

**For Immediate Release**



**Professional Bull Riding finds new home in beautiful Ozark Mountains. PBR announces the awarding of a founding PBR Team Series Bull Riding Team, the Missouri Thunder, to Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops.**

*Bass Pro Shops' investment in Missouri Thunder aligns with company culture and brand growth objectives as PBR continues its charge into the mainstream*

**NEW YORK (Jan. 6, 2022)**—PBR today announced that Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops have purchased a founding PBR Team sanction, the Missouri Thunder in a new bull-riding league launching in June. The Missouri Thunder represents a significant investment in the Bass Pro Shops brand—one that fits well into its current lineup. Bass Pro Shops has long been active in promoting its legendary brand through the passions of its customers through venues like PBR, NASCAR, and country music, as well as amateur and professional fishing tournaments and other sporting events.

**Thunder Ridge, one of the most beautiful natural amphitheater settings in the world and located within the rolling mountains of the Missouri Ozarks, will be home for the team.**

Located on 1,200 pristine acres near Ridgedale, Mo., the venue has hosted concerts from some of the biggest names in music. Notable entertainers who have performed at Thunder Ridge include: Hank Williams Jr., Chris Janson, Dierks Bentley, Josh Turner, Tracy Lawrence and other major acts.

Johnny and Bass Pro Shops are dramatically expanding facilities at Thunder Ridge to host large events across the entertainment spectrum. The addition of the Missouri Thunder is the first step in a plan to develop the venue into a world class events center.

“We couldn’t be more excited for Johnny Morris and the Bass Pro Shops Missouri Thunder to be a founding member of the PBR Team Series. We believe this is the most transformational development in the world of Western Sports since the formation of the Professional Bull Riders in 1992,” said Sean Gleason, CEO of PBR.

“Many of our customers are passionate PBR fans, and this is a great extension of our brand. We couldn’t be more excited to showcase some of the best bull riders in the world at the Thunder Ridge Nature Arena at Big Cedar Lodge, right here in the Ozarks. Hang on, it’s going to be a fun ride,” said Johnny Morris, founder of Bass Pro Shops.

**Legends of the sport named to lead the Bass Pro Shops Missouri Thunder**

“One of the things that motivated us most about investing in this sport was the opportunity to partner with long-time friends and legends of the sport Randy Bernard, Luke Snyder, and Ross Coleman,” Morris explained.



*Randy Bernard, co-founder of the PBR (left), and Johnny Morris celebrating another of their outdoor passions*

The Missouri Thunder will be directed by General Manager Randy Bernard. Randy Bernard was former CEO of the PBR and currently serves as Garth Brooks' manager. The team will be coached by co-captains and bull riding legends Luke Snyder and Ross Coleman.

“When I heard Bass Pro Shops would own a team, it was very exciting. First, because of the great brand and what it represents to the outdoors and conservation. Secondly, because Johnny Morris is a great friend. Johnny has always been a hero of mine, and I couldn't think of a better way to re-engage in the sport of Professional Bull Riders than serving as the general manager for Johnny's team,” Bernard explained. “It didn't take us long to determine who we wanted for our coaches. Ross Coleman and Luke Snyder represent the west, the outdoors and have always been great ambassadors for PBR.”



*Missouri Thunder co-captains and PBR hall of famers, Luke Snyder (left) and Ross Coleman*

Snyder and Coleman traveled the PBR circuit together for 11 years, are great friends and boast 25 PBR World Finals Qualifications between them. Each is a member of the PBR Ring of Honor, the organization's highest

honor. Luke Snyder is a member of the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame, and Ross Coleman is widely recognized as one of the toughest riders to ever compete in the sport.

“PBR has always been the leading innovator in western sports. The league format will open exciting new opportunities for our riders and give our loyal fans—those who have followed PBR for a long time and new ones alike—something to really get behind and enjoy,” co-captain Luke Snyder said. “Randy, Ross and I share a deep passion for the western lifestyle and go a long way back. We couldn’t be more proud to represent Johnny and the Bass Pro Shops Missouri Thunder as we lead a world class team of the best riders in the world into this new endeavor.”

“I couldn’t be more excited to be part of Johnny Morris’ Team Bass Pro Shops Missouri Thunder. It is a dream scenario to work with Luke, Randy and the top bull riders in the world! I started my career in bull riding with these guys,” Coleman, PBR Ring of Honor member and Thunder co-captain, explained. “The combination of the camaraderie we share, our knowledge of bull riding and our drive to be the best promise exciting things for the Missouri Thunder.”

For Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops, the Missouri Thunder is an exciting brand extension that aligns with the company’s customers and culture. Incorporating bull riding into the Bass Pro Shops umbrella reinforces the company’s commitment to the great outdoors. After all, cattle ranchers—like sportsmen—rely on functional, open spaces and wise land use to make a living. Like hunting and fishing, Western sports enjoy a proud and storied heritage and are rooted in American values.

The PBR Team Series is the most exciting thing to happen in bull riding in two decades adding numerous new opportunities for a sport that has experienced significant growth in audience, viewership and sponsorship participation. The team concept will create new fan rooting interests,

increase the rider prize pool, and make the sport even more exciting to mainstream audiences worldwide—while building on the growth the sport is currently experiencing. An annual circuit that features 11 events across legendary rodeo grounds and modern venues, each team will host a weeklong, home market Western lifestyle festival capped off by three nights of bull riding. Each year the Series culminates in a playoffs and championship in Las Vegas. Every event will be nationally televised on CBS and available on RidePass on Pluto TV, the world’s leading free ad-supported streaming service.

The Missouri Thunder and others will create their teams through a draft that features the best and most talented bull riders in the world. PBR Team Series competitions will be composed of head-to-head match ups in a relatable format—common to team sports—that improves the experience for seasoned bull riding fans and new audiences alike.

For more on the PBR Team Series, the Missouri Thunder or how you can take part in the action, please visit [PBR.com](https://www.pbr.com) and @PBR on social media.

Click [here](#) for photos.

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### **About PBR (Professional Bull Riders)**

PBR is the world’s premier bull riding organization. More than 500 bull riders compete in more than 200 events annually across the televised PBR Unleash The Beast tour (UTB), which features the top 35 bull riders in the world; the PBR Pendleton Whisky Velocity Tour (PWVT); the PBR Touring Pro Division (TPD); and the PBR’s international circuits in Australia, Brazil, Canada and Mexico. In June 2022, PBR will launch PBR Team Series – eight teams of the world’s best bull riders competing for a new

championship. PBR's digital assets include RidePass, which is home to Western sports. PBR is a subsidiary of IMG, a global leader in sports, fashion, events and media. For more information, visit [PBR.com](https://www.pbr.com), or follow on Facebook at [Facebook.com/PBR](https://www.facebook.com/PBR), Twitter at [Twitter.com/PBR](https://twitter.com/PBR), and YouTube at [YouTube.com/PBR](https://www.youtube.com/PBR).

### **About Big Cedar Lodge**

Located in the heart of Missouri's Ozark Mountains, [Big Cedar Lodge](https://www.bigcedar.com) is America's premier wilderness resort. A passion of Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris, the 4,600-acre lakeside retreat connects families to the outdoors with a variety of nature-based experiences including fishing, boating, hiking, spa and wellness offerings, hosting 7.4 million guests annually. Signature attractions include Top of the Rock, home to world-class golf, dining, and entertainment; and Dogwood Canyon Nature Park, a 10,000-acre nonprofit wildlife nature park. Named "Number One Resort in the Midwest" by the readers of Travel + Leisure, the resort offers genuine Ozarks hospitality and a convenient location just south of Branson. Learn more at [www.bigcedar.com](https://www.bigcedar.com).