



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **TOYOTA TEXAS BASS CLASSIC RETURNS IN 2008**

**HOUSTON, TX** – Officials for the Toyota Texas Bass Classic (TTBC) have announced that the unique team angling event will return for its second year. The Tournament will be held on Lake Fork in East Texas, April 18-20, 2008, and will adhere to the strict slot limits of the lake. The event will benefit the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and its outdoor recreation programs.

“It is a great honor to announce the Toyota Texas Bass Classic will be returning to Lake Fork in 2008,” said TTBC Co-Founders Dan Friedkin and Donato Ramos. “Not only will this allow us to continue to showcase the outstanding bass fishing in Texas, but it also sets the standard for conservation practices in angling and it benefits TPWD programs.”

The Toyota Texas Bass Classic is a one of a kind event in the sport of angling. The Tournament features 100 professional anglers grouped in teams of four. 2007 was the first year of the event and the team of Terry Scroggins (captain), Chris Daves, Frank Ippoliti and James Niggemeyer took home the \$250,000 team purse. They reeled in 54 fish totaling 244 pounds 12 ounces.

“Through the support and hard work of multiple organizations, this Tournament has reinvented the bass fishing Tournament format and reinvigorated the sport for many,” said Professional Anglers Association (PAA) President Mark Davis.

The 100 contestants, all of whom are qualified members of the PAA, will be arranged in four-man teams for the Tournament's first two days on Friday and Saturday, with five of those teams qualifying for the finals on the Tournament's third day. The four-man teams will consist of two pairs of anglers, one pair fishing in one boat for four hours each morning and the other pair in the afternoon.

“Toyota is thrilled to be on board again with this tremendous event and to be able to support TPWD and its efforts,” announced Toby Hynes, President, Gulf States Toyota. “It is great to put the spotlight on Lake Fork but even better to see the positive impact that this event has on the programs sponsored by TPWD.”

Through the TTBC, the TPWD will receive a \$250,000 donation that will be used to benefit their first-class youth fishing and outreach programs. “The focus of these programs is to expose kids and non-traditional users to the great fishing and the conservation of the TPWD’s Freshwater Resources upon which good fishing depends,” said JC Fassino, President, Texas Bass Classic Foundation.

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In the Toyota Texas Bass Classic, all fish caught above 14 inches will be weighed and the top five caught each day credited to each angler. Fish will be weighed in the boat by a certified and independent observer, and then returned to the lake immediately. This avoids having fish held in live wells for long periods of time and will set precedence on how fish are to be handled in future professional bass tournaments. Contestants will be allowed to keep one fish larger than 24 inches, which will be weighed at the lake-side weigh-in scales, then turned over to TPWD for proper handling and release back to the lake.

The Tournament's format is designed to appeal to spectators, and includes a kids' area with outdoor activities, live music and a Jumbotron showing continuous action to the audience. Morning and afternoon weigh-ins will assure high levels of activity during the day. While half of the anglers are on the water fishing, the other flight of anglers will be on shore giving clinics, signing autographs and interacting with the public. A fishing industry expo will feature instructional seminars and the latest in fishing equipment, gear and accessories.

In 2007, over 27,000 people attended the events at Lake Fork over the course of the Pro-Am and TTBC tournaments. An hour-long national network broadcast is scheduled for the event.

The 2007 Lucchese Toyota Tundra Big Bass Award went to angler John Sappington for his largest Tournament catch, weighing in at 11 pounds 2 ounces. The big catch earned him a custom pair of Lucchese Boots, Stetson hat and a Lucchese edition Toyota Tundra truck.

The Toyota Texas Bass Classic is sanctioned by the Professional Anglers Association with technical assistance and support from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Inland Fisheries Division. Title sponsor for the event is Toyota.