

## **Bassmaster High School Community Club and Grade Requirements 2024.**

BASS Nation held its 2023 meeting for State Presidents and Youth Directors the week of 10/16/2023 in conjunction with the BASS Nation National Championship.

There were common discussions about the way that BASS Nation conducts their organization and there were several points of focus for the high school and junior level that BASS is going to put more emphasis on in 2024. We felt it necessary to provide this information to avoid confusion.

The biggest thing to come out of the meeting was a focus on “Community Club” requirements and eligibility. This is nothing new. Years ago BASS saw that many schools in each state chose not to participate in the sport of fishing. In turn, many young anglers who wanted to fish were missing out on the opportunity. BASS saw the need for a way for those anglers to participate so the “Community” club was born, and guidelines set.

These guidelines have been in place for years. BASS is requiring that any school who denies a club the ability to form under their institution, sign a BASS official denial letter, that confirms that the school does not have an affiliated club and releases students who attend the institution to either form a community club outside of the school’s administration or join a community club within reasonable distance from the angler’s home address.

**All students from a given institution that does not have a school affiliated club, per BASS’ requirements, must be members of the same community club.**

When a potential group comes to us wanting to form a community club, we discuss the requirements and who can and can’t be part of their club. Understand that many school “affiliated” clubs are also community clubs. They have faculty liaisons that interact with the club and watch conduct and grades for club members. We treat those clubs, with administration liaisons, like school teams.

Those admins also work with the school to get excused absences for teams to fish on official practice day for a given tournament.

For reference, all Junior Bassmaster clubs are considered “community” clubs. Although some have the name of their school, and sometimes use the same admins, they are community clubs and school affiliation doesn’t come into play.

High School clubs on the other hand are very different. Any given “High School” affiliated club can be either a school club or community club connected to the school. The same rules apply to both. If the school club/ school community club is formed specifically for an individual institution, only students who attend the named school, or home-schooled students living in the district may be a member of that club, if it’s approved by the club board and school administrator.

When an angler whose school does not have a club, wants to join a community club, they must get the denial letter signed by their institution proving that they don’t have a BASS affiliated club already in existence that serves their students.

Any student who attends an institution that has an affiliated club established for their school, may not join any other community or school affiliated club, per BASS' guidelines.

Once again, this has been in place for many years, but BASS has not enforced the submission of denial letters as they felt they should. That changes for the 2024 season.

Team admins and coaches, if you are over a community club with anglers from different high schools, you will need a denial letter from each angler's school verifying that they don't have a school affiliated club or team. If it's found that an angler does in fact attend a school that has a team or club who has joined another community club, they will need to be removed from the roster and informed that they need to join their school club or team.

You don't need a denial letter for each angler but do need one from each school or institution that has an angler in the community club, who attends said school.

Now, why is this important and why is it done this way. Our interpretation is that BASS promotes a team concept. Just like any other sport, you are bound by the talent at your institution. It's done this way with most high school sports and BASS treats fishing the same way.

It's better to comply with this requirement up front than to discover at the end of the year, and a possible state championship or national championship berth is earned, then denied, because the individual team did not conform to the requirements.

As the state level organization, it's our duty to monitor this requirement and enforce it as well. We do not make these requirements. We have been educated about the requirements and educate our club admins as to what is allowed or not.

Our database tracks anglers. When a change comes up, we will know it and it's our job to find out why and make sure that if there was a change of club, there can't be an existing club at the angler's current school, and if there isn't, a denial letter must be submitted to BASS via the state level organizations like ours.

We check this at the state level the best we can but we're sure that it's possible for some to fall through the cracks. We rely on our checks and balances as well as your honesty. Please understand that if your team qualifies for the championship, or fishes a BASS High School Open, BASS will check this, and it will be caught.

Here is the link to the BASS denial letter.

<https://www.bassmaster.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Official-Denial-letter.pdf>

The first paragraph of the denial letter discusses the date and who submitted the request to form a school affiliated club. Note that this can't be completed if the school has an affiliated team or community club.

Paragraph two can only be filled out if there is not an existing club. Permission to form a club can't be given because a club already exists for the school. At that point, the requirements for the denial letter can't be met and the ability to form a club or join a club outside of an individual angler's institutional club is not allowed per BASS' requirements.

This was once again confirmed by Glenn Cale, the BASS Nation, National Youth Director on 10/27/2023.

The information below was provided as part of the 2024 rules concerning Community clubs

### **2024 Bassmaster High School Rules**

#### **2. PARTICIPANTS AND ELIGIBILITY:**

*B. This tournament is open only to current members of official high school clubs, recognized by said high school or an official community club. Students must belong to the same official high school club or official community club to compete as a team in this tournament. Multiple clubs from the same institution, including community clubs, are not allowed. Community clubs can incorporate multiple institutions. Students from those institutions must all be a member of the same community club.*

### **Grade requirements 2024**

BASS has put an emphasis on anglers taking care of their work in the classroom in alignment with all high school athletic programs. This has always been a focus of LYBN and is discussed with schools, team coaches, and team admins when needed.

Although we/they (BASS) don't set a minimum grade point average, we recommend that clubs follow LHSAA minimum requirements of a "C" average, determined by the local institution.

It is the responsibility of the club/teams to monitor and enforce the GPA of all anglers and hold them to an acceptable standard for the institution and club.

LYBN will support the requirements of an institution and uphold requests for disciplinary actions when warranted.

It is our belief that holding student anglers to a minimum standard has been effective with improvement of academic and conduct performance. We also understand that some participating anglers have special needs or have scholastic "accommodations". Those will be taken into consideration for individual student anglers' academic performance.

Thanks for your understanding in this matter.

LYBN Staff