

Bill Lowen lifts second Elite trophy with narrow St. Johns victory, but got the job done anyway in spite of vegetation

PALATKA, Fla. — Twice in three days vegetation threatened to thwart Bill Lowen's efforts. Both times persistence prevailed, as the Brookville, Ind., pro tallied a four-day total of 73 pounds, 14 ounces to win the 2025 FXR Pro Fish Bassmaster Elite at St. Johns River.

Lowen, who won his first Elite title at Pickwick Lake in 2021, placed third on Day 1 with 21-5, then took over the lead with a second-round limit of 24-4. Sacking up 18-1 on Semifinal Saturday, Lowen held the top spot and entered Championship Sunday with a 5-4 lead over his nearest competitor.

Day 4 proved excruciatingly stingy, as Lowen struggled to coax fish that showed increasing sensitivity to the week's severe cold front. He missed his limit by one keeper, but after anchoring an otherwise slim bag with a 7-pound, 7-ounce bass, Lowen turned in a final bag that went 10-4 and edged Jay Przekurat by 4 ounces.

"Today was weird; I lost my fifth fish three times, and one of them was a good one — maybe 4 or 5 pounds," Lowen said. "I've always said, 'When it's your time, it's your time and you can't do anything wrong.'"

"Even though I lost those fish, the good Lord was looking out for me. To say I'm a two-time Elite winner is unbelievable."

Lowen caught all of his fish in Deep Creek, north of the tournament site, on the river's east



Indiana's Bill Lowen wins the FXR Pro Fish Bassmaster Elite at St. Johns River in Palatka, Fla., with a four-day weight of 73 pounds, 14 ounces. (Photo by Seigo Saito/B.A.S.S.)

bank. He chose this artery because its 20-plus-foot depths offered greater stability than shallower areas.

"It was all dependent on the tide, and the tide just never got right today," Lowen said. "All week, my bigger bites came when the tide got low, but that window got later and later every day."

Lowen caught his Day 1 fish on a blue craw 3/8-ounce signature series Lure Parts Online flipping jig with a Zoom Super Chunk. From then on, he did most of his work with a 5/16-ounce blue

craw signature series Lure Parts Online swim jig with a Zoom Super Speed Craw.

"The key was fishing that swim jig really slow," Lowen said. "In that cold water, they just wanted that bait moving slowly."

That tactic, while clearly productive, was not without risk, and a Day 2 entanglement nearly cost Lowen the tournament. When one of his better fish became ensnared in a sunken tree, Lowen tensely tugged and manipulated his rod for a couple of minutes until the main branch miracu-

lously broke and released the fish.

Two days later, Lowen's painfully slow final round saw Deep Creek taunting him with a random obstruction that blocked one of his key areas.

With the cold front dropping his water temperatures, Lowen targeted areas with slightly greater warmth.

"Last night during the high tide, a grass mat moved into one of my best bends in the creek," Lowen said. "I had caught a 5 and a 6 there in the last three days and that mat was in my way."

"I said, 'I'm just going to punch through that mat,' so I dropped right through that mat and caught that 7-7. I've been dropping through a lot of mats this week and never got a bite. If that mat hadn't blown in there and I hadn't dropped through there, I wouldn't have caught that key fish."

Przekurat, who makes his home in Plover, Wis., finished second with 73-10. The 2022 Dakota Lithium Elite Series Rookie of the Year started strong and kept himself in the conversation all week.

After taking the Day 1 lead with 24-15, Przekurat managed only 12-12 in the second round but slipped only one spot to second. Adding 16-10 on Day 3, Przekurat slipped to third before gaining back one notch with his final-round limit of 19-5.

Przekurat caught most of his Day 1 weight by targeting prespawnners and bed fish in Salt Springs Run. The next three days saw him focus more on targeting fry guarders (male bass protecting hatchlings) with jerkbaits in the canals below Lake George.

On Day 4, Przekurat started in the canals, but later returned to Salt Springs and added a key fish on a dropshot with a Strike King Baby Z-Too.

"I started on the fry guarders just to get my day going, and then I was trying to catch a kicker in the springs," Przekurat said. "With the fry guarders, it seemed like the quicker the better."

"It would take them a minute to

get on it. As soon as they would start coming for the bait, you had to make sure it was in the strike zone, because if it was a little bit too far outside the fry ball, they wouldn't bite."

Shane LeHew finished third with 73-9. His daily weights were 18-4, 17-3, 17-14 and 20-4.

Devoting most of his attention to throwing a Berkley Stunna jerkbait at fry guarders, LeHew anchored his biggest bag with a 7-7.

"I had a fantastic day," LeHew said. "I went to the canal where I caught almost all of my fish in. For whatever reason, it's been super special."

"I decided to go try and find a big one on bed. I went to a bed that had a 2-pounder in practice and there went that 7-7. It took me about 10 minutes to catch her, and then I caught the male, and it was a 3-pounder."

"I said, 'I just went from (stinking) really bad to doing really well really quick.' I caught both of those bed fish on the new Berkley MaxScent Stank-Bug." John Cox of Debary, Fla., won the \$2,000 Phoenix Boats Big Bass award for his 8-13. Cox also won the \$1,000 Day 1 daily award.

Austin Felix of Eden Prairie, Minn., won the \$1,000 BassTrakk Contingency award. Lowen won the \$1,000 award for leading the Progressive Angler of the Year standings.

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B.A.S.S. and Cavender's Boot City announce 2025 Bassmaster Classic partnership with Kickoff Party

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., February 17, 2025 — B.A.S.S. announced that Cavender's Boot City, the leading Western wear retailer based out of Tyler, Texas, has signed on to partner for the 2025 Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Classic presented by Under Armour. Cavender's will join the Classic as a local partner as well as title sponsor of the Bassmaster Classic Kickoff Party.

The Cavender's Bassmaster Classic Kickoff Party will officially start the festivities surrounding Classic week Thursday, March 20 at Fort Worth's Historic Stockyards in downtown Fort Worth, Texas. Last year's Kickoff Party at the Bassmaster Classic in Tulsa, Okla., featured live music from the Toyota Music Den from country sensation Stoney LaRue.



"We're excited to have Cavender's as a partner with us at the Fort Worth Bassmaster Classic," said B.A.S.S. CEO Chase Anderson. "Cavender's represents 60 years of building their brand into the authority on Western lifestyle clothing. The Classic Kickoff Party is one of the most anticipated events surrounding the Bassmaster Classic, and we couldn't be happier to celebrate it in the heart of cowboy country in Fort Worth with Cavender's." Details about the Bassmaster Classic Kickoff Party and other fan-favorite events surrounding the Bassmaster Classic in Fort

Worth, visit Bassmaster.com and cavenders.com.

"The outdoor enthusiast and Western lifestyle go hand in hand. Cavender's carries many products that we want to share with the Bassmaster Classic," said Joe Cavender. "We look forward to everyone's visit to Fort Worth and the Stockyards."

About Cavender's Boot City Founded by James and Patricia Cavender in 1965 in the small east Texas town of Pittsburg, Cavender's has grown into America's premier destination

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for top-of-the-line Western boots, jeans and hats for the entire family. Across a dozen states, every one of its 100-plus stores takes great pride in embracing the history, values and culture Cavender's shares with the American West. Likewise, Cavender's exclusive lines — Rafters C, Rockin' C, and JRC & Sons — ensure that its customers' wardrobes are as authentic and enduring as their lifestyles. As the Cavender's

family puts it: "We will always remain true to who we are and what we stand for: the cowboy way of life. Because ours is not just a Western lifestyle. This is how we live."

Cavender's commitment to quality is also evident in its comprehensive range of boots and Western wear from brands such as Ariat, Wrangler, Rock & Roll Denim, Resistol and Stetson, as well as its full line of top-shelf workwear and work boots. For more information on Cavender's products and history, and to find a store near you, visit cavenders.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 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.

Do You Know This About Black History?

- Edward G. Walker and Charles L. Mitchell, both from Massachusetts, became the first African Americans elected to a Northern state legislature in 1866.
- There are 50 recorded lynchings in 1884.
- African American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux is born on Jan. 22, 1884.
- The Medico-Chirurgical Society is founded on April 24, 1884 in Washington, D.C. It is the first African American medical society in the country.
- Floyd McKissick becomes a director of CORE in 1966.
- Sigma Gamma Rho is founded in 1922 in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- The U.S. Supreme Court hands down the ruling of "Nixon vs. Herndon" which said that it is unconstitutional for states to not allow African Americans to vote in primary elections. The ruling was handed down in 1927.



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UofM Police Services welcomes first K-9 to strengthen campus safety measures ... from sports-Military 2

focus on increased lighting improvements will continue through 2025.

In a collaborative effort to deter crime, the University has worked closely with the City of Memphis and, specifically, Councilman Philip Spinosa, Jr., District 5, to address safety and security improvements in the neighborhoods that surround the campus. These efforts have included increased visibility and identifying potential locations for speed humps and other infrastructure improvements to deter crime and speeding. Councilman Spinosa is working closely with MLGW President Doug McGowan to restore street lighting around the University.

The increased resources and enhancements have also been made possible by the \$5.4 million in

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funding received from the governor and state legislation in both 2023 and 2024. Other recent safety enhance-

ments have included:

- The State of Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs Grant provided the University \$2 million to execute police equipment upgrades for vehicles, drones, canine officers, cameras, weapons and technology.
- Working with the city to integrate UofM cameras into the Memphis Police Department's Connect Memphis system.
- Testing and evaluating the usage of body-worn cameras.
- Approval from the Federal Aviation Administration to utilize drones to enhance patrol, which will serve as a preventative and response tool aiding officers in increased surveillance capabilities.
- The University Crime Information Center (UCIC) is a full-

service center staffed around the clock with the capabilities to actively monitor campus safety through the use of more than 1,000 cameras and the utilization of alarms and mapping of call locations in conjunction with the University Police Services computer-aided dispatch system.

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