

# A summertime showdown is on tap for Bassmaster College Series National Championship presented by Bass Pro Shops

COUNCE, Tenn. — More than 130 teams from 54 different universities will compete in a summertime showdown in Counce, Tenn., during the 2023 Strike King Bassmaster College National Championship at Pickwick Lake presented by Bass Pro Shops.

And while Sam George — one of the St. Croix Bassmaster Opens pros fishing the Opens Elite Qualifiers Division — knows the lake can be stingy during the dog days, any stop on the lake can produce the quality of bass needed to take home the prestigious trophy.

Tournament days are scheduled for Aug. 10-12 out of Pickwick Landing State Park. The Top 3 teams will qualify for the College Classic Bracket presented by Lew's, joining Bassmaster College Team of the Year Easton Fothergill and Nick Dumke of Alabama's University of Montevallo in an individual, head-to-head style tournament that sends the winner to the 2024 Academy Sports + Outdoors Bassmaster Classic presented by Toyota in Tulsa, Okla.

Over the past decade, Pickwick Lake has become one of the most popular tournament destinations in the country. The Bassmaster Elite Series has visited the Tennessee River reservoir two of the past three seasons, with Bill Lowen and Brandon Lester both claiming their first career blue trophies. The College Series last visited



The country's best college fishing teams will compete in Counce, Tenn., August 10-12 for a national title at the 2023 Strike King Bassmaster College National Championship at Pickwick Lake presented by Bass Pro Shops. (Photo by Dalton Tumblin/B.A.S.S.)

Pickwick in 2018, a springtime event that took 58 pounds, 11 ounces to win.

Much of the hype that surrounds Pickwick is all about the offshore ledge bite, and George expects that to get a lot of attention in this event, particularly with anglers launching from the northwest side of the fishery.

“With it still being August and Pickwick being one of the most famous ledge lakes in the country, I still expect those deep fish will play a factor for sure,” the Athens, Ala., native said. “They get beat on from mid-May until late summer.”

Much like any other Tennessee

River event, George believes productivity will come down to how much water is moving through the system. Generally, at the beginning of August, the strength of the current is at its lowest point, which makes for a scattered offshore bite. It will also limit the Wilson tailrace productivity, and that means smallmouth will not come into play nearly as much.

Finesse tactics like drop shots, shaky heads and magnum shaky heads will come into play, as well as deeper-diving crankbaits and spoons.

“The problem with this time of year is, and it seems to get worse

every year, the Tennessee Valley Authority doesn't seem to run water like you want to set those bass up to be catchable,” he said. “More often than not, it can be pretty tough and it is a grinder deal out there. You aren't typically going to pull up and catch 40 or 50. You will pull up and catch one here and there. You have to grind your way to a limit.”

During a normal year, bass living offshore are difficult to catch due to pressure and current flow. With several factors hampering the deep bite potentially, the shallow bite tends to pick up.

“That time of year, you can kind of get back on the bank a little and just fish,” George said. “There are residential fish that are trying to get away from the thermocline stuff you start to get. It will spread people out a little bit.”

While he hasn't been to Pickwick this year, George said all indications point to an increase in hydrilla and eelgrass. He added that when you are targeting grass, not all of it is good, and finding the right stretches with the most life is imperative.

“It is starting to get a lot of grass back in it. A few years ago, the grass was really good before all (of) that flooding in the Elite event. I've talked to a few people who have said the grass is coming back, and I expect that to be a player as well. If you find the right stuff and the grass is truly coming back, I could easily see flipping and frogging coming into play.”

Flipping and pitching will work for grass anglers, as well as ChatterBaits, swim jigs and topwaters. If the grass is topped out, the frog bite could be really good as well, George said.

The field will take off from Pickwick Landing State Park each day at 6:00 a.m. CT and return at 1:45 p.m. for weigh-in. Full coverage will be available on Bassmaster.com.

The tournament is being hosted by Tour Hardin County.

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B.A.S.S., which encompasses the Bassmaster tournament leagues, events and media platforms, is the worldwide authority on bass fishing and keeper of the culture of the sport, providing cutting edge content on bass fishing whenever, wherever and however bass fishing fans want to use it.

Headquartered in Birmingham, Ala., the 500,000-member organization's fully integrated media platforms include the industry's leading magazines (Bassmaster and B.A.S.S. Times), website (Bassmaster.com).

# NFL celebrates Play Football Month with youth flag football campaign Let's Play starring Justin Jefferson... from sports page 1

NITA KROUCH, NFL legend MICHAEL VICK, and his daughter JADA VICK, a star flag football quarterback who recently received a full scholarship to play at Reinhardt University in Atlanta.

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*"I'm very honored to play a role in the NFL's 'Let's Play' campaign to help bring attention to the great game of flag football and showcase how much fun it is and that anyone and everyone can play," said Justin Jefferson, Minnesota Vikings wide receiver. "As a Global Flag Football Ambassador, I truly believe in this sport and want to show kids why it's one of the fastest growing games out there."*

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can play," said JUSTIN JEFFERSON, Minnesota Vikings wide receiver. “As a Global Flag Football Ambassador, I truly believe in this sport and want to show kids why it's one of the fastest growing games out there.”

Played by over 20 million people in more than 100 countries, across every continent, flag football is one of the world's fastest-growing sports disciplines. It is the most inclusive and accessible format of football, played by people of all ages and genders, with women and girls driving some of the fastest growth.

Jefferson is the latest NFL player to become a Global Flag Football

Ambassador. He will be added to the all-star team of men and women, including current American and flag football players, Legends, coaches and officials, as ambassadors who will work together to further raise the profile and promote the unique values of one of the world's fastest-growing sports.

The Flag Football Ambassadors team – first announced ahead of the NFL's 2022 Kickoff – supports the combined global efforts of the NFL and International Federation of American Football (IFAF) to increase awareness, interest, and participation in flag football internationally and drive forward the development of the game.

"It doesn't get much better than working with Justin, one of the league's best NFL players, to show that flag is fun, fast and inclusive, but then integrating authentic fans with great football stories, like Deestroying and Jada Vick, just takes it to the next

level" said MARISSA SOLIS, SVP Global Brand and Consumer Marketing at the NFL. "Flag is the embodiment of 'football is for everyone,' and we are continuing to show that year round, from this pre-season campaign up to The Pro Bowl Games, where the league's best will play action-packed flag football."

Earlier this week, the NFL announced The 2024 Pro Bowl Games will be held in Orlando, FL. The event was reimagined last year to feature an exciting format that highlighted flag football. In addition to the AFC vs NFC flag games played by Pro Bowl players, other events will include the NFL FLAG Championships, organized with RCX Sports. The NFL FLAG Championships will feature the top girls' and boys' youth flag teams from across the country, as well as an International Division with youth teams from across the globe, to reflect the ongoing growth and

interest in the game around the world.

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Washington, D.C. that showcased NFL FLAG youth teams from across the country. The tournament was played across two leagues of flag football, 14U Coed and 17U Girls, with each league comprised of 32 teams and each representing a different NFL club. The invitational marked the first time where every club participated in a youth event together promoting flag football.

“The NFL celebrates youth and high school football throughout the year," said SARAH BISHOP, VP of Brand and Consumer Marketing at the NFL. “Through camps, activities, and NFL Flag and tackle leagues, our Play Football initiative provides a fun, engaging experience for players of all ages and skill levels, equipping young people with key life skills that are building blocks to success on and off the field.”

With the Fall season of flag football going from August through October, youth players can still register for the upcoming season. For more information, visit NFLFLAG.com or PlayFootball.com to find a league near you.

Watch for  
The Mid-South Tribune's  
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# Memphis Grizzlies announce 2023 Caravan Tour of events from sports page 1

during select stops on the tour.

As part of the Grizzlies Caravan, the team is offering free Grizzlies Youth Basketball Clinics presented by Nike at each caravan stop, giving young athletes, ages 6-13, the chance to receive training from the Grizzlies Youth Basketball staff. Each clinic will offer skills instruction, contests and games, as well as opportunities to win special prizes. Boys and girls interested in attending a youth basketball clinic are encouraged to pre-register at Grizzlies.com/Caravan. Each participant will receive a Grizzlies Youth Basketball shirt. In addition, the Grizzlies have partnered with Memphis Tourism and their members to offer fans at each regional stop some amazing prizes. Fans will have the opportunity to win a “Weekend in Memphis Getaway Package” for two at each of the



caravan stops by signing up for Grizzlies E-News. The package includes a two-night hotel stay at a downtown hotel in close proximity to FedExForum, tickets to a Grizzlies game, Grizzlies swag and passes to local Memphis attractions. Fans can learn more about Memphis, the home of blues, soul and rock ‘n’ roll at memphistravel.com.

Festivities will continue throughout the fall, starting with a jam-packed Labor Day Weekend. The Grizzlies will celebrate 901 Day at AutoZone Park Friday, Sept. 1. Grizz Nights at

Overton Park Shell are back on Saturday, Sept. 2, and will feature performances from the Grizzlies Entertainment teams. On Saturday, Sept. 2, and Monday, Sept. 4, they'll help tip-off the grand opening of the renovated Tom Lee Park, with a free youth basketball clinic and other Grizzlies Entertainment Team elements. The Grizzlies will take over the Memphis Redbirds game on Saturday, Sept. 23, with Grizzlies Night at the Redbirds which will feature a special appearance from Grizzlies wing Desmond Bane. The Redbirds will be sporting limited edition jerseys to be auctioned off at the end of the night and will feature special appearances by the Grizzlies Entertainment Teams. In addition, fans can expect giveaways and live music on Saturday, Sept. 9, and Sunday, Sept. 10, at the Germantown Festival and Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Cooper Young Festival.

Fans are encouraged to check Grizzlies.com/Caravan for a full list of events, both new and current, and for up-to-date information on the 2023 Grizzlies Caravan and Fall Events sched-

ule. A complete listing of events can be found by visiting grizzlies.com. Fans who want to support the Memphis Grizzlies and purchase 2023-24 Season Tickets can call

(901) 888-HOOP or go online to grizzlies.com/tickets. For more information on the Grizzlies, ‘like’ Memphis Grizzlies on Facebook or follow on Twitter (@memgrizz).

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