

# Top eight college anglers battle for Classic berth at Bassmaster College Bracket on Milford Lake at Junction City, Kansas

JUNCTION CITY, Kan. — Eight of the country's best college anglers will launch on Milford Lake from Junction City, Kan., Sept. 29-Oct. 2 during the Bassmaster College Classic Bracket presented by Lew's, fishing for a berth in the 2024 Academy Sports + Outdoors Bassmaster Classic presented by Toyota.

The 2023 Bassmaster College Team of the Year — Easton Fothergill and Nick Dumke from the University of Montevallo — automatically punched their ticket to the College Classic Bracket to compete alongside the Top 3 teams from last week's Strike King Bassmaster College Series National Championship presented by Bass Pro Shops in this individual, elimination-style tournament.

Joining Fothergill and Dumke, who finished fifth at the National Championship, will be national champions Hayden Marbut and Tucker Smith from Auburn University, Levi Mullins and Matthew Cummings from Bethel University and a second Montevallo team, Brody Robison and Jack Alexander.



Auburn University's Tucker Smith and Hayden Marbut will be among the eight anglers competing at the Bassmaster College Classic Bracket presented by Lew's in Junction City, Kan., for a spot in the 2024 Academy Sports + Outdoors Bassmaster Classic presented by Toyota. (Photo by Chase Sansom/B.A.S.S.)

This is the second trip to the College Classic Bracket for Smith, who finished second by just 3 ounces in 2021.

"The last time I was there, it really hurt my feelings," Smith

said of the narrow loss. "It will be good to be back and get another chance at it."

Located several miles northwest of Junction City, Milford Lake is home to the Kansas state-record

smallmouth, a 6-pound, 14-ounce fish caught in early April 2010. The lake has hosted a couple of Bassmaster tournaments through the years, including the 2018 College Classic Bracket

and the 2021 TNT Fireworks B.A.S.S. Nation Central Regional.

On Day 1 of the event, all eight anglers will compete individually to determine seeding — based on weighing in the biggest bag — and set the bracket for head-to-head competition. Morning action on Days 2 and 3, the first two elimination days in the tournament, will be broadcast on FS1 beginning at 8 a.m. CT on Saturday and 7 a.m. on Sunday. The final day of competition will be streamed on Bassmaster.com.

In addition to a spot in the Bassmaster Classic, the College Classic Bracket champion will also earn paid entry into the 2024 St. Croix Bassmaster Opens and the use of a Toyota Tundra and a Nitro Boat.

For full coverage of the tournament, visit Bassmaster.com.

The event is being hosted by the

Geary County, Kansas Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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## Fish on the move as sea water warms; Two new state king mackerel records made where kings are rarely caught

By Frank Sargeant, Editor of Water Wire.com

On the last weekend in July, Joe Vricella and his dad Dominic brought in a 67.45 pound king from 5 miles off the New Jersey beaches, a fish that blew away the old record by more than 10 pounds. (That fish would have won most Florida, Alabama and Louisiana tournaments as well — a true monster!)

And at almost the same time, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control announced that a Millsboro angler Jeff McCoy had caught a 52-pound, 11.2-ounce king mackerel along Fenwick Shoal.

His king mackerel, with a 56-inch fork length and 24-inch girth, bested the previous 31-year Delaware record by 4 pounds, 2.2 ounces.

Blitzes of king mackerel have showed up off Cape Cod in recent years, as well.

Kings stay out of water colder than 68 degrees when possible. Last year NJ beaches had an all-



This monster 67.45 lb. king mackerel, the new NJ state record, would have won most king mackerel tournaments anywhere on the planet. (Photo by Joe Vricella)

time water temp record set, 84.2 F. It's around 79 right now.

While kings are unlikely to become abundant enough in this area to make them a target species, their presence shows just how saltwater fish can take advantage of suitable habitat when it becomes available to expand their territory.

Something similar has happened with snook in inshore waters around Florida over the past 20 years. The species is now found regularly as far north as the Suwannee River on the state's west coast, at least 100 miles farther north than the "Snook Line" at Tarpon Springs had been forever previous to the 1980's.

Florida state biologists say breeding populations are now present around Homosassa, Crystal River and Cedar Key and the fish use the Suwannee and other coastal rivers as winter refuge during the occasional freezes. Some of the fish have gone 100 miles up the Suwannee in winter, though most stay in the lower brackish areas in deep holes. (There have long been a

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## 2019 Mississippi Bonnet Carré Spillway disaster recovery program for assistance is now open

From The Fishing Wire.com

Biloxi, MS — The 2019 Mississippi Bonnet Carré Spillway Fisheries Disaster Recovery Program financial assistance applications for commercial fisheries and charter boat participants is now open on the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) website at [dmr.ms.gov/2019bcrelief/](http://dmr.ms.gov/2019bcrelief/).

Applicants must be a Mississippi resident 18 years or older and have possessed a valid Mississippi resident commercial fishing or dealer 2019 calendar year license with MDMR documented landings, verified by MDMR through trip tickets during the following five historical license years (May 1-April 30) 2014-2018. To qualify as a dealer, applicants must have been in possession of an active dealer license in 2019, have purchased seafood from an active Mississippi commercial fisherman between 2014 and 2018 and records of these transactions must be present in the MDMR trip ticket database. Eligible Mississippi resident charter boat captains must be 18 years or older and possessed a valid Mississippi resident charter boat license for the 2019 calendar year and at least one of the previous five years (2014-2018).

If applying as a business, it must be domiciled in Mississippi and registered with the Mississippi Office of the Secretary of State. Participants must not be debarred, not on the government "do not pay list" and in good standing with the federal and state government.

Applications will be open for 30 days and will close Thursday, September 7, 2023, at 11:59 p.m.

No late applications will be considered and there will be no appeals if the deadline is missed. Funding allocation has been structured so that only applications submitted by the deadline will be considered. Payout will be based on all individual fishermen values across all fisheries and funds distributed proportionally based on overall value of all fisheries and participation in all fisheries as determined by the MDMR, without the need for any supplemental documentation from applicants.

The following information will be needed for the application process: contact information, valid email address, all applicable 2019 calendar year fishing license numbers, date of birth and social security number or employer ID tax number. A W-9 form, incorporated into the application, will also be required for payment, and retained by MDMR.

For assistance submitting an application, contact the MDMR at 228-374-5000. For questions regarding the status of an application or payment, or if an email with completed individual application information is not received, contact Traci Floyd at 228-523-4068 or [2019bcrelief@dmr.ms.gov](mailto:2019bcrelief@dmr.ms.gov).

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at [dmr.ms.gov](http://dmr.ms.gov).

## NFL partners with NFHS to develop officiating skills in youth and high school football students from sports page 1

The partnership with NFHS has helped us better understand high school football participation trends and been an incredible resource for all 32 clubs", said Roman Oben, NFL Vice President of Football Development. "We can now promote the officials as well as the athletes on the field."

objectivity, fairness in rules implementation and commitment as high school football officials. In association with Nike, crews will receive apparel and uniform items to keep them outfitted on the field. Across all participating markets, nine officiating crews each month will be nominated as the crew of the month, with the winner being recognized on NFL Play Football social channels and on the Play Football website.

"The NFHS is honored to work with the NFL to address the issue of officiating recruitment and re-

tention," said Karissa Niehoff, NFHS Chief Executive Officer. "The desire of the League and the participating clubs to help us recognize, celebrate, train, recruit and retain officials at the high school level is exciting and inspiring, and we look forward to seeing how this initiative grows in the future. We appreciate the NFL and their clubs taking such an interest in high school officials and being such willing partners in developing an initiative that benefits football officials at the grassroots level."

NFL clubs will work in conjunction with state associations to serve as a host location for a state officials association meeting and recruitment event. The NFL will provide speakers and clinicians from the officiating space to help train, educate, and mentor officials at the high school level and prospective officials who attend these educational and recruitment

meetings. Along with education, these meetings will serve as an opportunity for individuals interested in becoming an official to meet those involved in officiating in their community, learn more about officiating roles, the scope of work involved and to connect prospects with current officials in their areas.

To understand the officials outside their on-the-field roles, "Under the Lights" will provide a glimpse into the life of a current high school official.

To understand the officials outside their on-the-field roles, "Under the Lights" will provide a glimpse into the life of a current high school official. State associations will select an official who demonstrates a commitment to their work, local community, and their families. The selected officials will share

their experiences in youth and high school officiating, while being recognized in the community. For more information on how the officials are awarded, visit [PlayFootball.com](http://PlayFootball.com)

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