

Sports & Entertainment

B.A.S.S. names Top 12 student athletes to 2025 High School All-American Fishing Team ... from sports page 3

number of service projects, including L.O.U. Outreach for the Unsheltered, the Louisville chapter of Blessings in a Backpack and WaterStep, a clean water initiative.

Bennett Fontenot (Krotz Springs, La.)

During his junior year at Port Barre High School, Bennett Fontenot won a Louisiana Youth B.A.S.S. Nation North qualifier at the Red River and a Louisiana Youth B.A.S.S. Nation West qualifier at Henderson Lake, beating out fields of 150 boats in both events. Consistently competing against 200 boats or more, Fontenot registered six Top 5 finishes and seven Top 20 finishes, including an 11th-place finish at the 2024 MLF National Championship and a second-place finish at The Bass Federation High School World Finals. He accomplished all of this while also playing varsity football and baseball.

"Bennett is also a commendable character," Port Barre High School math teacher Donna Robinson said. "He has been recognized as a 'Dynamic Devil' for consistently exhibiting characteristics aligned with the tenets of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program at Port Barre High School. This recognition underscores his pos-

itive attitude, respect for others and responsible behavior within the school community.”

Grady Stanley (Fuquay-Varina, N.C.)

As a junior at Fuquay-Varina High School, Grady Stanley excelled as a member of the Triangle Bass Club. He had four victories in the North Carolina B.A.S.S. Nation High School Series, including a state championship victory in 2024 at the Roanoke River. He also added six Top 5 finishes and six Top 20 finishes to his resume, including a second-place finish at the 2025 Strike King Bassmaster High School Series at Buggs Island and a third-place finish at the 2025 North Carolina B.A.S.S. Nation High School State Championship at Lake James.

“Grady’s dependability, decisiveness and quiet leadership make him a standout among his peers,” Fuquay-Varina High School

English teacher Tristan McKinney said. "He is thoughtful in his actions, respectful to peers and adults and consistently demonstrates strong moral character." Stanley is part of the National Honor Society as well as the National Technical Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He volunteered at the Wake County Big Sweep clean-up project at Shearon Harris Lake and has assisted with AFTCO clean-up programs and a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers habitat improvement project at Falls Lake as well.

Walker LaRue (Alcoa, Tenn.)

During his senior year at Alcoa High School, Walker LaRue built an impressive resume as a member of the Alcoa Fishing Team, accruing six wins, which included victories in the 2025 Tennessee B.A.S.S. Nation High School State Championship at Dale Hollow Reservoir against 164 teams and the 2024 Bass Pro Shops-Sevierville, TN High School Championship at Douglas Lake. He also earned six Top 5 tournament finishes and 12 Top 20 finishes.

“As a dedicated member of our Tornadoes Fishing Team for all four years, Walker has demonstrated not only an extraordinary level of skill and competitiveness, but also an unwavering

commitment to excellence,” said Sarah Bailey, assistant principal at Alcoa High School. “I have had the privilege of watching him embrace leadership roles in school activities and grow into one of the most accomplished student anglers in the country.” LaRue has volunteered with numerous different youth fishing programs. He hosted and led a casting competition for over 400 children at the 2024 Mountain Music Kids Fishing Tournament at Douglas Lake and volunteered at the Duck Pond Derby for three years, assisting with youth casting competitions and activities.

Dylan Sorrells (Dallas, Texas)

As a senior at Highland Park High School, Dylan Sorrells won five tournaments across the state of Texas, each with a field size of 125 teams or more. Each win came at a different fishery, including Texas High School Bass Association (THSBA) events at Richland-Chambers Reservoir and Eagle Mountain Lake in 2025. Included in his five Top 5 finishes are a third-place finish at the THSBA State Championship at Lake Conroe against 186 teams and a second-place finish at a THSBA event at Lake Ray Roberts against 142 teams. He added nine Top 20 finishes to the resume as well, including a ninth-place showing at the 2024

MLF High School National Championship. During his time fishing THSBA events, he won four consecutive Angler of the Year titles for the Metro Division.

"His work ethic, moral integrity and unshakable commitment to excellence make him not only a phenomenal angler, but a role model in every sense of the word," Highland Park High School Bass Team school administrator Michelle Altom said. "Dylan is the kind of angler who every coach dreams of — disciplined, humble and relentless in pursuit of excellence."

Sorrells has completed 400 hours of community service since his freshman year of high school, serving 180-plus hours during the summer of 2024 alone, with most of his time dedicated to mentoring young anglers and participating in conservation efforts. He volunteered as a counselor at the Florida Fantasy Fishing Camp in Tampa, Fla., and also collected and donated over \$1,000 in fishing gear to an all-girls program at Academy of the Sacred Heart in New Orleans.

Hayden Ross (Spring, Texas)

A self-taught angler, Grand Oaks High School's Hayden Ross has grown into a formidable angler in his home state of Texas, which he showcased during his junior year.

In 2024, Ross won the Texas A&M Open against 50 other teams. Between local tournaments and high school tournaments, Ross accumulated two Top 5 finishes and seven Top 20 finishes, including a seventh-place finish at Sam Rayburn Reservoir in the 2024 Student Angler Federation State Championship. “Hayden’s success as an angler is entirely self-made. Unlike many of his peers who benefit from multi-generational family experience, including professional angling backgrounds, Hayden’s skill is the sole product of his relentless research, self-discipline and hard work,” former Grand Oaks High School principal James Bush said. “He has achieved elite competitive status without the benefit of a family background in the sport, demonstrating that passion and personal grit are his greatest captains.”

Ross participated in numerous community service and conservation projects, including building beds for children in need through Sleep in Heavenly Peace, helping distribute food to needy families at Abundant Harvest and delivering meals to elderly residents through Meals on Wheels. He also volunteered at a program called Fishing's Future Boo Gill at Huntsville State Park where he helped teach children about fishing and stewardship.

T.G. Sheppard and Kelly Lang celebrate the season with “Tender Tennessee Christmas” out now ... from sports-Ent. 5

Still The One," "Addicted to You" and "Because You Loved Me" that helped create a heartfelt collection that continues to stand the test of time!

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About T.G. Sheppard:

T.G. Sheppard has always had an unstoppable passion for music. That passion and a steadfast dedication to entertainment have made him one of the most popular live performers in country music today. With 22 #1 hit songs, his live concerts are chock full of his chart-topping

About Kelly Lang:

Kelly Lang is a celebrated songwriter, singer, producer, author, and performer whose songs have been recorded by country legends including Ricky Skaggs, Lorrie Morgan, The Oak Ridge Boys, Crystal Gayle, George Jones, B.J. Thomas, Jimmy Fortune, Jerry Lee Lewis, T.G. Sheppard, and Johnny Lee. She has recorded duets with icons such as Sir Barry Gibb, Dame Olivia Newton-John, Paul Shaffer, and Lee Greenwood, and has released a string of acclaimed albums, including '11:11,' 'Shades of K,' 'Throwback,' 'Obsession,' 'Old Soul,' 'Old Soul II,' 'Iconic Duets with T.G. Sheppard,' and her latest, 'Dragonfly.' A member of the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, Lang's music has also reached national audiences through television, with her song "I'm Not Going Anywhere" serving as the official anthem for Ascension Hospital, and her autobiography of the same name available in print and audiobook. Her popular song "Under a Tennessee Moon" was named an official state song of Tennessee, and she made her solo debut on the Grand Ole Opry stage in 2023.

Beyond music, Lang is a painter, speaker, and entertainer, drawing inspiration from her journey as a 20-year breast cancer survivor to create music and art that inspires and uplifts audiences nationwide.

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