

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHING LEAGUE WORLDWIDE AND THE BASS FEDERATION EXTEND PARTNERSHIP

FLW to Debut 24-event High School Fishing Open Series

MINNEAPOLIS (Dec. 14, 2016) – Fishing League Worldwide (FLW) and The Bass Federation (TBF) today announced a multi-year extension to their strategic partnership, bolstering the relationship between the world's largest tournament-fishing organization and the nation's oldest broad-based grassroots fishing, youth and conservation organization. Terms of the agreement were not released.

As part of the extended partnership FLW will undertake the largest expansion of the co-managed High School Fishing program since launching the state-championship series of High School Fishing events in partnership with TBF in 2011. The expansion includes facilitating a new series of 24 High School Fishing Open tournaments to complement the existing State Championships and High School Fishing World Finals coordinated by TBF. TBF will also debut two High School Fishing Challenge events to meet growing demand from the more than 15,000 young anglers that participated in the program in 2016. All told, students will now have 76 FLW and TBF High School Fishing events in which to compete in 2017.

"High School Fishing is the foundation on which our sport will continue to grow," said FLW President of Operations Kathy Fennel. "With the continued erosion of traditional pathways into fishing, the industry is taking note of High School Fishing's recruitment, retention and reactivation potential. All it takes is one visit to a High School Fishing tournament to see that FLW and TBF have tapped into something special that unites generations in a way our sport has never seen before."

No changes will be made to the existing program for adult TBF anglers. Fourteen TBF anglers (seven boaters and seven co-anglers) will advance to the BFL All-American from the TBF National Championship. The TBF National Champion boater will also advance to the Forrest Wood Cup and continue to receive the life-changing "Living the Dream" package to fish the entire season as an FLW Tour pro using a TBF-wrapped Ranger boat and tow vehicle without paying a single entry fee. TBF members will also continue to receive priority entry into all FLW tournaments.

"TBF is proud to partner with FLW in providing the nation's most extensive network of grass-roots fishing opportunities from our TBF junior program through high school and college to the TBF National Semi-Final Series for adult anglers and ultimately our 'Living the Dream' package on the FLW Tour," said TBF President Robert Cartledge. "No two organizations work more closely to provide more fishing opportunities for more anglers nationwide than FLW and TBF. We are proud of that tradition and what it means for future generations."

Veteran Bass Fishing League (BFL) tournament director Dave Maxfield has been tapped to lead the new series of High School Fishing Opens as FLW High School Fishing tournament director. Working closely alongside Maxfield will be Scott Ellison, who has been promoted to FLW Youth Director and Promotion's Manager.

Going forward, High School Fishing will operate on a school calendar with the National Championship being held in the summer in conjunction with the High School Fishing World Finals. The top 10 percent of teams in each State Championship, Challenge and Open will advance directly to the High School Fishing National Championship. The High School Fishing national champions will each receive a \$5,000 college scholarship to the school of their choice.

All participants must be Student Angler Federation (SAF) members to participate. SAF membership includes both TBF and FLW membership plus a digital subscription to *FLW Bass Fishing* magazine, online training courses and more.

SAF members never pay an entry fee to participate in FLW or TBF High School Fishing tournaments and all clubs are covered by SAF insurance, which means there is no added expense for schools with sanctioned High School Fishing clubs.

2017 High School Fishing Open & Challenge Schedule:

Jan. 15	Lake Okeechobee Challenge	Lake Okeechobee
Feb. 19	Lake Hartwell Early Bird Challenge	Lake Hartwell
March 4	South Carolina Open	Lake Murray

March 11	Mississippi Open	Columbus Pool
March 25	Arkansas Open	Lake Hamilton
April 1	Texas Open	Lake of the Pines
April 22	Alabama Open	Logan Martin Lake
April 29	North Carolina Open	High Rock Lake
May 6	Wisconsin Open & Iowa State Championship	Mississippi River @ La Crosse
May 13	Missouri Open	Truman Lake
May 14	California Open & State Championship	California Delta
May 20	Virginia Open & State Championship	Claytor Lake
June 3	Minnesota Open	Mississippi River
June 10	Michigan Open & State Championship	Detroit River
Sept. 9	Louisiana Open	Ouachita River
Sept. 16	Maryland Open	Potomac River
Sept. 23	Pennsylvania Open	Raystown Lake
Sept. 30	Indiana Open	Lake Monroe
Oct. 7	Illinois Open	Lake Springfield
Oct. 14	New York Open	Oneida Lake
Oct. 21	Oklahoma Open	Grand Lake
Oct. 28	Ohio Open	Caesar Creek
Nov. 4	Kentucky Open	Lake Cumberland
Nov. 18	Tennessee Open	Norris Lake
Dec. 2	Georgia Open	Lake Lanier
Dec. 9	Florida Open	St. Johns River

2017 High School Fishing State Championship Schedule:

Jan. 29	Texas State Championship	Sam Rayburn Reservoir
Feb. 11	Georgia State Championship	West Point Lake
Feb. 26	Florida State Championship	St. Johns River
March 25	Louisiana State Championship	Cross Lake
April 1	Kentucky State Championship	Lake Cumberland
April 1	Mississippi State Championship	Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway
April 2	Illinois State Championship	Clinton Lake
April 9	North Carolina State Championship	Kerr Lake
April 9	Missouri State Championship	Table Rock Lake
April 29	South Carolina State Championship	Lake Murray
May 6	Ohio State Championship	Alum Creek Reservoir
May 7	Arkansas State Championship	Lake Dardanelle
May 7	Idaho State Championship	C.J. Strike Reservoir
May 7	Tennessee State Championship	Norris Lake
May 20	Arizona State Championship	Lake Pleasant
May 21	Alabama State Championship	Lake Neely Henry
June 3	Indiana State Championship	Brookville Lake
June 3	Massachusetts, Rhode Island & Connecticut Tri State Championship	Mashapaug Pond
June 11	Colorado & New Mexico Dual State Championship	Lake Pueblo
July 8	Wisconsin State Championship	Lake Winnebago
July 9	Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland & New Jersey Quad State Championship	Chesapeake Bay
July 15	New York State Championship	Mohawk River
July 15	South Dakota State Championship	Lake Cochran
July 16	Minnesota State Championship	Mille Lacs Lake
July 16	Ontario Province Championship	Georgian Bay
July 22	Nebraska State Championship	Lake Merritt
Aug. 13	Washington State Championship	Potholes Reservoir

High School Fishing World Finals and National Championships:

June 3, 2017	National Championship (2016 qualifiers)	Wheeler Lake
June 27-July 1, 2017	2017 World Finals/National Championship (qualifiers from events held Jan. 1 - June 10, 2017)	Pickwick Lake
June 26-30, 2018	2018 World Finals/National Championship (qualifiers from events held June 11, 2017 to June 9, 2018)	TBA

Complete rules can be found online at FLWFishing.com and Highschoolfishing.org.

For State Championships, each team must compete in the state in which their school is located. Teams from all states can participate in Open tournaments and Challenge events. Entries for State Championships and Challenge events should be made at Highschoolfishing.org or by calling TBF at (580)-765-9031. Entries for Opens should be made at FLWfishing.com or by calling FLW at (270)-252-1000. Entries for all events will be accepted beginning January 3. There is no limit to the number of teams accepted into a tournament from each school or club.

Full schedules, including additional state championships, and latest announcements will be available on Highschoolfishing.org and FLWFishing.com.

About FLW

FLW is the world's largest tournament-fishing organization, providing anglers of all skill levels the opportunity to compete for millions in prize money in 2017 across five tournament circuits. Headquartered in Benton, Kentucky, with offices in Minneapolis, FLW conducts more than 235 bass-fishing tournaments annually across the United States and sanctions tournaments in Canada, China, Mexico, South Africa and South Korea. FLW tournament fishing can be seen on the Emmy-nominated "FLW" television show, broadcast to more than 564 million households worldwide, while FLW Bass Fishing magazine delivers cutting-edge tips from top pros. For more information visit FLWFishing.com and follow FLW at [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FLWFishing), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/FLWFishing), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/FLWFishing), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/FLWFishing) and Snapchat: @FLWFishing.

About The Bass Federation

The Bass Federation Inc., (TBF) is a member of the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame. TBF is owned by those we serve and dedicated to the sport of fishing. The Federation is the largest and oldest, organized grassroots fishing, youth and conservation organization there is. TBF, our affiliated state federations and their member clubs conduct more than 20,000 events each year and have provided a foundation for the entire bass fishing industry for more than 45 years. TBF founded the Student Angler Federation and the National High School Fishing program in 2008 to promote clean family fun and education through fishing. Visit bassfederation.com or highschoolfishing.org and "LIKE US" on Facebook.

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