

# MLF RSA Shoot Out

## TOURNAMENT RULES

Arabie Dam, June 14 – 16, 2024

These rules supersede any previously published set of rules for this event and intended to further the best interests of bass fishing in general and not to benefit any individual, team or competitor. Please make sure you understand the rules, regulations and procedures.

### 1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT

Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the MLF RSA Tournament Committee. Decisions of the MLF RSA Tournament Committee are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant agrees to report any rule violation to the tournament organiser immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification.

Protests are to be made in writing within 15 minutes after the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day and handed to the tournament director in person. Protest forms are available on request from the tournament director.

### 2. GENERAL

All anglers enter the MLF RSA Shoot Out tournaments voluntarily and at their own risk. The tournament proprietor, the tournament director, MLF RSA Tournament Committee, and tournament sponsors and all resort proprietors and their employees at all levels, are indemnified from any personal liabilities whatsoever that may be incurred by any person while travelling to, or from, or during the tournament.

Fishing is from boats only. The emphasis is on team (rather than individual) competition and only one team per boat is allowed. A team consists of maximum two persons on one boat, but a team may however consist of just one person.

Anglers are not allowed to keep the official weigh-bags, tags or boat flags used at the tournaments.

### 3. DATES & VENUES

The MLF RSA Tournament Committee cannot be held responsible if dates and venues need to be changed because of influences beyond their control. Notice will be given by notifying participants via the website, social media networks, e-mail or SMS. At the discretion of the tournament organiser, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or cancelled due to unsafe weather, or water conditions, or civil unrest in the area.

### 4. TOURNAMENT PRIZES\*

All prizes are based on a full field (a full field is regarded as 45 boats per event with two anglers per boat), and Prize winners have to be at the prize giving ceremony to receive their prize. No prizes will be kept for collection and non attendance will result in a forfeiting the prize, and trophies.

In the event of a tie, the team who had the heaviest bag on day three will have the benefit. If there is still a tie, the team who had the heaviest bag weight on day 2.

#### FIRST PRIZE\*

The first-place winners (consisting of two anglers) will win one pro-angler plus one co-angler slot to represent MLF South Africa at the MLF Toyota Series Championship in the USA in 2025. (See caption #25 [TERMS & CONDITIONS\\*](#))

### 5. PARTICIPATION

Participation is open to any angler, irrespective of creed, colour, race or affiliation. No angler under the age of 16 is allowed to participate. The tournament director reserves the right of admission to any participant.

Any person who, in the judgment of the tournament director is disabled or handicapped in such a manner as to unfairly hinder his or her skipper or co-angler partner or compromise his or her safety or the safety of his or her skipper or co-angler partner may not be eligible to participate.

### 6. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION

The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not

permitted after the entry deadline for each tournament. The sharing of tournament winnings with non-contestants in exchange for information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters is strictly prohibited and will be cause for disqualification from the entire tournament. The purchasing of, or bartering for, fishing locations from another contestant is strictly prohibited and will be cause for both contestants to be disqualified from the entire tournament.

Contestants may not ask for and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone, including publicly available sources (quasi-public websites, blogs and/or social media pages set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals, either private or public).

Flights over tournament waters, including drones, are not permitted beginning with the start of the off-limits period, extending through practice and competition days.

#### **7. REGISTRATION & PRE-TOURNAMENT MEETING**

The tournament entry fee (per team) must be paid up front. (The entry fee exclude launching and accommodation fees.)

There will be no refunds of the entry fee unless an event is permanently cancelled. In the event a participant needs to cancel an entry (for any reason), the MLF RSA Shoot Out will move the entry fee forward to a subsequent event.

Entries must be made on the official entry form, which will be available on our web site and at registration. (Please write clearly!) By filling in the entry form, submitting and participating in the MLF RSA Shoot Out, contestants agree to abide by all the rules and have acknowledged and have accepted the indemnity at the bottom of the entry form.

Each contestant must register in person at the designated site.

All contestants have attend the pre-tournament meeting to record flights, takeoff time, check-in time, off-limits areas, and any other relevant tournament rule information. Non-attendance at a briefing will not be accepted as an excuse for ignorance of the arrangements and/or rules in the event of a complaint or objection being raised.

<https://www.mlfsouthafrica.com/online-entry-form>

#### **8. STARTING POSITIONS**

All team numbers will be randomly drawn out of a hat on a first come first serve basis during registration. The number drawn will be valid for the duration of the tournament.

No contestant may be on tournament waters for the purpose of locating fish or testing boats or equipment or be on potential fishing waters after the opening of registration except during tournament hours.

Each day there will be four flights and starting positions during each flight will be according team numbers. Every registered team must collect their corresponding boat flag number for display when boats are lining up for the start.

Skippers must separate themselves on the water and each co-angler must display his team's starting number so that all skippers can arrange themselves for a single boat start. Teams will only be allowed to set off once the team number is called and a GREEN flag has been raised. No team may set off whilst the RED flag is raised. Teams failing to comply with the starting procedure will be disqualified immediately and no tournament entry fees will be refunded. When a team's number is called out, the team must idle out and is only allowed to go on the plane from the point the organiser has appointed.

There will be only one official checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one official check-in point in the afternoon.

Failure to go through boat check in and checkout in the morning or failure to check-in at the check-in point will result in disqualification.

#### **9. BOAT & HORSEPOWER REGULATION**

All boats participating must be fitted with a minimum of 30hp (thirty horsepower) outboard engine, must be propeller driven and be a minimum of three meter (10ft) in length. No kayaks or jet skis will be permitted. Each boat must have all required safety equipment and must be equipped to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated live-well of some sort. All vessels should be equipped with an emergency ignition shut-off device that should be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is in operation.

The use of generators, other than solar or wind-powered generators, is prohibited in contestant boats during tournament hours on all competition days.

#### **10. BOAT OPERATION & EQUIPMENT FAILURE**

Contestants must leave and return to the official checkpoint by boat. In the event of equipment failure or emergency, there will be only two permitted methods of returning to the official check-in:

(1) by both partners remaining in their boat and being towed, or

(2) by one partner boarding the boat of another tournament contestant with their entire catch kept separate in a weigh bag. Under these two conditions the contestant's catches may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties or dead-fish penalties. **Note:** *Equipment failure does not allow for flat batteries, or running out of fuel*). Contestants who elect to return to the official check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day's catch. A 100 meter radius from the weigh station must be treated as a no-wake zone.

Boats are not allowed to beach directly at the release point. There is a "No Fishing Zone" directly at the weigh station as indicated by the tournament organiser. Teams who do not comply will be disqualified. Tournament officials reserve the right to board any participating boat before, during or after the tournament.

#### 11. **LIVE FISH**

The MLF RSA Shoot Out is a catch, weigh and release event. Every effort must be made to keep bass alive through the use of a properly aerated live-well of some sort. The tournament proprietor and all its sponsors recommend the use of live-well additives that promote the healthy return of bass to their natural habitat. (No stringers, keep nets or fish nets are allowed).

Any fish presented to the weigh master with a white circle in the eye or a fish, or obviously dead, or a fish that is not gilling or finning within (10) ten seconds on a wet towel in the shade; will be regarded as "dead" and will not be weighed.

#### 12. **PERMITTED FISHING METHODS**

Any team can only start to fish after they have gone through the starting gate. Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the rod in hand. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. All fishing must be conducted from the boat and only artificial lures may be used, with the exception of pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Only one wet rod with one main line and one lure / bait per angler at any given time is allowed. The rod must be hand held (no rod holder may be used). Rigs like the double rig where multiple lures / baits are attached to one main line are not allowed, except for commercial available "Alabama" rigs. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. Trolling is defined as operating the combustion engine or using the trolling motor to extend a cast or lengthen a retrieve. All bass caught must be hooked inside the mouth. Creating feeding spots by dumping bait either artificial or natural, or any other attractant in order to attract fish to a specific location is prohibited. Tournament ethics, courtesy and good conduct are unwritten "golden rules" and core responsibilities of all anglers on all levels.

#### 13. **PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS**

Contestants may fish anywhere on tournament waters available to the public and accessible by boat, except areas designated as "off limits" or "no fishing" by local or provincial officials or within 45 metre of a competitor's boat. Non-contestants (and/or spectators on boats) are also not allowed within 45 metres from a contestant's boat. At no time may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs after the start of registration to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament.

#### 14. **CHECK-IN**

All tags must be returned and be back at the weigh station, on the tag board before the cut off time for the particular flight. Even though a team's bag could have been weighed but their tag is not on the board at the time, the team will be deemed late and their catch for the day will be disqualified. Any team who is late solely due to them rendering emergency assistance to another team may, at the discretion of the tournament organiser, have their catch weighed if they provide satisfactory proof of such assistance given.

#### 15. **LIMITS**

All live-wells must be empty prior to commencement of any fishing session. The daily limit is FIVE fish per boat and each team may not have more than the daily limit in their possession at any time during official event hours. Anglers found possessing more than the tournament limit per team per day will be disqualified. There is no minimum size limit on bass to be weighed.

#### 16. **WEIGH-IN**

The weigh-station will be open through the day, but once the flights start to come in - then only teams in that particular flight may weigh their fish. No culling at the weigh station will be allowed.

All fish to be weighed have to be brought to the scale within a suitable weigh bag filled with adequate water. Any fish brought lip-landed to the scale will NOT be weighed!

Only a team member may handle his team's catch to be weighed and presented for scoring by a tournament official. No angler may allow any fish caught by him to be added to the score of any other team. In such an event both teams shall be disqualified and subject to disciplinary procedures. Each team's catch must be verified by the signature of a team member. Failure to have a verified signature may result in disqualification of that day's catch. The team's boat flag must be weighed along with their fish. Weight will be measured in kilogram.

Any fish weighed before the weigh-in time will be noted on the team's score card and once it has been noted it cannot be removed for any reason whatsoever. Winners are determined by the heaviest cumulative weight from days 1, 2, and 3.

## 17. PENALTIES & DISQUALIFICATIONS

There will be two penalty levels:

### \* **Minor offences (-250 gram penalty per bag)**

- Going on the plane within a no wake zone.
- Smoking in the weigh-in line is not allowed

### \* **Disqualification**

- Violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the rules for the tournament rules.
- Failure to wear an approved personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any kind of mind-altering substance during registration or tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure and prize giving.
- Anglers possessing more than the tournament limit of five fish per team per day will be disqualified.
- Teams who beached directly at the release point.
- No angler may hand to, or exchange, any article with any other boat and, excepting in an emergency situation, may not leave the boat during the fishing session.
- The intentional introduction of materials that cause an increase in weight/mass of a fish by an angler.
- Intentional damaging of fish (fin clipping, illegal tagging, or disfiguration of any kind).
- A tag that is not on the tag board by the closing time for the particular flight will result in the day's catch being disqualified. (In case of a lost tag the team must identify itself to the tournament organiser and inform him of a lost tag before the dedicated cut-off time, to avoid disqualification.)
- Fishing in an off limits area.
- If any team or team member receives more than one complaint, the team (or team member) will be disqualified for the rest of the series.
- In the event that a team is found guilty of cheating, the team members will be immediately banned from all SA BASS, Cast-for-Cash® or MLF tournaments and legal action will be taken against the team members.

## 18. MEDIA COMMENTS, PUBLIC ATTACKS

The favourable public reputation of the tournament, the tournament proprietor, tournament organisers and staff, tournament sponsors as sanctioning organizations in the sport of fishing, the integrity of its officials, and the reputation of its media properties are valuable assets and tangible benefits for SA BASS and MLF South Africa. Accordingly, it is an obligation of competitors to refrain from comments to the news media that unreasonably attack or disparage the integrity of tournaments, tournament officials, sponsors, fellow members, fellow anglers, SA BASS or Major League Fishing (MLF). Responsible expressions of legitimate disagreement with SA BASS and/or MLF South Africa policies are encouraged as opposed to attacks upon the integrity of the rules or officials. However, public comments that an angler knows, or should reasonably know, will harm the reputation of SA BASS, MLF, its officials or sponsors shall be considered conduct unbecoming an angler and will result in disciplinary action.

## 19. SPORTSMANSHIP

All contestants are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy and conservation and to conduct them in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, the tournament, sponsors, the sport of fishing and efforts to promote the sport. Any other words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavourably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set in this rules.

In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined in these rules, the tournament director shall have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete by returning the entry fee, to

disqualify a contestant or impose any penalty outlined in these rules. All disputes will be handled and finalised immediately after each tournament. The organisers may at their discretion co-opt persons to assist in settling disputes.

**20. MISBEHAVIOURS**

- a. Fighting, pulling pushing and threatening each other and abusive language will not be tolerated, this includes officials as well.
- b. Deliberate or intentional actions of a member, official, competitor (including the competitor's family, relatives or friends), publishing negative comments towards fellow competitors, administrators, officials or tournament partners on social media, using foul language (including officials) towards spectators, officials, competitors, tournament partners or employees of the venue. The competitor (official) may be banned from future MLF RSA Shoot Out events if found guilty by a special committee appointed to investigate the matter. The decision of the special committee is final.
- c. The intentional introduction of any material, including vegetation, that cause an increase in weight/mass of a fish by any angler shall be deemed just cause for the disqualification of the team concerned. Any foreign object protruding in any way from the fish must be safely removed and not count towards the weight. For the avoidance of doubt such foreign objects will include partially swallowed or regurgitated prey / food and any fishing tackle.

**21. COMMUNICATION and SOCIAL MEDIA**

Contestants may not use mobile communication devices, including but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc., to communicate with anyone about locating or catching fish on tournament waters during tournament hours. Mobile communication devices may be used during tournament hours to communicate with the tournament director. At no time during tournament hours may contestants read or discuss social media posts from other contestants.

**22. LOGO DISPLAY & MEDIA COVERAGE**

During all days of competition any and all tobacco logos are prohibited and may not be worn or displayed.

Anglers may wear their own apparel every day, but the tournament director reserves the right, in his sole discretion, to prohibit any angler to compete whose apparel is found to be offensive.

Only official sponsors and benefit providers are entitled to publicity at tournaments as jointly agreed. No competitor may offer publicity, guaranteed or incidental, on behalf of the tournament director in exchange for sponsorship.

In the event of any television coverage of any event, the tournament proprietor owns the rights to all camera footage. The tournament proprietor is under no obligation to remunerate, whether it be cash or any other means, what so ever, to any competitors should they appear in the production.

**23. TRUTH VERIFICATION**

Each contestant agrees to submit, by signature on the tournament entry form, to a polygraph or voice stress analysis examination and to abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass an examination will result in disqualification from the tournament. Truth verification tests will be used at the tournament director's sole discretion and the decision based on the findings will be made solely by tournament proprietor. All costs for such a polygraph test will be for the competitor's account, despite the outcome.

**24. POWER OF DISQUALIFICATION**

Under any of the above rules, tournament organisers are empowered to disqualify any competitor, after due consideration of the facts, deemed to have broken these rules at their level and/or apply disciplinary measures as defined in these tournament rules. The tournament organiser may recommend the banning of any angler for serious breach of rules. In the event of a dispute the tournament director may make use of a polygraph test for both anglers on the boat.

**25. TERMS & CONDITIONS\***

- a. The first prize is awarded according the following terms & conditions:

\*Not all costs are covered - see 25b. *"For the person's own account"*

\*All prizes are based on a full field, and

\*The costs for the first prize will be covered pro-rata the number of entries in case there are less than a full field, or/if the Rand/Dollar exchange rate weakens above ZAR23:US\$1 when flight and accommodation bookings are done.

\*If the winning team in the MLF RSA Shoot Out has only one angler competing, that angler will receive a single "pro-angler" slot. The "co-angler" slot will then be awarded to the runners-up.

\*The USA slots cannot be exchanged for prize money.

\*Flights – Economy class as arranged by MLF South Africa from Johannesburg International Airport to the USA, and only after each angler's valid US visa has been received.

\*Accommodation – The tournament organiser will arrange and provide group accommodation for four nights during the official tournament days. (Any accommodation not with the RSA Team, and/or outside the tournament period is for each person's own account.)

\*The cut-off date for providing a valid USA passport is 30 July 2025

**b. For the person's own account:**

USA visa application, vehicle hire & fuel, boat fuel, US fishing license, spending money, any domestic travel cost to and from Johannesburg International Airport, boat hire outside tournament hours, and any accommodation outside the tournament period and/or not with the RSA Team.

26. **CAPTION**

The captions at the beginning of each paragraph are intended to facilitate convenience in referring to the various rules. The captions are not part of the substance of the paragraph and should not be used in construction of any paragraph or of this overall set of rules

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