



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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To Kickstart its 50th Anniversary Celebration, Bass Pro Shops and Johnny Morris Announce the Grandest Fishing Tournament in History

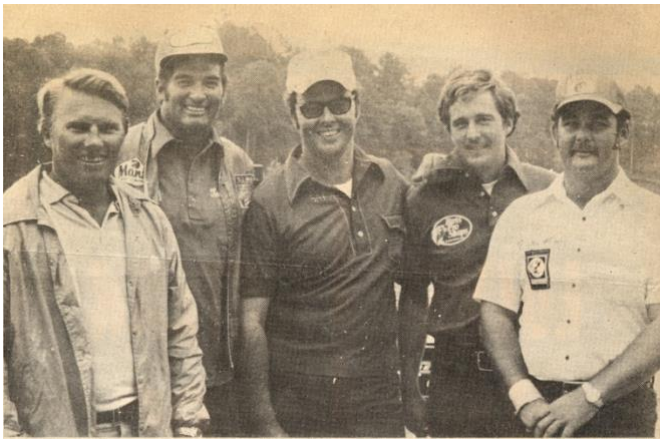
***Over \$4 million in cash and prizes for anglers
and an anticipated \$1 million plus for conservation***

- ***Ultimate owner's appreciation event offers the biggest payout ever in angling while raising money and awareness for conservation***
- ***Owners of the world's foremost boat brands will compete on a global stage televised internationally on NBC***
- ***Event celebrates the heritage of Bass Pro Shops' founding on Missouri's fabled Table Rock Lake by inviting families and fishing buddies to compete together***

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Bass Pro Shops today announced a new era in the sport of fishing with the introduction of the [Johnny Morris Bass Pro Shops U.S. Open National Bass Fishing Amateur Team Championships](#). Noted conservationist and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris had a dream to create “the ultimate owner’s appreciation event” while benefitting conservation. The first-of-its-kind tournament invites owners of Tracker, Ranger, Nitro, Triton, Sun Tracker, Tahoe and MAKO brand boats to compete in two-person teams. With proceeds benefitting conservation and the future of fishing, the event is being created exclusively for amateurs including serious weekend tournament anglers, parents, grandparents, and youngsters, giving everyday anglers, friends, and families the chance to **win big!**

- **The prize totals are staggering: Competitors will be rewarded with a total guaranteed purse value of \$4.3 million. The national championship team wins a \$1 million cash prize – the largest cash payout of any single freshwater fishing tournament in history. Conservation wins too, with a minimum of \$1 million going to improve fish habitat.**

- **Build your own team with a fishing buddy or family member:** Registration is open exclusively for amateur anglers, creating a thrilling opportunity for families and friends from all walks of life to compete together on the water. To help grow the sport, regional and international qualifier events will feature division payouts for youth, family teams, all-female teams, veterans, and more. Additional prizes will be offered for the biggest bass and other categories that add to the collective excitement. Johnny is awarding one lucky junior angler (ages 11 – 18) a \$250,000 scholarship toward a conservation-related area of study. Events will offer fun for the whole family with activities and entertainment.
- **Rewarding customer loyalty and supporting conservation:** As a thank you to loyal customers, the event is open to owners of the world's foremost boat brands – Tracker, Ranger, Nitro, Triton, Sun Tracker, Tahoe and MAKO brands. For over 50 years, these celebrated brands have come to represent the #1 best-selling boats in North America. Along the way, they made first-time boat ownership more affordable for thousands of families.



Left to right: Legendary anglers Roland Martin, Tom Mann, Bill Dance, Johnny Morris and Ricky Green



Fishing icons Ray Scott and Johnny Morris weigh in a lunker during the early days of tournament fishing.

Anglers to compete for the ultimate prize with the biggest audience in fishing history airing live internationally on NBC

Following a series of regional qualifying tournaments starting this spring, 350 two-person teams will compete in an internationally broadcast championship finale this fall at Big Cedar Lodge on famed Table Rock Lake. The competition will also include international teams from around the world including Japan, Spain, Germany, Romania, Mexico and Holland.

Celebrating Bass Pro Shops' Origins

On the eve of our 50th Anniversary, the championship brings Bass Pro Shops back to its birthplace in the beautiful Ozark mountains of Missouri. Prior to founding the beloved outdoor brand in the back of his father's liquor store in 1972, avid young angler Johnny Morris grew up float fishing on Ozarks rivers and later, Table Rock Lake, before spending five years competing on the professional bass circuit, which continues to have a profound impact on his life.

“Fishing in the first national BASS tournament on Table Rock Lake in 1970 rewarded me with friends for life and served as my inspiration to start Bass Pro Shops. Fishing on the BASS Tournament Circuit also helped keep us abreast of the latest emerging trends in fishing and enabled me to stay closely connected to our customers. And without our

loyal customers and industry-leading independent boat dealers, we simply wouldn't be here today. This tournament is our way of giving thanks and rewarding our customers with the chance to land the catch of a lifetime. Beyond offering the ultimate prize in fishing, we're excited to celebrate our heritage, raise funds for conservation, and have some big fun with people who love fishing as much as we do," said Johnny Morris.

Morris underscored, "We are also very grateful to our network of independent boat dealers. Their passion and support for helping get so many anglers and families out on the water has made this dream possible."

Entry and Qualifying Process

In an effort to provide the widest opportunities for participation, there are three ways anglers can qualify for a chance to compete in the national championship event:

1. **Finish in the top 40 at one of eight regional qualifier events hosted around the country:** Accommodating a grand total of 4,700 anglers, each regional qualifying event will be open to 250 two-person teams. Regional qualifiers will take place at some of the best bass fishing locations in the country while offering up plenty of fun:
 - Lake Okeechobee, Fla. – March 13, 2021
 - Lake Ray Roberts (Dallas), Texas – April 17, 2021
 - Lake Mead, Nev. – April 24, 2021
 - Chesapeake Bay, Md. – July 17, 2021
 - Lake St. Clair (Detroit), Mich. – Aug. 21, 2021
 - Old Hickory Lake (Nashville), Tenn. – Sept. 11, 2021
 - Grand Lake 'O the Cherokees (Tulsa), Okla – Oct. 16, 2021
 - Last Chance Qualifier: Bull Shoals Lake, Ark. – Nov. 17, 2021
 - Culminating in the Grand Championship finale for those who qualify: Table Rock Lake, Mo. – Nov. 19, 2021

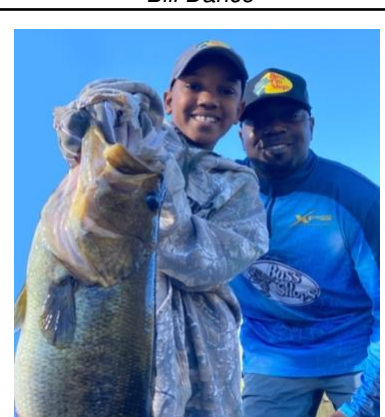
In addition to a festive environment with activities for the whole family, each qualifier event will feature celebrity weighmasters and guests such as country music star **Chris Janson** and fishing legends like **Bill Dance**, **Jimmy Houston**, **Roland Martin**, **Kevin VanDam**, **Ott DeFoe**, **Timmy Horton** and more. Additional weighmasters and celebrity guests will be announced prior to each qualifier.



Country music star
Chris Janson



Legendary angler
Bill Dance



Family Teams
Welcome



Note: Online registration for the first three regional qualifiers will be open for 24 hours beginning at 10 AM CT on February 10, 2021.

Entry fees are \$450 per person, \$250 for youth ages 12 – 17, and free for kids under 12. Entry includes a US Open Gift Bag for each team member with exclusive goods valued at \$150. Most importantly, entry fees will go to conservation and the future of fishing (see details below).

Due to anticipated high demand, boat owners can only register for one qualifying event, with all entrants placed in an independently verified drawing to determine the 250 teams eligible for each event. Individuals who do not receive a slot in the regional qualifiers can register for the “last chance” qualifier on Bull Shoals Lake in Arkansas, with registration opening later this year.

- 2. Win one of several existing fishing competitions across the United States and around the world organized by authorized independent dealers of Tracker, Ranger, Nitro, Triton, Sun Tracker, Tahoe and MAKO brand boats, with details available at basspro.com/usopen.**
- 3. We’re also proud to make eligible the winning teams from the three major national collegiate championships:** As a continued investment in the future of the sport, Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops will honor the collegiate fishing champions of the three top college trail events with an invitation to the championship with special prizes and recognition for this division.

Epic 3-Day Championship Finale at Big Cedar Lodge on Missouri’s Legendary Table Rock Lake

The National Championship will take place in November, on one of America’s most legendary bass fishing lakes, Table Rock Lake in Missouri’s beautiful Ozark Mountains. Internationally televised on NBC in what is anticipated to be the largest audience in the history of the sport, the epic 3-day championship and star-studded festivities will be hosted by Bass Pro Shops’ Big Cedar Lodge, America’s Premier Wilderness Resort.

The National Championship will consist of a 5-fish limit each day, with overall weight recorded determining the champion at the conclusion of the three-day competition. Awaiting the champion is the \$1 million cash prize. The angler who catches the biggest bass receives a 21’ fiberglass RANGER, NITRO or TRITON bass boat, a TOYOTA Tundra truck and other incredible prizes.

The event will be broadcast live on NBC Sports Network on Sunday, November 21, followed by a feature special airing on NBC later this year.

Note: There is no additional entry fee to participate in the final championship event for those who qualify in regional events.



*Delivering Value: Making fishing and boating affordable for 50 years
Left: The first Bass Pro Shops store in Springfield, Missouri, USA. Right: The original Bass Tracker boat.*

Anglers to Help Raise Over \$1 Million for Conservation and the Future of Fishing

The tournaments will benefit local fish habitat with proceeds supporting The National Fish Habitat Initiative. One-third of all entry fees will directly support the project. Bass Pro Shops will match each donation as will Toyota, a longstanding conservation partner, enabling an amount equal to 100 percent of all entry fees – over \$1 million – to benefit conservation.

The National Fish Habitat Initiative is a major conservation effort that can trace its roots back to Table Rock Lake. To improve the fisheries habitat that assures high-quality fishing in our lakes, in 2007 Johnny Morris convened the Army Corps of Engineers, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Missouri Department of Conservation, and Arkansas Fish and Game Commission to establish a research-based approach to improving habitat in Army Corps of Engineers-managed reservoirs.

Piloted on Table Rock Lake, the resulting effort established a national model for freshwater reservoir habitat efforts that continues to positively impact fish populations. Since 2007, the initiative has supported over 1,000 projects in all 50 states, restoring tens-of-thousands of acres of habitat including freshwater impoundments and over 2,000 miles of rivers.

In keeping with a longstanding commitment to conservation, Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops is partnering with local conservation agencies to help ensure all fish are released responsibly following a fish-friendly weigh-in.

Don't miss your chance to support the future of fishing and compete for the ultimate prize with the biggest audience in fishing history airing live on NBC. For complete rules, registration details and updates, visit basspro.com/usopen.

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EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE OWNERS OF THE WORLD'S FOREMOST BOAT BRANDS

TRACKER
boats

Ranger
BOATS

NITRO

Triton
BOATS

MAKO

Sun
TRACKER

TAHOE

About Bass Pro Shops

[Bass Pro Shops](http://BassProShops.com) is North America's premier outdoor and conservation company. Founded in 1972 when avid young angler Johnny Morris began selling tackle out of his father's liquor store in Springfield, Missouri, today the company provides customers with unmatched offerings spanning premier destination retail, outdoor equipment manufacturing, world-class resort destinations and more. In 2017 Bass Pro Shops acquired [Cabela's](http://Cabela's.com) to create a "best-of-the-best" experience with superior products, dynamic locations and outstanding customer service. Bass Pro Shops also operates [White River Marine Group](http://WhiteRiverMarineGroup.com), offering an unsurpassed collection of industry-leading boat brands, and [Big Cedar Lodge](http://BigCedarLodge.com), America's Premier Wilderness Resort. Under the visionary conservation leadership of Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops is a national leader in protecting habitat and introducing families to the outdoors and has been named by Forbes as "one of America's Best Employers."

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