



To: IHSA Bass Fishing State Qualifiers
From: Christopher Schwarz, IHSA Assistant Executive Director
Date: May 23rd, 2025
Re.: IHSA Bass Fishing State Finals

Congratulations on advancing to the IHSA Bass Fishing State Finals. This is truly a special year to qualify for the state tournament because it's the first year the bass fishing state series has expanded to a regional round. This is also the inaugural year for the bass fishing state finals to be held at beautiful Lake Shelbyville. Your team will forever be part of this historic year in IHSA Bass Fishing. We hope that you enjoy your experience and create lifelong memories with your school community.

We are fortunate to have two weeks between the sectional round and the state finals to prepare and organize before we all descend on Lake Shelbyville. I wanted to cover a few logistical items to help alleviate the stress associated with planning and preparation.

Housing:

The City of Shelbyville has provided a complete list of housing on the IHSA website. If you have any questions regarding hotels, restaurants, and other accommodations, please contact Rachel Wallace, City Clerk, at 217-774-5531.

Boat Safety Checks and Pre-Fishing:

- A. No coaches, boat captains or team members of any qualifying school may be on the water at Lake Shelbyville on Monday-Wednesday, June 2-4, 2025. (Terms and Conditions, VIII X)

- B. Thursday, June 5, 2025, will be the official pre-fishing day for the state finals. This is not a required event. Schools who choose to pre-fish will be able to have their boat checked between 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. before launching. Boats that can't make this timeframe will be able to check their boats by the US Coast Guard throughout the afternoon hours. Boats will need checked before launching. Schools can only put into the water one (1) boat for each qualified roster, and the boat must be captained by a district employee or board approved coach/captain. (Terms and Conditions, VIII. Tournament Rules, X). Do not bring extra boats expecting to put them on the water on pre-fish day. All pre-fishing must be concluded by 4:00 PM on Thursday, June 5th, regardless of what time the safety check was conducted.

- C. A second boat check will be available on Thursday evening, June 5, from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at the 9th Street Launch/West Dam Access parking lot. Boats that are not checked on Thursday will be checked before launching on Friday.



D. The boat safety check on Friday morning will be held at the High Water Boat Ramp, near the West Dam Access. Please review the safety check map in the online state qualifier packet.

Tournament Launch Site:

The launch site will take place at the 9th street launch, referred to as “West Dam Access” located near the Army Corp of Engineers Visitors Center.

Boat Rosters and Substitutions (Terms and Conditions VIII. Tournament Rules, R.):

Schools may change boat rosters from one round of the state series to the next, using only those students, coaches, and boat captains who are listed on the original list of participants.

Launch, Park, and Loading Service:

There will be volunteers on-hand to help with the launch/loading process and parking boat trailers. These volunteers are local club anglers with years of experience launching and loading bass boats. If you are interested in this service, please fill out and sign the waiver form and return to Greg Harkins HarkinsG@shelbyville.k12.il.us.

Boat Release Order:

The IHSA will announce the release order for both days of the state finals no later than noon on Friday, May 30, 2025. The IHSA will randomly assign each boat a release number, and boats will go off in numerical order from 1-60 on Friday, June 6, 2025. On Saturday, June 7, 2025, the boats will release in reverse order of Friday, from 60-1. On each day of the state finals, boats will have a pre-determined return time based on the order of release, so schools will want to make sure they are aware of their return time to avoid any penalties.

Coaches Cell Phone:

To help with the administration of the tournament, it is required that coaches provide their cell phone number to the IHSA. The numbers will only be used to communicate with coaches and/or boat captains. A phone-relay system will be used to communicate with boats in the event the lake needs to be evacuated. Before launching on Friday, June 6, 2025, schools will need to provide this information to the IHSA.

Pre-Tournament Operations/Safety Meeting: A mandatory, virtual pre-tournament operations/safety meeting will be held on Monday, June 2, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will last an approximate hour and will cover important tournament information, including procedures for lake evacuation in the event of severe weather. Coaches are encouraged to have boat captains also view the meeting. A link to the meeting will be sent to schools with qualifiers no later than Friday, May 30th, 2025.