

# Patrick Walters conquers northern smallmouth to win the Minn Kota Bassmaster Elite Series event at St. Lawrence River

CLAYTON, NY — Safe to say, Patrick Walters now loves northern smallmouth bass.

Overcoming what he had previously considered one of his few limitations, the fifth-year pro from Summerville, S.C., caught the heaviest 20-fish total of smallmouth in Bassmaster history — 105 pounds — and won the Minn Kota Bassmaster Elite at St. Lawrence River.

“I used to not be able to catch 17 pounds on this river when 25 pounds a day was still good,” Walters said. “That’s what means the world to me — how bad I truly was at it and to come back and catch (over) 100 pounds of smallmouth and win.

“This one means more than my first Elite win (Lake Fork, 2020). I could not do it without my family — my mom and dad here and my wife back home. My wife’s grandfather passed away during last week’s tournament at Lake Champlain. I felt like he was with me throughout this week.”

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Along with the \$100,000 top prize, Walters received an automatic berth into the 2024 Academy Sports + Outdoors Bassmaster Classic presented by Toyota scheduled for Tulsa, Okla., in March. He also received his third Bassmaster century belt, which recognizes a 20-bass total of 100 pounds or more. Turning in daily weights of 24-14, 27-3, 28-5 — Day 3’s heaviest bag — and 24-10, Walters edged Canadian superstar Chris Johnston by 1-4. Walters earned his first Century Club belt in his 2020 victory at Lake Fork and added another one



Patrick Walters of Summerville, S.C., has won the Minn Kota Bassmaster Elite at St. Lawrence River with a four-day total of 105 pounds. (Photo by Seigo Saito/B.A.S.S.)

the following year with a second-place finish at Fork. With this week’s performance, Walters became the first angler in Bassmaster history to break the 100-pound mark with largemouth and smallmouth bass.

Walters had identified key areas in Canadian waters, about an hour from the river mouth. But when Day 1 brought strong southerly winds and extremely rough water, he decided to fish the St. Lawrence River. Doing so allowed his main area to rest, and the fish proved very dependable when he returned.

Walters spent most of the next three days on his initial target area near Prince Edward Point. There, he fished a drop shot with a Megabass Hazedong and a Berkley MaxScent Flatnose Minnow.

After a good start to Championship Sunday, Walters made a key move that sealed his victory.

“I had 21 pounds at 1:30 and I came all the way back to the U.S. side and caught two 4-pounders in the last 30 minutes. I think that was the nail in the coffin,” Walters said. “It was a tough week, but I had an amazing

time.” Hailing from Otonabee, Ontario, Johnston started strong with a Day 1 limit of 28-3 and then kept himself near the top with limits of 24-11, 25-2 and 25-12. Johnston, who won the 2020 Elite at the St. Lawrence, earned his first century belt for his four-day, second-place total of 103-12.

“It’s getting harder and harder to win this event,” Johnston said of his home waters. “I had a huge advantage seven or eight years ago. I used to catch them all shallow. They were my pets; I basically named them.

“Now, they’ve changed and gone offshore. Then Garmin LiveScope (forward-facing sonar) came out and it really leveled the playing field.”

Fishing points and shoals in Lake Ontario, Johnston caught his fish on a drop shot with a SPRO CJ Smasher. He varied his weight and leader sizes to coax difficult fish.

Notably, Johnston’s brother Cory was the first Bassmaster angler to break 100 pounds with all smallmouth in his second-place finish at last year’s St. Lawrence event.

Kyoya Fujita, who makes his home in Minamitsuru, Yamana-shi, Japan, finished third and also claimed his first century belt with his tournament total of 102-5. His daily weights were 24-10, 26-15, 25 and 25-12.

Devoting the majority of his time to the Canadian waters of Lake Ontario, Fujita caught his fish on a drop shot. He alternated between a 3-inch Jackall RV-Bug, a Jackall Crosstail Shad and a 4.5-inch Jackall Yammy. He trimmed the latter to about 3 inches.

“The key was finesse shaking the drop shot,” Fujita said. “I caught fish all day.”

In addition to Walters locking up the tournament title Sunday, Joey Cifuentes III of Clinton, Ark., won the Dakota Lithium Bassmaster Rookie of the Year title with 698 points. His amazing season included two Elite wins, at Lake Seminole and Lake St. Clair.

Cifuentes, who placed 17th at the St. Lawrence, finished one point ahead of Fujita, who won the previous Elite event at Lake Champlain.

“I was a little stressed watching

Bassmaster LIVE today to see how (Fujita) was doing,” Cifuentes said. “He is an extremely good angler, so there was a little bit of stress, but it ended up (well).”

Fujita won the \$1,000 Phoenix Boats Big Bass of the Day award for his 6-2. Kenta Kimura of Osaka, Japan, won the \$2,000 award for the Phoenix Boats Big Bass of the Week for the 7-pounder he caught on Saturday. Jason Christie claimed a \$10,000 bonus for catching the Phoenix Boats Big Bass of the Year — a 9-4 Lay Lake largemouth.

Kimura also took home an additional \$3,000 for being the highest-placing entrant in the Toyota Bonus Bucks program, while Matty Wong of Honolulu, Hawaii, earned \$2,000 for being the second-highest placing entrant.

As part of the Yamaha Power Pay program, Walters earned an additional \$4,000 and former St. Lawrence champion Taku Ito of Japan claimed an additional \$1,500 for being the second-highest placing entrant.

Wes Logan of Springville, Ala., won the \$1,000 BassTrakk Contingency award for the most accurate weight reporting.

Bryant Smith of Roseville, Calif., won the \$2,000 VMC Monster Bag of the Event with the 29-5 limit he caught Thursday.

Kyle Welcher of Opelika, Ala., won the Progressive Insurance Bassmaster Angler of the Year title with 752 points. Brandon Cobb of Greenwood, S.C., finished second with 728, followed by Walters with 717, Drew Cook of Cairo, Ga., with 712 and Cifuentes III with 698.

The tournament was hosted by the 1000 Islands Clayton Chamber of Commerce.

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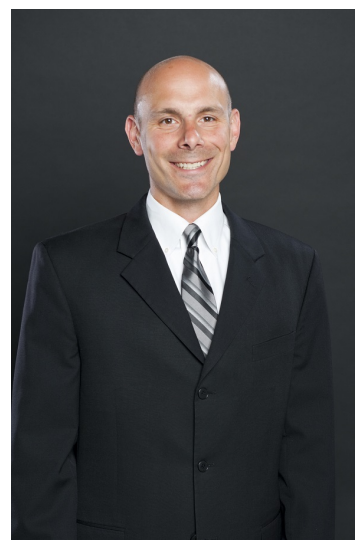
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## Brad Loos hired as senior associate athletic director and chief revenue officer and will manage operations of the Memphis Athletics Fund

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — University of Memphis Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Laird Veatch has announced the addition of Brad Loos as Senior Associate Athletic Director/Chief Revenue Officer.



Brad Loos

At Memphis, Loos will manage the day-to-day operations of the Memphis Athletics Fund and lead the strategic planning of major gifts for the athletic department. He will also oversee coordination of Name, Image and Likeness efforts and assist with the development of ticket sales and donation strategies.

Loos, the son of M Club Hall of Famer and former Memphis assistant basketball coach Dave Loos, joins the Memphis athletic department after spending six years in development at the Uni-

versity of Missouri and 15 seasons as a college basketball coach.

“We are thrilled to add someone of Brad’s caliber to our athletic department and senior leadership team,” Veatch said. “Not only

*“I could not be more excited to join the athletic department at Memphis,” Loos said. “I grew up on campus at Memphis when my father was an assistant coach under Larry Finch, and I know first-hand how special of a place Memphis is. My family and I cannot wait to get to know the great people of Memphis and help make an impact on the future of this athletic department.”*

does Brad bring high-level fundraising expertise, but he also has significant experience with stadium renovations and selling premium seating, which will be invaluable as we continue the renovation process to Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium and head

into renovations at FedEx Forum.”

In six years in the athletic department at Missouri (2017-23), most recently as Associate Athletic Director, Development, Loos’ primary responsibilities included oversight of the Tiger Scholarship Fund fundraising team and identification, cultivation and solicitation of philanthropic gifts of \$50,000 or more. He was also responsible for implementation and oversight of all development and advancement initiatives within the Mizzou Athletic Department and for premium seating sales throughout the football stadium and basketball arena.

“I could not be more excited to join the athletic department at Memphis,” Loos said. “I grew up on campus at Memphis when

my father was an assistant coach under Larry Finch, and I know first-hand how special of a place Memphis is. My family and I cannot wait to get to know the great people of Memphis and help make an impact on the future of this athletic department.”

Prior to shifting to development, Loos spent 15 years as a college basketball coach, including three seasons (2014-17) as an assistant at Missouri under Kim Anderson. In addition to three years in Columbia, Loos was on Anderson’s staff for 12 years at the University of Central Missouri, where he helped the Mules to an impressive 274-95 record and the 2014 NCAA Division II national title.

He was instrumental in the program’s success, which saw three NCAA Final Fours, six MIAA

regular season championships, four MIAA tournament titles, and seven NCAA Tournament appearances.

The Clarksville, Tenn., native stayed home and played college basketball for his hometown Austin Peay Governors and his father. The younger Loos was a four-time Ohio Valley Conference Commissioner’s Honor Roll member and three-time APSU basketball scholar-athlete.

Loos and his wife, Jennifer, have three children, son Brady and daughters, Rhyann and Charli.

For complete information on Memphis Tigers Athletics, visit [www.GoTigersGo.com](http://www.GoTigersGo.com) and follow the department’s social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

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