

Jake Coucoules claims victory at Bassmaster Kayak Series event on Lake Murray for a ‘pretty surreal’ moment in life

COLUMBIA, S.C. — It wasn't broken, so Jake Coucoules didn't fix it.

That decision to stick with his area helped the Maple Shade N.J., pro post a Day 2 score of 89 inches and win the Yamaha Rightwaters Bassmaster Kayak Series at Lake Murray scored by TourneyX. His two-day total of 188.75 edged Ryan Matylewicz of Tunkhannock, Penn., by 4.75 inches and took home the \$13,400 top prize.

"This is pretty surreal, but it's the best moment of my life," Coucoules said. "I have to thank God because that's the only way this weekend was possible. I don't know how everything worked so perfectly for me."

After leading Day 1 with 99.75 inches, Coucoules' Top 5 Day 2 bass measured 19.5, 19, 17.5, 16.5 and 16.5.

Day 1 saw Coucoules make a spontaneous decision to fish an area he had not originally intended to visit. Doing so gave him the lead by a 3.75-inch margin. Coucoules returned to the area for the final round and found what he needed to close the deal. Fishing from a 12-foot Hobie Outback pedal drive, Coucoules opted to fish Lake Murray's mid-lake region, as he had developed the most confidence in that area during his three prior visits to this Saluda River reservoir.

Coucoules described his key area as a series of islands, which offered leeward protection from the weekend's big winds. Coucoules fished the first island on Day 1 and switched to the second for Day 2. Targeting mostly grass and wood, he fished in 7 to 8 feet the first day and 9 to 10 the second.

"That second island was a little steeper and the first one was flatter," he said. "Also, that second island had stumps [on the



Jake Coucoules has won the 2024 Yamaha Rightwaters Bassmaster Kayak Series at Lake Murray scored by TourneyX with a two-day total of 188.75 inches. (Photo by Mark Cisneros/B.A.S.S.)

perimeter] and that's mostly what the fish were relating to." Coucoules said he caught all of his bass both days with power-fishing techniques. His bait selection included a River2Sea Tactical DD Crank in the blue/gill color, a Rapala DT-10 in demon, a 3/4-ounce Dirty Jigs wobble-head with a green pumpkin Strike King Rage Craw and a 3/4-ounce Z-Man ChatterBait JackHammer with a Hog Farmer Spunk Shad trailer. Describing a unique presentation style, Coucoules said, "I was mostly yo-yoing that Jack-Hammer like we do for fluke in Barnegat Bay (New Jersey)."

Despite entering the final round with a lead of 3.75 inches, Coucoules said a slower second day proved stressful until the waning hours. "I caught my biggest fish (19.5) with an hour and a half left to fish," he said. "That was the first time I thought I had a chance to win." Coucoules said his victory was the culmination of commitment and sacrifice inspired over two decades ago by a fellow New Jersey angler who'd become an industry icon. "This has been my life since I was 5 years old," he said. "I saw (Bassmaster Elite Series pro)

Mike Iaconelli win the (2003) Bassmaster Classic and this is literally all I've ever wanted to do. "I skipped parties and proms for this. I've slept in my car and I didn't eat for days to afford the entry fees. I've put my entire life into this, so for it to all work out is amazing. It's gotta be God watching over me. I'm just so happy." Matylewicz finished second with 184 inches. Adding to his first-round total of 89.25, Matylewicz recorded Day 2 catches of 19.5, 19.5, 18.75, 18.5, and 18.5 for a total of 94.75. Mentioning that the big winds proved challenging for traversing

open water and staying on his spots, Matylewicz said his Old Town Auto Pilot, which integrates Minn Kota's Spot-Lock technology proved invaluable. "It was no joke," Matylewicz said. "It was Great Lakes-style waves out there. That Autopilot made me feel safe and kept me (on my spots). "Yesterday was a little more of a struggle. I tried to cover a whole lot of water. Today, I focused on one area and ended up with a bigger bag." Matylewicz caught all of his bass by power fishing an Alabama Rig. "I was just looking for fish that

were getting ready to move up and spawn," he said. "I was just locating them and trying to force feed them. I had a lot of followers today, but I caught enough of them that mattered."

Bailey Eigbrett of Cheektowaga, N.Y. finished third with 183.5 inches. After scoring 87.5 on Day 1, Eigbrett turned in the best performance of Day 2 with 96 inches, comprising five bass that measured 23.5, 20.75, 19, 16.5 and 16.25.

Describing his big bass as the largest he's ever measured in a tournament, Eigbrett said, "I caught him on 6-pound test, so when he came up wallowing, my heartbeat was going!"

Chad Walden of Graniteville, S.C., won the \$500 Big Bass award for his 23.5-inch. Walden's 21-incher broke the big-fish tie with Eigbrett.

The Top 5 finishers qualified to fish the 2025 Yamaha Rightwaters Bassmaster Kayak Series Championship.

This week's event was hosted by Capital City Lake Murray County.

Full results from the 2024 Yamaha Rightwaters Bassmaster Kayak Series at Lake Murray scored by TourneyX can be found here.

2024 Bassmaster Kayak Series Title Sponsor: Yamaha Rightwaters
2024 Bassmaster Kayak Series Partner: MotorGuide, YakGear
2024 Bassmaster Kayak Series Angler of the Year Sponsor: Dakota Lithium

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Custom survey from Nielsen and NFL reveals Super Bowl LVIII reached an estimated 210 million viewers

The Custom Survey, Which Examined Viewing in Group and Out-of-Home Settings, Indicated Year-Over-Year Growth of Approximately 6% Compared to Last Year's Custom Survey Report

Nearly 2/3 of Americans Tuned in for Super Bowl LVIII

Average Minute Audience of 143 Million Viewers According to Custom Survey

NEW YORK — Feb. 23, 2024 — The National Football League commissioned a custom survey from Nielsen, a global leader in audience measurement, data and analytics, to complement

Nielsen's audience measurement data and provide additional insights into this year's Super Bowl audience estimates, with a focus on viewership in group settings.

According to the custom survey, Super Bowl LVIII on Feb. 11 reached approximately 210 million viewers — nearly 2/3 of Americans — across CBS Television Network, Paramount+, Nickelodeon, Univision, and CBS Sports, Univision and NFL digital properties, including NFL+. This is a 4% increase compared with the 202 million unique viewers reported in Nielsen's syndicated ratings service, which measures viewers that watched at least one minute of

the game. The survey also revealed that the average minute audience was approximately 143 million viewers.

The Super Bowl stands alone in sports and entertainment spheres as an event in which a larger portion of viewers watch in out-of-home and group settings. The custom survey of 5,267 households examined the size of viewing groups, regardless of location, and to what extent those groups are larger than that which is currently measured by Nielsen today. The survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago using the AmeriSpeak panel. "The Super Bowl is singular ac-

"Nielsen understands the nuance of the Super Bowl, which historically has drawn the largest television audience of the year and includes unparalleled viewership from large groups of people, both in and out of homes," said Deirdre Thomas, chief product officer at Nielsen.

ross the television and media landscape not only in its unparalleled viewership, but because it is largely watched in group settings," said Paul Ballew, chief data and analytics officer of the NFL. "With that in mind, additional measurement is needed

in order to have a complete picture of the total viewership of this special event and the results of this custom survey with Nielsen illustrate the true magnitude of the Super Bowl."

"Nielsen understands the nuance of the Super Bowl, which historically has drawn the largest television audience of the year and includes unparalleled viewership from large groups of people, both in and out of homes," said Deirdre Thomas, chief product officer at Nielsen. "We are proud that the NFL partners with Nielsen to provide the best possible measurement of their programming, for the Super Bowl and throughout the season. Ad-

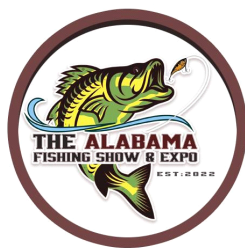
ditionally, we're excited about the expansion of our National Out-Of-Home panel, which we announced earlier this month, because it will enhance our ability to provide the most complete picture of the audience, especially for major events like the Super Bowl."

According to Nielsen's National panel measurement, Super Bowl LVIII averaged nearly 124 million viewers on CBS Television Network, Paramount+, Nickelodeon, Univision, and CBS Sports, Univision and NFL digital properties, including NFL+. It ranks as the most-watched Super Bowl of all time.

2nd Annual Alabama Fishing Show and Expo March 8-10 in downtown Gadsden as biggest expo in the Southeast

From The Outdoor Wire

The biggest fishing show and expo in the Southeast returns to Gadsden for the 2nd Annual Alabama Fishing Show and Expo March 8-10 at The Venue at Coosa Landing. The East Ten-



Vendors from across the United States will be on hand with the newest and best fishing and lake/salt-life related products to help you get ready for the fishing season. Kayaks, bass and pontoon boats, custom lures, fishing accessories, fishing rods/tackle, marine electronics, apparel, and more will be on display.

nessee Fishing Show and Expo in Knoxville each February is the largest fishing show in the Southeast and with Gadsden's 2023 inaugural show being such a success, Greater Gadsden Area Tourism is once again sponsoring this premiere Etowah County

event. Vendors from across the United States will be on hand with the newest and best fishing and lake/salt-life related products to help you get ready for the fishing season. Kayaks, bass and pontoon boats, custom lures, fishing accessories, fishing rods/tackle, marine electronics, apparel, and more will be on display. "We've been attending the East TN Fishing Show and Expo for a number of years, exhibiting bass fishing and Neely Henry Lake, and more recently, trout fishing at Nocalula Falls," said Greater Gadsden Area Tourism Executive Director Tina Morrison.

Our lakes, rivers and creeks are some of our most valuable tourist assets and we are very excited to welcome thousands of visitors to Etowah County that weekend."

There will be seminars from professional bass and trout anglers, as well as a new tournament for kids. The Kids Fishing Rodeo will be Saturday, March 9th at Coosa Landing, right next to the show venue. Fishing will begin at 10:00 am and end at Noon. There will be two age groups: 4-7 years old and 8-12 years old. Participants can register at Coosa Landing starting at 9:00 am the morning of the event or go AlabamaFishingShow.com to register in advance. The Kids Fishing Rodeo is FREE and there will be prizes for both age groups. The first 100 kids to register will receive a free kid's fishing pole and tackle box. Register your kids today. Expo hours are Friday, March 8th: 10am-7:30pm. Saturday,

March 9th: 10am-7pm. Sunday, March 10th: 10am-5pm. Admission prices at the door are \$12 for adults and \$8 for children 6-12 years old. Children 5 and under

are free. If you would like to skip the line and purchase a VIP ticket in advance, go to AlabamaFishingShow.com.

The show will be held at The

Venue at Coosa Landing, 201 George Wallace Dr, Gadsden, AL 35903. To make a weekend getaway of it, find restaurants and lodging and other things to do at www.GreaterGadsden.com.

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