



South Carolina Natural Resources

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Mar 28

Check out a Cherry-Red Slice of Pro Fishing History

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This “classic” Rebel bass boat will be on display at the Bassmaster Elite fishing tournament this weekend at Lake Hartwell.

by Greg Lucas; photos courtesy Doyle Hodgin



One of the original boats used for the very first Bassmaster Classic in 1971 will be on display during the Bassmaster Elite Series tournament on Lake Hartwell, scheduled for April 4-7, at the Green Pond Landing and Event Center (<https://www.facebook.com/Green-Pond-Landing-Event-Center-1528339974128993/>) in Anderson, S.C.

Manufactured by Rebel, the No. 17 inboard-outboard bass boat equipped with a Rebel Rambler trolling motor was used by Dennis Pope of Haysville, Kansas, during the 1971 Bassmaster Classic held at Lake Meade in Nevada. Pope

finished 17th in the Angler of the Year standings that year, the basis for the boat numbers



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Mills, N.C. Hodgin will be
lite Series, where it will be

on display during the weigh-ins on Thursday and Friday and during the Expo on Saturday and Sunday, from noon to 5 p.m.



Hodgin has been a member of B.A.S.S. since 1972 and prides himself on knowing the history of the organization. When he first saw the boat, almost by accident, while running an errand, he was initially skeptical of the claim by the owner that the boat had really been a part of the 1971 Classic. First, the boat was a Rebel, and Hodgin assumed all the early Classic boats had been Rangers.

But after doing some research, he found a Rebel history page which said that Rebel was not only limited to lure making. In 1971 the company had begun making bass boats, and Rebel did, in fact, furnish the boats for the very first Bassmaster Classic.

“I did find a video of the first Classic on Bassmaster.com,” Hodgin said. “There they were—24 identical Rebel Fastbacks and Ray Scott firing a flare gun from one of the two outboards to start the tournament.”

The boat, which Hodgin purchased for \$3,000, had been kept inside a building almost its entire life, and was in good condition. He spent two years restoring it to its original shape. Carpet had been laid over the original fiberglass deck, and Hodgin said he painstakingly removed the contact cement that held the carpet down, a process that took months.

Most of the boat is in original condition. It has original seat cushions, original engine and the original Lowrance sonar



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“People love to see it,” said Hodgin. “Folks who have followed bass fishing for any amount of time, especially those over 40, they feel a real connection to the boat.

“Most folks ask two questions: ‘How did you find it?’ And that’s a good story, of course, and the second question is, ‘How much is it worth?’ And I don’t have a clue. I’ve had some serious offers, but I’m not interested in selling it.”

Hodgin spent six years on the pro bass-fishing tour himself, so he feels a special affinity for the boat, and he’s gratified by how much delight folks receive from being around it.

To watch a YouTube video on the 1971 Bassmaster Classic boat, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUqmBJUo3t4>
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUqmBJUo3t4>)

If You Go: Bassmaster Elite Series at Lake Hartwell

Lake Hartwell, listed as a Top 100 Bass Lake in America has hosted the Bassmaster Classic three times: 2018, the “Second-Most Attended Classic” in history; 2015, the “Coldest Classic” in history; and 2008, which received 11.5 hours of TV coverage on ESPN2.

Daily takeoffs and weigh-ins will be April 4-7 at Green Pond Landing and Event Center, 170 Green Pond Road in Anderson. Check out bassmaster.com for event



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ending Saturday, April 6, and
and events.

Coming up later this year is the Bassmaster B.A.S.S. Nation Championship, set for Nov. 6-8 on Lake Hartwell.

About B.A.S.S.

The Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.) is a fishing membership organization with more than a half a million members. It is geared toward bass anglers, mainly in the United States but with members located worldwide. The society publishes *Bassmaster* magazine and other related publications and produces *The Bassmasters* weekly television program. B.A.S.S. is best known for the sport fishing tournament trails it sponsors, and for the championship event of its primary series, the Bassmaster Classic.

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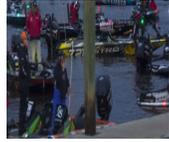


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