

Case Situation Interpretation – April 20, 2018 – Sonar Bobbers

Various fishing rules, like those from TBF and FLW, define fishing as, "...having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the rod in hand." This seems like a good, standard definition. Recently, IHSA staff was asked if the use of 'sonar bobbers' would be a violation of any IHSA tournament rules. To offer a general description of a 'sonar bobber' for anyone not familiar with the term, a 'sonar bobber' is a bobber that is attached to a line and placed in water. The bobber is equipped with a mechanism that enables the device to send wireless images of the water below the surface back to a smart phone or tablet in the angler's boat. The device functions in a similar fashion to a depth finder, although perhaps not as accurately or clearly.

The question then raises a few issues:

1. Are anglers allowed to use more than one rod at a time during competition?
2. Is the use of a device like a 'sonar bobber' considered using a second rod for fishing?
3. Are emerging technologies like this that use cell phones or other mobile devices allowed?

Before offering an interpretation for the remainder of the 2017-18 school year, please know that IHSA staff will bring these questions before the advisory committee at their next meeting in August with the hopes of developing formal recommendations that can be included into the Bass Fishing Terms and Conditions. Until that time, however, the use of 'sonar bobbers' shall **not** constitute a violation of any IHSA Bass Fishing rule for the remainder of the 2017-18 season, unless the angler attaches some kind of additional lure or bait onto the same line as the bobber, and/or the angler uses the rod to which the bobber is attached to fish in some manner. And should an angler manipulate or use this additional line as described above, the angler's boat will be immediately disqualified from any state series competition.

Individuals with any questions about this interpretation should contact Kurt Gibson at the IHSA Office