

# Tennessee's John Garrett claims first Bassmaster win at Lawrance Bassmaster Elite at Harris Chain of Lakes

LEESBURG, Fla.- April 15, 2024 — Sometimes, you close the door.

Other times, you slam it shut. John Garrett did the latter and tallied a four-day total of 84 pounds, 5 ounces to claim his first Bassmaster win with a wire-to-wire victory at the Lowrance Bassmaster Elite at Harris Chain of Lakes.

The rookie from Union City, Tenn., endured a final-round emotional roller coaster that started with unexpected bonuses, followed by a desert of disappointment. Thankfully, the ride ended with a fist-pumping, "Let's go!" kinda moment that sent a blue trophy to Garrett's mantle and a \$103,000 top prize to his bank account.

"I used to watch the Bassmaster Elites on the weekends with my grandad (former St. Croix Bassmaster Opens co-angler Johnnie Garrett)," said a clearly emotional Garrett. "It was a hard choice whether to watch the Elite weigh-in or go fishing all weekend."

"I never thought that I would be on this stage, let alone win one of these trophies. The Lord had His hand above me all this week."

After taking the lead with a Day 1 limit of 24-2 — the event's heaviest bag — Garrett added limits of 19-13, 19-3 and 21-3. Garrett edged rookie JT Thompkins of Myrtle Beach, S.C., by 10-9. This is only the 14th time in Elite Series history a competitor has recorded a double-digit winning margin.

The only angler to break 20 pounds twice, Garrett is the second rookie to win an Elite event



Tennessee's John Garrett goes wire to wire for the win at the Lowrance Bassmaster Elite at Harris Chain of Lakes with a four-day total of 84-5. (Photo by Seigo Saito/B.A.S.S.)

this season. Fellow rookie, sixth-place finisher Trey McKinney of Carbondale, Ill., won the year's second event at Lake Fork.

Lamenting a lean practice that left him with minimal options, Garrett devoted the majority of his tournament to a 75-yard stretch of shellbar on Lake Carlton's northwest side. With quality bass rubbing fins with tilapia and catfish, he methodically worked up and down the hard-bottom zone in hopes of triggering bites. Garrett caught his bass on a Strike King 5XD, a deep-diving crankbait, a Strike King 1.5 squarebill, a white hair jig and a Carolina-rigged Strike King Ocho.

Earlier in the week, Garrett said he settled into this pattern largely

because he had nothing else going. Having grown up on the Tennessee River, Garrett is very familiar with fishing bars, so committing to a familiar pattern helped keep his head in the game. "During the off day (Thursday's scheduled start was postponed by extreme weather), something told me to take a chance on this tournament," Garrett said. "I was about to go to Lake Griffin and play it safe. But I heard this little voice in my head that said, 'Go for those big ones.'"

"Since I made that decision, the Lord was with me all week. Whether it was a bait change or location change, I could not do anything wrong."

Each day, Garrett started on what he called a "limit spot," where he

would put five keepers in live-well to settle his nerves before proceeding to his big-fish spot. The first three days, he ended up culling all of those small bass, but Day 4 delivered 3 1/4- and 4-pound surprises that put him ahead of schedule when he transitioned to his big-fish spot.

Unbeknownst to Garrett, Thompkins was craftily mounting the heartbreak campaign, by picking off solid fish with a Clutch Boss glidebait. Notably, Garrett finished second to Thompkins in the 2023 St. Croix Bassmaster Opens Elite Qualifiers standings.

Fortunately for Garrett, his school of big fish saved the best for last. Leading Thompkins by about 1 1/2 pounds (according to

BassTrakk's unofficial standings), Garrett overcame a temporary impediment and connected with his biggest catch of the tournament — a 7-4 that effectively put the event out of reach. "I'd been waiting all week for that fish," Garrett said. "My shellbar had gotten overrun by gar, but I scanned around for about 30 minutes and relocated the school. When I caught that big fish, I didn't necessarily think I had won, but I knew I had a good chance."

Garrett would make one more cull about 20 minutes later. Confident he had done all he could likely do, he headed in early to ensure no complications could doom his efforts.

Thompkins kept himself in the hunt all week. Starting with a Day 1 limit of 19-11, he tied Mississippi pro Brock Mosley for eighth place. Adding 17-1 in the second round moved him up to fourth.

With a third-round limit of 19-13, Thompkins improved his position to second before a Championship Monday bag of 17-3 settled him in the No. 2 spot with a tournament total of 73-12. "I gave it everything I had and that's all I can ask for," Thompkins said. "I just tried to get my bait in front of as many fish as I could. I'm pleased with what I have."

Thompkins split his time between lake Dora and Beauclair. He said he found the most promising conditions in those two lakes.

KJ Queen of Catawba, N.C., placed third with 72 pounds. His daily weights were 19-0, 15-7, 18-15 and 18-10.

## Seals named to AAC honor roll



Pierre Seals

MEMPHIS, Tenn. April 15, 2024— University of Memphis baseball junior outfielder Pierre Seals was named to the American Athletic Conference (AAC) Weekly Honor Roll for his performance over the weekend, the conference announced Monday. The honor marks the first of Seals' career.

The Memphis native led the league in hitting for the week, batting .583 (7-for-12) with a pair of home runs and four RBI. He scored four runs and totaled 13 bases, slugging a league-best 1.083. He walked once and reached base at a .615 clip.

Seals went 3-for-5 with an RBI and a pair of runs scored in Saturday's 12-5 win over UTSA and recorded a pair of hits, including a long ball, in Friday night's 9-6 loss. He logged another pair of hits and slugged his ninth home run of the season in the Sunday finale, a no-doubt, 432-foot blast, to match Jacob Compton for the team lead.

Seals also made a pair of highlight plays in right field for the Tigers with a catch running back and into the wall, and a diving grab running in to take away a pair of Roadrunner hits on Friday night.

For the season, Seals is batting a team-high .328 and completes his slash line with team-best totals in slugging (.584) and on-base percentage (.436) while leading the club with 13 stolen bases. The junior has added six doubles and a triple while driving in 23 runs and scoring 31 times, racking up 80 total bases to lead the squad.

The Tigers are back in action this weekend at AAC-newcomer Charlotte (16-20, 5-7 AAC) for a three-game weekend series.

For complete information on Memphis Tiger Baseball, visit [www.GoTigersGo.com](http://www.GoTigersGo.com) and follow the team's social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

# Report: NFL-USO Tour takes place in Poland from sports-Military page 2

tunity to meet with service members from the Arizona National Guard, who are ardent Arizona Cardinals fans.

"We are privileged to have once again participated in another meaningful tour with the USO to visit and honor our nation's service members stationed on the frontlines in Poland," said NFL Senior Vice President of Social Responsibility Anna Isaacson. "The NFL continues to support the military year-round through our Salute to Service initiative, and we are proud to facilitate opportunities for players to meet service members and thank them for the incredible sacrifices

they've made to protect our freedom."

For nearly 60 years, the NFL and the USO have partnered to bring NFL players to military bases around the world to engage with and honor the country's military community. In 1966, the NFL first teamed with the USO and became the first sports organization to send players on an overseas tour to meet with service members, visiting military personnel stationed in Vietnam and the surrounding region. Since then, more than 250 NFL players, coaches and executives, including Legends Terry Bradshaw, Drew Brees, Larry Fitz-

gerald, and Jason Witten, have participated in NFL-USO tours spanning close to 30 countries and involving more than 100,000 U.S. service members.

"All of us at the USO are extremely grateful for our decades-long partnership with the NFL that allows us to bring football and so much more to the people who are serving and protecting us around the world," said Christopher Plamp, USO Chief Operating Officer. "Bringing NFL players to overseas locations, where service members and their families are far from home, is always an exciting opportunity. It's partners like the NFL that make

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our mission at the USO possible."

Throughout the year, the NFL partners with the USO to express gratitude and thanks to our nation's Armed Forces. Leveraging the sport of football, the NFL and the USO work together to provide a piece of familiarity and joy to service members stationed away from home. Recently, through the league's Salute to Service initiative and partnership with the USO, the NFL supported the expansion of the USO center at Pituffik Space Base in Greenland, offering comfort and recreation to the military community stationed in the Arctic

Circle. Additionally, the NFL recently collaborated with the USO to coordinate Super Bowl LVIII watch parties in USO centers across the globe. For more information on the USO, please visit [uso.org](http://uso.org).

### Salute to Service

Salute to Service is the NFL's year-long initiative to honor, empower, and connect with our nation's service members, veterans, and their families. Since 2011, this effort has raised more than \$66 million for military and veteran support organizations such as the Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF), the Pat Tillman Foundation (PTF), Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), USO and Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP). For more information on Salute to Service, visit [NFL.com/Salute](http://NFL.com/Salute).

### USO

The USO is the leading non-profit dedicated to strengthening the well-being of the people serving in America's military and their families. Since 1941, the USO has been by the side of service members throughout their military service. To learn more and support our critical mission around the globe, please visit [USO.org](http://USO.org) and follow them on Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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