

# St. Croix renews title sponsorship of popular Bassmaster Opens series; 2024 streaming coverage on Bassmaster.com

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. January 23, 2024— St. Croix Rods has renewed its title sponsorship of the wildly popular Bassmaster Opens series for 2024, B.A.S.S. announced. The organizations have partnered to enhance this series since 2022, and the upcoming St. Croix Bassmaster Opens will feature higher payouts and more coverage than ever before.



For 2024, live coverage from every Open will be streamed on Bassmaster.com, with expanded coverage on FS1. Also new, EQ anglers will now be competing for an Angler of the Year purse of \$110,000, which includes an increased first-place cash prize of \$45,000. The prize payouts for every event have also increased, as one in five competitors (the top 45) will receive a check. All in all, more than \$3.1 million will be paid to competitors throughout the Opens season.

St. Croix Rods has renewed its title sponsorship of the Bassmaster Opens for 2024. (Photo by Steve Bowman/B.A.S.S.)

“After more than 50 years, B.A.S.S. continues to be the dominant voice in the bass-fishing world,” says St. Croix Vice President of Marketing, Jesse Simpkins, “and 2024 marks the third consecutive year St. Croix has extended the title sponsorship to the Bassmaster Opens Series. We’re on-site at every Opens event because each one is a unique, grass-roots opportunity to connect with passionate bass anglers at every level.”

all nine events (called the Elite Qualifiers division) and land in the top nine in points. For those anglers looking for a Classic berth, they must win an Opens event and compete in all three events in one of the three available Opens divisions.

level happy. And that’s exactly what we’re doing with series like Bass X, Mojo Bass TRIGON, Victory, Legend Tournament Bass, Legend Xtreme and others under development. Elite anglers like Trey McKinney, Pat Schlapper, Bob Downey and Caleb Kuphall proved that they can consistently compete and win at the highest level by coming through the Opens, and we’re proud that our rods have been on their decks and in their hands every step of the way.”

Perhaps the biggest draw of the St. Croix Bassmaster Opens is that it remains the only path to Elite Series qualification and the simplest avenue to qualify for the biggest bass tournament on the planet, the Bassmaster Classic. Anglers who are looking to qualify for the Elite Series must fish

“Just as the Opens are a critical pathway and proving ground for some of the world’s top bass anglers, this series is an essential component in our mission of staying connected to anglers as a whole,” says St. Croix Brand Manager, Ryan Teach. “We’re committed to innovating, designing and crafting rods that give Opens anglers the upper hand in the diverse and emerging presentations necessary to win on tour. When we do that, we know we can make bass anglers at every

Alongside the increased coverage and payouts, St. Croix will continue its contingency program, the St. Croix Rewards Program. Anglers who meet the contingency requirements (fishing St. Croix rods during competition days) and register at the

tournament meeting prior to the start of the event will be eligible for even more money. If the winner of the event was registered for the contingency, St. Croix will pay them an additional \$1,000. If the winner was not registered for the contingency prize, the next-highest-placing registered angler (in the Top 10) will receive \$500. Through the same process, the winning co-angler will receive \$500. If the winner wasn’t registered, the next-highest-placing co-angler (in the Top 10) will receive \$250.

“We are so excited to continue our partnership with St. Croix through the Opens,” said Chase Anderson, CEO of B.A.S.S. “The popularity of this series has only been matched by the excite-

ment of these events. Now, with increased coverage, fans will be able to watch even more dreams come true, whether it’s qualifying for the Elite Series or punching a ticket to the Bassmaster Classic. St. Croix has a passion for creating products that help anglers achieve these dreams, and B.A.S.S. has a passion to build the best possible platforms to make this possible.”

The St. Croix Bassmaster Opens will kick off Feb. 1-3 (Division 1) in Clewiston, Fla., on historic Lake Okeechobee. Division 2 launches Feb. 15-17 on Lake Ouachita out of Hot Springs, Ark. Division 3 will start with Lake St. Clair fishing out of Macomb County, Mich., July 11-13. For a complete schedule of the St. Croix Bassmaster Opens, visit Bassmaster.com.

About B.A.S.S. B.A.S.S., which encompasses the Bassmaster tournament leagues, events and media platforms, is the worldwide authority on bass fishing and keeper of the culture of the sport, providing cutting-edge content on bass fishing whenever, wherever and however bass fishing fans want to use it. Headquartered in Birmingham, Ala., the 500,000-member organization’s fully integrated media platforms include the industry’s leading magazines (Bassmaster and B.A.S.S. Times), website (Bassmaster.com), TV show, radio show, social media programs and events. For more than 50 years, B.A.S.S. has been dedicated to access, conservation and youth fishing.

## Conor Gannon named AAC Player of the Week



Conor Gannon

IRVING, Texas – Memphis men’s tennis junior Conor Gannon has been named the American Athletic Conference Men’s Tennis Player of the Week, announced by the league office Tuesday. It marks the first weekly honor of his career.

The Dublin, Ireland native has been key in helping lead the Tigers to a 4-0 mark to begin the season.

Gannon earned seven wins across the opening week with three in singles and four in doubles.

He swept all three of his singles at the No. 2 position, earning a dominant 6-1, 6-1 win against UAB’s Carlos Gimenez Perez to open the spring. He then took down No. 11 Harvard’s Henry Schulenburg (6-4, 7-6(4)) and Indiana’s Facundo Yunis (6-2, 7-6(4)).

In doubles, he teamed with Harry Rock to win all four matchups at the No. 2 spot. They dinged UAB (6-0), No. 11 Harvard (7-5), Northwestern (6-2) and Indiana (6-2).

Memphis will hit the road this weekend for Ann Arbor, Michigan for two matches in the ITA Kick-Off Weekend. The Tigers will take on No. 9 Stanford on Saturday and either No. 14 Michigan or Nevada on Sunday.

For complete information on Memphis Tiger Men’s Tennis, visit www.GoTigersGo.com and follow the team’s social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

# Mississippi Trustees Implementation Group releases fourth restoration plan to partially restore injuries to wetlands

By The Fishing Wire

The Mississippi Trustee Implementation Group has released its fourth restoration plan. This plan includes projects to partially restore injuries to wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats; reduce nutrient pollution (non-point source); and provide and enhance recreational opportunities to compensate for lost recreational use in the Mississippi Restoration Area as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Coastwide Habitat Acquisition (\$5,000,000) This project will include land acquisition in coastal areas for conservation that have: 1) high ecological value and/or 2) where wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitat creation, restoration, and preservation projects could be implemented in future restoration actions (e.g., lands adjacent to coastal bays and estuaries). Once acquired, parcels would be conserved, complementing and advancing the goals of coastal management, habitat conservation, and other applicable plans. Living Shoreline Bulkhead Alternative (\$3,000,000) This project will include the construction of small-scale living shorelines that would reduce shoreline erosion and incorporate vegetation or other living, natural “soft” elements alone or in combination with some type of harder shoreline protection structure (e.g., oyster or mussel reefs or rock sills) for added habitat, protection, and stability. Projects will be located adjacent to properties with public shoreline access to view as demonstration projects. Hancock County Marsh Living

Shoreline Phase 6 Breakwater (\$10,500,000) This project will include construction of an approximately 1.7-mile linear segmented riprap breakwater in the Mississippi Sound between Bayou Bolan and Bayou Caddy, which will extend the shoreline protection and enhanced benthic secondary productivity benefits already demonstrated by the existing Early Restoration Hancock County Marsh Living Shoreline breakwaters.

**Two Nutrient Reduction Projects: Back Bay Davis** – Davis Bayou Nutrient Reduction (\$2,500,000) This project will improve water quality by implementing conservation practices to reduce nutrients and sediment runoff in two priority coastal watersheds: Back Bay of Biloxi and Davis Bayou – Biloxi Bay. Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and its watershed stakeholders will develop conservation plans to identify conservation practices that reduce nutrient runoff and sediment and then implement those practices.

**Big Cedar Creek** – Rocky Creek Nutrient Reduction (\$2,500,000) This project will be implemented

in the Big Cedar Creek and Rocky Creek watersheds to improve water quality by implementing conservation practices to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff at the watershed level. U.S. Department of Agriculture and its conservation partners will help private landowners on a voluntary basis to adopt management strategies to address nutrient and sediment transport from their farming operations. Two Restoring Lost Recreational Use Restoration Projects: Jourdan River Boardwalk (\$2,118,000) This project will include construction of a public boardwalk along the Jourdan River to provide access to and information about this tidal estuarine ecosystem in coastal Mississippi. The project will include a boardwalk, nature observatory, seating areas, and educational signage about the wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats including the tidal Jourdan River, adjacent estuarine marsh, and living resources (e.g., birds) that use these habitats. Shepard State Recreational Enhancements (\$735,000) This project will provide additional visitor use experience and enhance access to natural resources by improvements to existing fa-

ilities, improvement and maintenance of existing trails, and providing enhanced natural resources related education programs for park visitors including students. Details on the projects and the environmental analyses are in the restoration plan and environmental assessment. The restoration plan is consistent with the Trustees’ Programmatic Restoration Plan.

### Public Engagement and Comment

This restoration planning effort began on February 7, 2022, with a Notice of Solicitation calling for project ideas. In October 2022, we published a Notice of Initiation of Restoration Planning in Mississippi. A draft of this plan was released for public comment in August 2023, and we posted a pre-recorded webinar on September 15, 2023, to provide input on the plan. We considered the public comments on the restoration plan and environmental assessment. On December 21, 2023, the Mississippi Trustee Implementation Group approved a Finding of No Significant Impact associated with the Final Restoration Plan 4 and Environmental Assessment.

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Also, watch for The Mid-South Tribune’s 29th Annual Black History Month Special Edition in February 2024

Thank you!

## Free radon kits for homes available to citizens ... from sports page 1

rock and soil. Radon is odorless, invisible and without taste. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, and it is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Citizens can receive radon test kits by filling out a request form online, or by calling the Tennessee Radon Program hotline at 1-800-232-1139.

Radon does not generally present a health risk outdoors because it is diluted in the open air. It can, however, build up to dangerous levels inside a house. A house can act like a vacuum, drawing radon through foundation cracks

and other openings. Radon may also be present in well water and can be released in a home when the water is used for showering and other household activity.

Citizens can receive radon test kits by filling out a request form

online, or by calling the Tennessee Radon Program hotline at 1-800-232-1139. High radon levels in a home can be mitigated – often through measures such as ventilation. TDEC officials highly recommend using a certified professional for mitigation.

The Tennessee Radon Program also provides technical information and specific materials for real estate professionals, home builders, home inspectors, school officials, and others.

Email sports news and photos to MSTsports@prodigy.net.

Email your Black History Month photos and events to blackinfohwy@prodigy.net or MSTnews@prodigy.net for The Mid-South Tribune’s 29th Annual Black History Month Edition.

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