locating or catching fish with anyone other than fellow competitors.

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## **VI. OFF LIMITS**

- A. The host marina waters are off limits for all events, as are all areas designated by state, Federal and local authorities.
- B. Tournament officials may designate additional areas as off limits when deemed necessary.
- C. All anglers must be off tournament waters the day of registration in time to check-in at the registration and briefing location no later than 5:00 PM local time. The exception to this will be to test an engine due to repairs and must be approved by the tournament director in advance.

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## **VII. CELL PHONES, RADIOS AND TRACKING APPS**

- A. During competition, a competitor may not use a CB radio, a VHF marine band radio, a cellular telephone, or any other type of communication device, for the purpose of locating or catching fish. (i.e., Text, photos, Maps, GPS Coordinates, Smoke signals or the like)
- B. During competition, competitors are permitted to transmit by radio, telephone, or any other type of communication device, only in the event of an emergency.
- C. If so equipped, competitors may listen to public broadcasts or marine-band radios.
- D. Cell phones may be used as a means of documenting the anglers own fishing details and for capturing rules infractions.
- E. APPS that allow anglers or an anglers’ family member to track their location may only be used in case of an emergency.
- F. APPS, including those for navigation may be used by the boater during practice and competition. They may not be used by co-anglers without the expressed consent of the boater before the day on the water begins. Use without expressed permission, can result in disqualification.

## VIII. TOURNAMENT HOURS

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- A. The tournament will begin at "SAFE LIGHT" with boats launching in order of boat number received from the random draw and returning at 3:00 PM local time.
- B. The tournament director has the authority to change the start and ending times of a tournament day for safety reasons.
- C. Hours are based upon the time zone in which the launch of the competition takes place. It is the responsibility of the competitor to know and observe these times.

## IX. COMPETITION

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- A. Boats will launch from the designated ramp unless otherwise indicated by the tournament director. The boater always has control of the boat.
- B. The boater fishes from the front of the boat and the Co-angler fishes from the back of the boat. Co-anglers can be on the front deck to land a fish, to get unhung or net a fish.
- C. Exceptions, if the boater chooses, she may have the Co-angler run the trolling motor in the event of an emergency. However, all fishing must stop for the duration of the emergency.
- D. Any boater that, in the judgement of the tournament director operates the boat in such a manner as to unfairly handicap their Co-angler shall be disqualified.
- E. At no time may the boater request that the Co-angler not fish.
- F. In view of the large expense involved in operating and maintaining a tournament bass boat, it is suggested that the Co-angler share, at minimum, the cost of gas and oil for the competitors. This courtesy fee is to be provided in cash only.
- G. All competitors must abide by all state game regulations and be in possession of a valid fishing license for all waters fished.

## X. TACKLE

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- A. Only artificial baits may be used. Exception to this will be pork trailers.
- B. All bass must be caught in a legal and sporting manner. No snagging.
- C. If an angler is sight fishing for bedding bass, the hook must be completely inside the mouth and verified by her partner for the catch to be legal.
- D. Each competitor may only use one (1) rod at a time. No rods over eight (8) feet in length.
- E. Trolling by combustion engine is not permitted.
- F. No competitor may leave the boat to catch or land a fish.
- G. A net for use in landing the fish safely and for emergency signaling is a highly recommended piece of tackle. If a boater does not have a net in the boat, a co-angler has the chance to bring her own net.

H. The use of the Alabama rig, or similar umbrella type apparatus is prohibited from use in all ETXLA events.

I. All rules apply regarding tackle during practice as well as during competition, for the competitor and practice partner.

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## **XI. LEGAL LIMITS AND CULLING**

A. A limit of five (5) bass for the boater and three (3) for the co-angler may be weighed in.

B. Minimum fish length to be determined by local lake regulations.

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C. Bass will be measured with their mouth closed on a “Golden Rule”. The tail may be fanned or pinched for length.

D. A short fish brought to the scales will result in a one (1) pound penalty, plus the loss of the short fish.

E. Dead fish will result in a penalty of eight (8) ounces. Dead fish cannot be weighed in as a big bass.

F. No boaters will possess more than five (5) fish in their live-well at any time and no co-angler will possess more than three (3) fish in their live-well at any time.

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G. Anglers must cull immediately upon catching their first fish over the legal limit for their division.

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H. The culling of dead fish is prohibited.

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## **XII. BOAT/MOTOR/SAFETY**

A. Boats must be at least 16’ in length or more.

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B. Boats must have functional and properly aerated live wells, in place to adequately maintain two (2) separate limits of fish of legal length alive.

C. Motor size not to exceed 250 hp and must match the US Coast Guard maximum horsepower rating.

D. Boat design must provide adequate back deck and overhead space for the co-angler to make normal casts and move about safely.

E. All boats must be equipped with an approved type of operable ignition cut-off/kill switch and lanyard, which must be attached to the driver any time the combustion engine is running. The only exception to this rule will be during the loading of a boat onto the trailer when a single individual is involved, and this is the only means of properly securing and seating the boat on the trailer. Only one manufactured lanyard may be used.

F. Every boat must have all required Coast Guard safety equipment and a functional bilge pump.

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G. Safe boating conduct must be always maintained.

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H. Each contestant is required to wear a Coast Guard approved personal floatation device securely fastened at all times the combustion engine is operating.

I. Running lights must be operational and on at launch and be used during all times that visibility is reduced.

J. Tournament officials reserve the right to make any necessary adjustments to the rules due to safety considerations such as dangerous weather/water conditions.

K. It is highly suggested that the boater has some type of seating in the back deck available if so, needed by the co-angler.

L. Boaters are recommended to have the U.S. Coast Guard inspect their boats once every three years. The exception to this is a boat that has sustained damage. That boat must then be re-inspected by the U.S. Coast Guard prior to the next event in which the angler would use the boat.

### **XIII. EMERGENCIES**

A. Competitors shall always remain with their partners in the boat during the tournament.

B. In case of a breakdown, one competitor may remain with the boat and the other may return in another tournament competitor's boat with both catches of fish to the weigh-in.

1. It is at the discretion of the tournament director to allow fish of the broken-down anglers to be weighed. (i.e., availability of a rescue boat.)

2.. It is at the discretion of the tournament director to allow the fish of the assisting anglers to be weighed, when towing another boat to safety will make them late to weigh-in.

3. The tournament director may send a volunteer boater to bring in one or both teams' fish to the weigh in.

C. The signal of distress will be the waiving of the dip-net. Any competitor who witnesses the distress signal is asked to stop and render assistance. The dip net is not a mandatory piece of equipment but is highly recommended.

D. Staff has the leeway to designate an appropriate means of keeping a co-angler on the water in the case of an emergency where a boater is unable to finish the competition.

F. In the event of a medical emergency, either competitor should dial 911 first, before contacting the tournament director/desk.

### **XIV. WEIGH-IN PROCEDURES/WEIGHT VERIFICATION/ LATE PENALTY**

A. Weigh-in will be in boat number order. Anglers and Co-Anglers will remain together during the weigh-in procedure.

B. Bags for weigh-in may be limited to preserve the health of the fish.

C. If presented, anglers must sign verification that their fellow competitors catch for the day was legally caught and that the weigh slip is accurate.

D. Competitors who are late to check-in, will be penalized at a rate of one (1) pound per minute up to 15 minutes, at which time they will be disqualified.

## **XV. TIES**

A. Ties at the end of a tournament will be broken by the following procedures:

1. Largest one day weight during the competition.
2. If still tied, the largest overall number of fish.
3. If still tied, the angler with the largest overall weight on the previous day.

B. Ties in point standings for determining the top ten (10) anglers who qualify for the end of the year Championship Tournament and/or Angler of the Year will be broken by:

1. The largest one-day weight during the regular season.
2. The largest overall number of fish.
3. The largest single tournament weight.
4. The largest overall weight on the last day of regular season competition.

## **XVI. SPORTSMANSHIP/ANGLER CONDUCT**

A. All anglers and tournament staff are expected to maintain the highest level of professionalism. This includes official meetings and banquets and is especially important when these events occur in public places.

B. Each contestant is expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, and conservation.

C. It is not acceptable for the person backing your boat into the water to cut in line or to back the boat into the water before the angler is in the area and ready to load the boat.

D. The consumption of, or under the influence of, drugs and alcohol during competition hours is strictly prohibited.

E. No contestant may fish within one hundred (100) feet of another competitor who is anchored using an anchor, a shallow water anchoring system or spot lock on the trolling motor.

F. No hole sitting by competitor or non-competitor to aid another competitor will be allowed. Violators will be disqualified.

G. Each competitor is required to report to the Tournament Director immediately any violation or infraction of any tournament rules.

H. Failure to report violations, or suggestions to another competitor that they violated these rules, or false verification of weigh-in forms, will be cause for disqualification.

I. Protests must be submitted in writing within 15 minutes of the closing of the scales.

J. OFFICIAL PROTESTS MUST BE FILED IN WRITING AND BE ACCOMPANIED BY \$100 PROTEST FEE. ALL PARTIES OF INTEREST WILL BE PROVIDED A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT. UPON A RULING THAT THE PROTEST IS LEGITIMATE THE PROTEST FEE WILL BE REFUNDED.

## **XVII. MEDIA / PUBLICITY**

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A. By willfully participating in the ETXLA tournament, all participants grant, the unconditional, royalty free, perpetual right and license to use their name, voice, and photographic likeness in connection with the ETXLA tournament promotions, television shows, DVD's, video streaming, and/or articles and press releases.

B. This agreement extends to all current and future media events that the ETXLA may wish to pursue.

C. Participants agree that they are not entitled to receive any royalties or other compensation in connection with such use.

D. It is the expectation that competitors refrain from comments to the media, on social networking sites, or other media, regardless of formats, that unreasonably attacks or disparages the integrity of the tournament, tournament officials, sponsors, fellow anglers, or the tournament organization.

E. Violation of any or all the above rules can result in penalties up to disqualification or banning from future tournament registrations

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## **XVIII. POLYGRAPH**

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A. All participants in the tournament are subject to polygraph at the discretion of the tournament director.

B. Anglers agree to abide by the results of the polygraph test.

C. Failure to agree to a polygraph will result in disqualification from the event.

D. Anglers who fail a polygraph test will be disqualified.

## **XIX. SCORING**

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### **A. All Tournaments**

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1. The first-place angler in each division will be awarded 300 points.

2. The first ten (10) placed will be scored in five (5) point increments.

3. Places 11-20 will be scored in four (4) point increments.

4. Places 21-30 will be scored in three (3) point increments.

5. Places 31-40 will be scored in two (2) point increments.

6. Places 41 and below will be scored in one (1) point increments.

B. Anglers not catching any fish during competition will be awarded one-half of the awarded to the last place angler weighing in fish. Whole numbers only.

C. Co-anglers may fish one regular season tournament as a boater and still have their points accumulate on the co-angler side of the event. (Reasoning: To build up confidence and encourage them to move to the professional side of the event in the future. In most cases, this occurs on an angler's home lake where they are more comfortable.)

D. If a boater moves to the co-angler side for two regular season events due to boat issues, her angler of the year points will be calculated in the co-angler division.

E. If a co-angler, fishes two regular season events as a boater, her angler of the year points will be calculated in the boater division.

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## **XX. ETXLA CHAMPIONSHIP**

A. The ETXLA CHAMPIONSHIP will consist of the top ten (10) anglers of the regular tournament season, in their division.

B. If the top ten (10) anglers of the regular tournament season are not able to fish, then the next angler in the AOY Points will be included; and so on until the field is full.

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## **XXI. ETXLA CHAMPIONSHIP**

A. All regular season rules apply to the ETXLA Championship unless otherwise stated in this section.

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## **XXII. END OF YEAR RECOGNITIONS**

A. Anglers with the highest total points, who meet the criteria set for each category will be recognized for their accomplishment.

B. Points will be accumulated during three regular season events.

C. The recognitions are:

1. ETXLA Championship Qualifiers – Top ten (10) anglers in each division with the highest total accumulated points qualify for the ETXLA Championship. ETXLA will pay a portion of the ETXLA Championship tournament fee.

2. Angler of the Year- Top Boater and Co-Angler with the highest total accumulated points from all three (3) events will earn AOY and qualify for the LBAA Classic.

3. LBAA Classic Qualifiers - The top Boater and Co-Angler of the Year will qualify to fish the LBAA Classic. ETXLA will pay a portion of the LBAA Classic entry for each angler to attend and represent ETXLA.

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## **XXIII. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS / EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

A. The owners of the ETXLA reserve the right to make rule changes during the four year to address needs and situations that warrant such changes.

B. Rule changes made will ensure the safety of the members of the ETXLA members and staff.

By signing this document, I adhere to the above rules and regulations put forth by the East Texas Lady Angler staff.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_