



## State Bass Fishing Championships 2025 through 2028

1 message

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Mon, Sep 9, 2024 at 9:50 AM

To: Danielle Wilson <director@lakecumberlandvacation.com>, Executive Director <eblevins@kentuckylake.org>

Cc: Darren Bilberry <dbilberry@khsaa.org>

Bcc: execstaff@khsaa.org, Julian Tackett <jtackett@khsaa.org>, Matt Wilhoite <matt.wilhoite@kenton.kyschools.us>, Greg Howard <greg.howard@warren.kyschools.us>

Good morning to both of you. And thanks to both of you for your interest in hosting the KHSAA State Bass Fishing Championship in future years. The meeting for input with the Board of Control will be on Thursday, September 26, at the KHSAA offices in Lexington, as each of you have previously been told. The board work session will begin at 8:00 a.m. ET, and it is anticipated that this item will be on the agenda for discussion around 10:00 a.m. ET.

### BACKGROUND

- Per the Constitution of the KHSAA, adopted as state regulation under 702 KAR 7:065, it is one of my prescribed duties to manage the state championships of the association along with the site selection. It has long been the past practice of the Association when there are multiple viable sites available and interested, to have those prospective sites appear before the KHSAA Board of Control and express that interest and for the Commissioner to collaborate with the Board in that discussion.
- During that meeting, each interested site is afforded the opportunity to present any material and support for the selection. In the end, I will certainly be guided by the thoughts of the Board members, who represent all geographic areas of the state. In addition, you should note that this board is composed of individuals who serve as Superintendent, Principal, Athletic Director and other positions in schools including coaches. In addition, there are other members who are outside of the school community whose role is to ensure a business, sometimes non-school perspective is included in the discussions.
- These decisions are business decisions. As such, there will be a variety of perspectives in the room, most of which have a very wide perspective on the decision, and will include thoughts around the business logistics, sponsorship arrangements, feasibility for travel of all teams and geographic issues. In many cases, these perspectives may be different from those who are parents of participants, coaches within the sport, and even supporters in local communities, and I am sure you will be ready to address any and all issues that may come up.

### HISTORY OF THE ISSUE AT HAND

- The KHSAA began its bass fishing championship in 2013. At that time, the area around the Land Between the Lakes as well as FLW Outdoors (nka Major League Fishing) partnered to help start this championship.
- This partnership, including adopted requirements for student membership in the Student Angler Foundation to assist with both training and liability issues, led to that first championship.
- Also, during that time, the desire for larger tournaments at both the region and state level, as well as the desire to have student success in fishing as a benefit, left the Association with minimal alternatives for hosting the state event. The event is now mature, and it is only to the benefit of all involved that many facilities have an interest.

### FACILITIES AND FUNDING

- There is little doubt that both facilities afford both the space and area accommodations to host this championship event.
- Unless your proposal offers otherwise, this event is unique in that admission to the public is not an option. The KHSAA does not charge an entry fee whatsoever for ANY of its championships to the students or schools, there are a few financial issues to address.
- The Association funds its year round operations by the financial success of its events. So, any event where admission cannot be charged necessarily involves more scrutiny around expenses. The KHSAA does not receive a state appropriation from taxes, and exists solely as a private, non-profit entity.
- Unlike all other state high school associations, no portion of the finances of early rounds of postseason play (i.e., districts and regions) come to the state association. So it is our job to ensure that even in those events where tickets cannot be sold, the financial loss should be minimized and in most cases, supplemented by corporate sales opportunities.
- The event is managed by the partners at Major League Fishing, located in Benton. Obviously if the event is held in proximity to MLF Headquarters, direct costs are reduced.

### PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- **SCHEDULE**
  - The state championship event will continue to be held during the week following the Kentucky Derby (an event which is held during the week that includes the first Saturday in May) with the regional tournament held during the week that includes the Saturday prior to the Saturday of the Kentucky Derby.
  - Staff and board reserve the right to award one site each of the four years, award one site a shorter period of time to hold the championships, or the ability to approve a rotation fo the event between multiple sites.
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- Please specify if you have requests regarding the length of awards of the championship.
- If either (or both) of you have a jointly proposed schedule of hosting, please make sure that is clear in the information you have presented.
- **FINANCIAL POINTS TO ADDRESS**
  - Opportunities to reduce costs (housing, etc.) for the limited number of KHSAA staff (normally four to five) that will be sent to the event.
  - Opportunities to reduce the costs that the KHSAA would be taking on for the team from MLF to operate the event on-site as part of our long-standing partnership with them, a cost that is not borne by the KHSAA now due to the proximity of the current event site to the offices of MLF. It is not considered an option to outsource this management to another provider.
  - Any other opportunities for direct proceeds to the Association (appearance grants, etc.) that would help with the offset of other costs of managing the event and conducting this championship.
  - Such areas may include, but are not limited to: direct appearance grants; the costs other than the MLF costs detailed above such as trophies, awards and other personnel; and any other direct incentive.
- **SPONSORSHIPS**
  - Any restrictions on sponsorships must be detailed, being mindful that the KHSAA has a long-term exclusive agreement for its events with Teall Properties Group (TPG) to manage sponsorship.
  - Ideally, each of you has already had a conversation with our GM, Sara Hacker, about any restrictions. Key in those discussions will be your help interfacing with area partners so that their sales team can have success returning this event to the sponsor levels of the past.
  - I know that each of you had mentioned some "sub-selling" you had done in the past with events with your own local partners, and this would certainly need to be a part of your discussions with Miss Hacker, along with ideas around the fulfillment of their newly signed long-term sponsor, Operation Unite.
- **COMPETITIVE CONCERNS**
  - It is a long-standing practice that the participants in a region event (the qualifying round two weeks prior) not have the competitive advantage of fishing the same area that will later be used for the state.
  - Therefore, consideration should be given to the ability to ensure that if the area is to host a regional competition, the perimeters and boundaries can be set and enforced by third parties to prevent schools from fishing in that state championship area.
- **STUDENT SUCCESS**
  - In the early championship years, there were sites chosen for regional events that, due to the time of year, did not provide for student "success" simply due to the time of year and spawning and population habits of the area.
  - If there are known issues in your area (or advantages in your area), be sure and highlight those areas including available data from authoritative organizations.

We look forward to seeing and hearing from you that morning, as well as answering any questions you may have in the interim. I can be made available for any concerns regarding meeting procedure and the site determination. Darren Bilberry ([dbilberry@khsaa.org](mailto:dbilberry@khsaa.org)) is our current state manager of the championships and may be able to help address any of your concerns.

Thank you!!

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Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

*Today's Challenge - Be a Leader in Today's Tough Times!*

*"We need leaders not in love with money but in love with justice. Not in love with publicity but in love with humanity. Leaders who can subject their particular egos to the pressing urgencies of the great cause of freedom.....a time like this demands great leaders." —Dr.*

*Martin Luther King*

Julian Tackett, Commissioner

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