

Fishing for Freedom

Fishing for Freedom 2017 has been scheduled for Friday, October 13th at Killeen Convention Center (Dinner) and Saturday, October 14th, 2017 on Lake Belton (BLORA) in central Texas! Take A Soldier Fishing, Inc. in conjunction with The Directorate of Family Morale, Welfare & Recreation's Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area, and Fort Hood, will host soldiers from all branches of the military, both active duty and retired in a Free Bass Tournament!

The 2017 Fishing for Freedom Event is sponsored by Triton Boats, Mercury Motors, Academy Sports & Outdoors, Texas Boat World, Line-X of Harker Heights, Marine Outlet, Lendlease Community Fund, Cloud Construction Perry Cloud, Tanner Roofing Eddie Tanner, Environmental Holding Group LLC Jonathan Ervin, Yester Construction, and many other generous sponsors.

According to Cliff Brown, Owner of Texas Boat World in Harker Heights, "Fishing for Freedom is one of the ways that our community says thanks to those who have served and those that continue to put their lives on the line for our country. Our desire is to offer a guided fishing experience, in a competitive setting, to interested soldiers." Rick Smith, President of the Central Texas Marine Association and Owner/General Manager of Marine Outlet in Temple said, "The only thing a soldier needs to participate is the desire."

Texas bass fishermen along with community, state and national sponsors will provide the resources. Up to 300 hundred bass fishermen from across the nation will volunteer to take a soldier fishing. Teams will be paired by draw. The potential for a "full field" will place 300 boats and 600 fishermen on Lake Belton during the Fishing for Freedom event! Each soldier will fish with a volunteer bass angler, including some pro anglers, who will provide the boat, fuel and also fishing equipment if necessary. Tournament fishing will begin on Saturday, October 14th at "Safe Light" as determined by the tournament director. Due to the large number of entries expected for this tournament, teams will be placed in "flights" and depart the tournament site to head to their fishing location one-at-a-time based on the team number drawn.

The official Fishing for Freedom online entry application will be available at midnight September 1st. There are still sponsorship opportunities available in support of this Fishing for Freedom event.

For information contact: Cliff Brown, Texas Boat World at (254) 699-9151, or send an [email](#). Rick Smith, Marine Outlet, 254-773-9931, rick@marineoutlet.com.

Entry Rules

Rule Changes/polygraph:

Interpretation of these rules shall be left exclusively to the tournament directors. In the event of a rule violation, the tournament directors may impose such sanctions, as deemed appropriate, including but not limited to, disqualification and/or forfeiture of prizes. The decision of the tournament directors shall be final in all matters. Protests for any rule infraction must be made in writing within 30 minutes of the official check-in time. All contestants are subject to a random polygraph examination. Failure to submit or pass this examination will result in immediate disqualification.

Participants and Eligibility:

Participation is open to all individuals who are 18 years of age or older or who have served or currently serving in our armed forces; however each team must consist of at least one active duty service member or retired veteran. Teams will be paired in a random selection of boater and Non boater. Proof of age to the satisfaction of tournament officials is the responsibility of the competitor. Any competitor answering yes to the question: "Will you enter as a boater?" will be expected to make that boat available for the tournament. Anglers must sign the release of liability form and present their entry form to the tournament director prior to the tournament. Tournament officials reserve the right to choose for any reason not to accept the application for entrance of any individual. Any person entering a tournament who is a boater and under 18 years of age must have the signature of his/her parent or legal guardian on the entry form. Unless they have served or are currently serving in our armed forces.

Professionals/Guides:

May take a soldier fishing and compete in the event.

Practice/Off-limits/Permitted Fishing Locations:

There will be no official practice period before the tournament. Tournament director shall establish tournament waters at the tournament briefing and define any **off-limits** areas including locking from established tournament waters. Fishing on tournament waters is not permitted: within 25 yards of a marina gas pump or within 25 yards of another competitor's boat anchored or not. Competitors invoking the 25-yard rule must hold boats steady. Any competitor who allows any other competitor to fish within 25 yards of their boat has suspended the 25-yard rule and opens the water to all competitors. Any water within tournament boundaries posted *off-limits* or *no fishing* by state or federal agencies will be off-limits.

Registration: ([Click here](#))

Contestants may also register through Texas Boat World in Harker Heights, Texas (254) 699-9151; or at [Marine Outlet](#) in Temple, Texas, 800-880-1807. Registration is limited to the first 300 boaters and 300 non-boater entry forms. All registrations must be received by October 3, 2016.

Safety:

Safe boating conduct will be observed at all times. During the official practice and competition, each competitor is required to wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved chest-type life preserver (PFD). This preserver must be worn any time the combustion engine is in gear. This preserver must be strapped, snapped, or zippered securely and maintained in the condition until the combustion engine is shut off. The boat operator must have a safety-stop switch attached to his/her person when the combustion engine is in gear. During tournament hours, extreme caution must be exercised by boat operator. Weather and water turbulence, as well as congestion, can be extremely hazardous and extreme caution should be exercised at all times. Violation of either the PFD or safety-stop switch portion of this rule will result in disqualification. Also, any time the combustion engine is in operation and in gear, there must be a driver in the driver's seat in full control of the boat.

Sportsmanship:

All contestants are expected to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, safety, and conservation. All contestants must adhere to all State, Federal and local laws governing water activities. Any infraction of these fundamental sporting principles may be deemed cause for disqualification. No alcoholic beverages or other stimulants or depressants (unless prescribed by a doctor for the participant?) shall be allowed in the boats during the competition, or when in the weigh-in area. Each contestant must keep the waters clean and bring trash to the dock for disposal.

Tackle And Equipment:

Only artificial lures may be used. No "live bait" or "prepared bait" will be permitted during competition, with the exception of pork strips, rinds, etc. Only one rod and reel combination may be used at one time. No fly rods or rods over 8 feet are allowed. Trolling with the combustion engine as a method of fishing is prohibited. All bass must be caught live and in a conventional sporting manner. All angling must be done from the boat and anglers must stay on tournament waters during tournament hours. Anglers are not permitted to leave the boat to land a fish or leave the boat to gain access to secluded waters. Boats must remain in tournament waters during tournament day. Each boat must have properly aerated or re-circulated live wells to maintain a live limit catch of bass by both contestants. Competitors must leave and return to official checkpoint by boat. Both competitors must remain in the boat at all times except in case of dire emergency. In such an emergency, competitors may be removed from their boat to: **a boat operated by another competitor, a rescue boat designated by the tournament director, and or to dislodge their boat from a hazard.** Partners must remain together at all times, in sight of each other and each other's catch, under the conditions cited above, in order for their catch of that day to be scored in the tournament. Citizen band radios, marine radios, and cellular phones are allowed in the boat for emergency use only. Any transmission of information via any communicative device concerning any aspect of fishing is prohibited during tournament hours.

Official Checkpoint:

There will be only one official point for check-out/send-off in the morning and check-in in the afternoon, as designated by the tournament director. Competitors not at the checkpoint at the designated time will be penalized at the rate of 1 one pound per minute, deducted from their total weight for the day. Any competitor more than 15 minutes late for send-off or check-in will be disqualified for the day. Official start and weigh-in times will be announced at the pre-tournament meeting. Our best effort will be given to allow at least 4 hours fishing time. In the case of adverse weather conditions, the tournament director will start as they deem necessary for safety.

Scoring:

The total weight of each team's catch will determine tournament standings and placement. Only largemouth, spotted, red eye, or smallmouth bass will be weighed. The creel limit shall be five (5). At no time shall a competitor have in his/her possession more than the tournament limit. Culling must be done immediately upon catching a sixth fish. (no culling of a dead fish is allowed by state law) Minimum length will be 14 inches (measured on a flat board). A penalty of 1 pound will be deducted from the total weight for each short fish (plus no credit will be given for the short fish) and a penalty of 4 ounces (.25 pounds) will be deducted from the total weight for each dead fish. A contestant who presents more fish than the tournament limit will be disqualified immediately. Mangled, mashed, mauled, or otherwise altered fish will be grounds for immediate disqualification. No regurgitated baitfish will be weighed. Fish will not be on a stringer at any time. All fish presented at the weigh-in become the property of tournament officials. All live fish will be returned to the lake and the tournament director will dispose of any dead fish.

Optional Big Bass Pot:

\$20 per boat. One place paid for each 50 entrées 3 places paid. Payback example 150 entrées: 70% 20% 10%.