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Anglers look to connect with big bites in Mountain Dew Bassmaster Elite at “Tenn-Tom” Waterway with takeoffs at Columbus Marina

COLUMBUS, Miss. March 19, 2026 — It’s all about connectivity. That’s the name of the game for a unique fishery, as well as those who’ll compete there during the Mountain Dew Bassmaster Elite at Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

Competition days will be March 26-29 with daily takeoffs from Columbus Marina at 7 a.m. CT and weigh-ins each day at the Marina at 3 p.m.

To set the stage, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, often referred to as the “Tenn-Tom,” is a 234-mile canal that connects the Tennessee River to the Tombigbee River. Completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1984, the waterway begins with a 175-foot-deep Divide Cut coming out of Yellow Creek on Pickwick Lake (a Tennessee River reservoir) and includes 10 locks and dams separating major pools.

With the Tombigbee River running to the Gulf of Mexico (via its merger with the Alabama River, which flows into Mobile Bay), the Tenn-Tom connects commercial navigation from inland ports to oceanic shipping lanes. Progressive Bassmaster Elite Series pro Justin Atkins, who grew up in the event’s host city of Columbus, Miss., said this waterway also has the potential to connect anglers with competi-



The Mountain Dew Bassmaster Elite at Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway will head to Columbus, Miss., March 26-29. (Photo by Solomon Glenn/B.A.S.S.)

itive bass limits.

“I’d say to make the Top 10, you’ll need 36 pounds after 3 days and it won’t take a lot less than that to make a check,” Atkins said. “You might need 10 to 11 a day to get a check, but if you get 12 a day, I believe you’ll make the Top 10.”

Predicting a winning weight of 60 pounds, Atkins said that, while the Tenn-Tom rarely produces the double-digit giants that often make crowd-pleasing ap-

pearances at Florida and Texas events, this fishery holds plenty of quality fish. Day-makers in the 5-plus-pound range may not be common, but Atkins expects the field to find a handful of impressive bass.

“There will be a couple of 6-pounders caught,” he said. “My dad had a 10 several years ago and I have caught a couple of 8-pound spawners.”

Atkins said the Tenn-Tom’s habitat assortment includes stumps,

submersed grasses, primrose, hyacinth, water willow, timber, riprap, docks and laydowns. This event will see anglers throwing a mix of swim jigs, spinnerbaits and frogs, while sight fishing for spawning fish will also come into play.

“It’s a typical shallow water river,” Atkins said. “Sure, It can be challenging at times, but sometimes it will make you look good.”

In the classic risk-reward prem-



ise, this fishery offers tremendous habitat diversity throughout the different pools, but anglers will need to carefully calculate their travel times. Locking decisions always matter, but compared to the Upper Mississippi River, a familiar fishery for Bassmaster Elite and Turtlebox Bassmaster Opens presented by Battery Tender events running out of La Crosse, Wis., locking on the Tenn-Tom will present a different scenario.

“When you lock from Pool 8 to Pool 9 (on the Mississippi River), you fall approximately 4 feet, so it’s a pretty quick little deal,” Atkins said. “When you lock on the Tenn-Tom, it’s a 30-minute endeavor.

“When a barge gets involved in that 30-minute turnaround, it extends that wait. There is a lot of barge traffic on the Tenn-Tom, so locking can be risky here. I’ve never felt in danger (of losing too much time) on the Mississippi River. Here, I’ve only been

burned one time, but it will get you.”

As Atkins explained, the defining factor is elevation. The greater the difference from one pool to the next, the longer it takes the lock operators to safely move boats through these control structures.

“The (Tenn-Tom locks) rise and fall roughly 18 to 25 feet, depending on the section of the waterway,” Atkins said. “If you are traveling north, they rise; if you are traveling south they fall.

“The waterway travels through a part of the country that has significant sea level change in parts of it, so the locks are closer together. The more the water level has to rise or fall in the lock the more of a commitment it is.”

Lock hopping will help some and hurt others. In some cases, anglers will make long runs up or downstream only to find that better opportunities were waiting elsewhere. Elsewhere, tournament history has seen cringeworthy cases of anglers locking down or up, catching big limits, but failing to make it back to weigh-ins on time.

“If somebody can string a couple of locks together during the day and have some time to fish and get back, that could be the recipe to do well; it could also be the recipe for disaster,” Atkins said. “The guy that stays close and figures out how to catch ’em with the pressure, could have the recipe for success, but he could also burn his fish out by Day 2 and that could be the recipe for disaster.”

Stating what he believes to be the key to Tenn-Tom success, Atkins said: “Good decision making, to include time management and good use of fish. I think limits could be difficult, because if guys try to lock a bunch of items, it’ll shorten their days and they’ll have to generate bites.

“This is an ultimate tournament venue because it’s a little tough and it has a lot of options. I don’t think it can be won doing one thing, so making good decisions will be critical.”

Bassmaster LIVE will be available all four days of the event, starting on Bassmaster.com and Roku March 26 and March 27. FS1 will host the morning session on March 28 from 8-11 a.m. ET before heading to FOX from Noon-3 p.m. On Sunday, March 29 action can be found on FS1 from 8-11 a.m. before heading to Bassmaster.com for afternoon coverage. All weigh-ins will be available live on Bassmaster.com starting at 4 p.m. ET.

Here’s the ‘What, Where, and When’ to take up Bass Pro Shops’ FREE photos for family Easter celebration

WHAT: Bass Pro Shops and Cabela’s invites families to celebrate spring by offering FREE photos with the Easter Bunny at all retail locations*. Families are encouraged to make a free reservation online and will receive a FREE 4x6 studio-quality photo, with additional photo packages available for purchase. After visiting the Easter Bunny, families will receive a free Bass Easter Egg with a special prize, while supplies last.

WHEN:

NOW thru—April 5, 2026. Photo hours*:
• Saturday, March 28: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.



•Sunday, March 29: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
•Monday, March 30 – Thursday, April 2: 5 – 8 p.m.
•Friday, April 3: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
•Saturday, April 4: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
•Sunday, April 5: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

WHERE:

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COST: FREE

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**Excludes Bass Pro Shops World Wide Sportsman retail location in Islamorada, Fla.

SHOP:

Bass Pro Shops and Cabela’s is the place to shop for Easter basket gifts for the whole family. Hop into the nearest retail location for spring-inspired gifts, including: Bass Pro Shops Stuffed Animals: Bring imagination to life with their favorite animal, fish or reptile!

Visit Columbus is hosting this event.

B.A.S.S., which encompasses the Bassmaster tournament leagues, is headquartered in Birmingham, Ala.. For more information, visit Bassmaster.com.

SAF Win: Post Office Carry Ban injunction covers current and future members ... from sports-Military 2

become a SAF member." Originally filed in June 2024, the lawsuit challenges the ban on firearms carry in U.S. Post Offices and on postal property. SAF is joined in the case by the Firearms Policy Coalition and two private citizens. "The truly shocking thing here is that even after a United States District Judge declared this law unconstitutional, the government responded by saying 'yeah but we want to continue enforcing it against almost everyone,'" said SAF founder and Executive



Vice President Alan M. Gottlieb. "We are heartened by today's ruling and that the court was not persuaded by the government's argument. Applying the injunction to all current and future SAF members is consistent with well-settled case law and being included in injunctions like these

are one of the best reasons to be a SAF member." For more information visit SAF.org. The Second Amendment Foundation (saf.org) is the nation's oldest and largest tax-exempt education, research, publishing and legal action group dedicated

to safeguarding and promoting the fundamental rights of individuals enshrined in the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. SAF engages in aggressive legal action to ensure the principles of armed self-defense, personal liberty, and the ownership of arms are defended, secured, and restored.

Through public education initiatives, SAF teaches the importance of the Second Amendment to promote a society that values and exercises the right to keep and bear arms.

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