

Women's Bassmaster Tour

ESPN OUTDOORS BASSMASTER SERIES COMPETITOR TO FISH WOMEN'S BASSMASTER TOUR

by BASS Communications / BASS (Mar. 07, 2006 - Celebration, FL.)... The only woman who qualified to fish the inaugural ESPN Outdoors Bassmaster Series presented by Advance Auto Parts National Championship will also fish the new Mercury Marine Women's Bassmaster Tour presented by Triton Boats in 2006.

Kathi Hurst of Ripley, Miss., said choosing the women's tour was a simple decision. "I think the WBT is awesome for women and I know it is going to grow into a great circuit," she said.

An accomplished angler and determined individual, Hurst broke new ground at BASS. In the 1990s, she had one of the highest finishes by a female angler in a CITGO Bassmaster Open tournament. She finished 51st in 1996 and then broke the record the next year with a 48th place finish. She's also the first woman angler to place in the top 50 of a Bassmaster Open tournament.

Hurst, who qualified for the ESPN Outdoors Series National Championship in January by placing second in a field of 100 anglers at the Series' second-chance tournament, hoped to win and become the first woman to qualify for the CITGO Bassmaster Classic, but she placed 41st in a field of 50. "I was disappointed that I didn't do better in the Championship tournament."

She may not have won the championship, but Hurst got closer to the Bassmaster Classic than any other woman angler.

"Individually, females can get a lot attention because people take more notice when you're in the minority," said Hurst, who placed fifth at the women's preview event at Lewisville Lake in Texas in October. "While I enjoyed fishing with a mixed field, I'm really looking forward to fishing with the women."

The 51-year-old comes from a lineage of women anglers. Both Hurst's mother and grandmother taught her to fish, taking her to a creek where they sat on buckets on the bank and fished with worms.

Later, Hurst's husband, Mike, introduced her to bass fishing. They bought a small bass boat in 1989 and hit local tournaments. Three years later, she entered her first women-only tournament and placed eighth. "It just evolved from there," she said.

In addition to her sponsor logos on her jersey – which include Champion Boats, Yamaha Outboard Motors, Wave Worms, Kirkwood National Golf Club, J. Miles & Company Furniture, Cajun Outboards and Hammer Fishing Rods - Hurst wears a lavender ribbon for cancer awareness. A survivor herself, Hurst urges others to get regular checkups and help raise money for cancer research.

Throughout the next 13 weeks, BASS is auctioning bass fishing-related items and excursions on eBay to benefit The V Foundation for Cancer Research. Bidders can visit the Bassmaster website/auctions for more information.

The first Mercury Marine Women's Bassmaster Tour presented by Triton Boats event is scheduled on April 20-22 on Neely Henry Lake in Alabama.

Sponsors of the Women's Bassmaster Tour include Mercury Marine, Triton Boats, Lowrance Electronics, MotorGuide, Advanced Auto Parts and Plano.

BASS is the worldwide authority on bass fishing, sanctioning more than 20,000 events through the BASS Federation annually. Guided by its mission to serve all fishing fans, BASS sets the standard for credibility, professionalism, sportsmanship and conservation, as it has for nearly 40 years.

BASS stages bass fishing tournaments for every skill level and culminates with the CITGO Bassmaster Classic. Through its clubs, youth programs, aquatic resource advocacy, magazine publishing and multimedia platforms, BASS offers the industry's widest array of services and support to its nearly 550,000 members. The organization is headquartered in Celebration, Fla.

To join BASS, call 1-877-BASS-USA