



Building the

Collegiate bass fishing gets high marks from electronics makers

The popularity of bass fishing competitions among college teams is not lost on many manufacturers of marine equipment, including electronics. Sponsors often provide participants with financial support, product prizes and technical advice.

I watched in amazement as 25-year-old tournament bass angler Daylon Smith swung the bow of his boat toward a distant shoreline point. His right foot never left the trolling motor pedal and his eyes never wavered from his Garmin MFD screen, as he turned his head just enough to address me in a loud whisper. “Get up here, there are some fish holding off this point.” I watched as he made a cast, then pointed to his lure on the Garmin Livescope display, slowly sinking toward a pair of lethargic winter bass on the Garmin’s Livescope display. Cold water made the fish sluggish that day, and you had to get a lure right in their face if you wanted to have any chance of a bite.

It was like watching a video game as the lure snaked its way towards the bottom, the fish slowly rising and the two coming together on the LCD screen at the moment Daylon wheeled back on his rod to drive the hook home. It was—pardon the pun—an electrifying experience for an old-school angler like me.

I first met Daylon a few months earlier during the 2022 WON U.S. Open at Lake Mojave in Nevada. I’d put out some feelers during this big-money, 200-boat event that I was looking for an expert to help film some action video of the latest Livescope technology. “You need to hook up with this kid Daylon,” I was told by older, more seasoned bass pros. I soon learned that Daylon was a young buck who recently graduated from New Mexico State University with a degree in business management and a boatload of experience as president of the school’s bass fishing team.

College fishing is one of the hottest things going right now, and smart manufacturers are finding new ways to partner with collegiate fishing tournaments nationwide, as well as individual anglers who represent the “rising stars” of competitive bass fishing.

As expected, forward-thinking boat builders, engine companies, rod and reel makers, lure designers and accessory manufacturers are becoming increasingly involved in this popular competitive sport. It should also come as no surprise that several key marine electronics brands are stepping up to support collegiate fishing and get a crack at influencing a new generation of tech-savvy fishermen.

Angling for prizes

College bass fishing tournament trails, as they’re called, can be found across the nation, ranging from

