

AMSOIL On The Water

Bassmasters brings NASCAR feel, elite anglers to events



Darrin Schwenkbeck's motor stands out among the rest of the Bassmasters Elite field.

says Schwenkbeck. "You have to catch your limit and hope a monster shows up in the live well to give yourself a chance. This is the hardest thing I've ever done."

Last year's win helped Schwenkbeck land a pair of sponsorships, including a unique twist by AMSOIL.

"Cornerstone Recruiting stepped up to become my title sponsor," said Schwenkbeck, "but it's AMSOIL that's getting major buzz at the tournaments with their sponsorship of the motor."

The AMSOIL logo adorns Schwenkbeck's Mercury 250 Optimax out-

board motor, and the move has received national attention on

bass websites and in fan forums because it is something that has never been done in professional bass angling.

"The engine companies have controlled the engine cowlings for decades, and there have been very few complete engine wraps," said Jeremy Meyer, AMSOIL Racing Coordinator. "In many cases, the motor is the most recognizable item on a boat, whether it's in the water or traveling down the road. This is a great opportunity for AMSOIL to gain recognition in the marine market."

Recognizing the popular-

ity of bass fishing is easy. In the United States, there are nearly 11 million registered bass anglers. With major networks such as Fox Sports Net and ESPN hosting major bass tournaments, the exposure the sport offers is far reaching. The Bassmasters is owned by ESPN, and the network airs all 12 of the Elite Series tournaments.

As for the events, each tournament is a four-day mad scramble with the flair of a NASCAR event. ESPN mandates that all pros have their boats wrapped with sponsor logos. The majority of a pro's time is spent in the boat, even when they are out of the water. If they aren't attending a B.A.S.S. fan event, they are sitting in their boats getting ready for the next day of fishing. All of this does not guarantee a check when the weekend is over. Only the top 50 in each tournament get paid a minimum of \$10,000, with \$100,000 going to the winner.

"I have been on the road since the end of February without a break," said Schwenkbeck following the Guntersville, Ala. event in late April. "We get a break in May to go home and get some rest, but once June hits we will be

Darrin Schwenkbeck is commonly known on the ESPN Bassmasters Elite Series as "the guy in the hockey jersey." That's fine for the Buffalo, N.Y. native who spent his formative years, as well as a minor league stint, on the ice. Now, the 39-year-old spends most of his time in sun-baked shallows using a rod and reel instead of a hockey stick and looking to net big bass instead of hat tricks.

AMSOIL began sponsoring the pro bass angler in 2006 at the midpoint of his rookie year on the Elite Series. The second-year pro pushed his career into high gear last year after winning a Bassmasters Northern Tour tournament in Iowa. The win, his first as a professional, helped Schwenkbeck stay on the Elite Series tour this season, where he battles 107 of the world's top pros.

"You have more than 100 guys battling for five fish apiece each day of a four-day tournament,"



Schwenkbeck takes a moment to speak with an ESPN.com media member before a tournament in Alabama.



A co-angler receives some advice from Schwenkbeck before the early start of a recent tournament.



Schwenkbeck checks out a possible hot spot during a practice day.

back in full swing. If you struggle at an event, it could take a toll on your resources the rest of the year.”

The hectic schedule puts stress on the equipment used by the sport’s elite. Schwenkbeck relies on AMSOIL to keep not only his boat moving, but also his tow vehicle, which has put on more than 40,000 miles already this year. Breakdowns cost Schwenkbeck a spot in the Bassmasters Classic last year as he blew his engine three times and went through eight gear cases before switching to AMSOIL products.

“Since switching to HP Injector Synthetic 2-Cycle Oil, there hasn’t been a problem with the boat motor, and the Universal Synthetic Marine Gear Lube is saving my gear cases. I speak with a lot of the pros on tour and they tell me they are using AMSOIL in their boats, especially the lower units. They can’t believe how much better their lower units run.”

Many pros on the tour are hounded by support staff at the events to use their engine manufacturer’s oil, but Schwenkbeck understands his role as a sponsored angler. He constantly promotes the AMSOIL product line, whether in the fan zone or if someone swings by his trailer while he is changing lures on his casting rod. He’s always looking for new ways to promote his sponsors, including a visit to AMSOIL University in May and numerous school visits. For Schwenkbeck, he’s fine being known as “the guy in the hockey jersey” because the view is a lot better skipping across the waves at 70 mph than it is on two thin blades of cold steel.



AMSOIL has a rolling billboard as the Bassmasters Elite Series goes nationwide.

Products The Pros Use

Along with HP Injector Synthetic 2-Cycle Oil, Darrin Schwenkbeck uses AMSOIL Universal Synthetic Marine Gear Lube to keep his outboard’s lower unit running cooler and working properly.

“We hit speeds topping 70 mph even on rough water,” says Schwenkbeck. “Without AMSOIL saving me money last year, I might be sitting at home instead of on the water fishing with the world’s best.”



Lovell Brothers Working Double Duty **Rockcrawling champions off to strong start in 2007**



Brad Lovell makes a steep pass through the cones at a recent WE-Rock event in Arizona.

Brothers Brad and Roger Lovell have been busy in 2007. The rock crawling duo took part in the second round of the WE-Rock series in Arizona in early April. Five days later, they followed that up with the opening round of Xtreme Rock Racing Association (XRRR) action in Utah. Brad Lovell piloted the FABTECH/AMSOIL Ford Ranger through the technical courses laid out by WE-Rock, landing the team in first place at the end of day one. The brothers completed another death-defying round the second day, but simple communication errors cost them the win. They fell into third place, only two points shy of the runner-up position. Roger, who is normally the spotter during rock crawling events, took over driving duties for the first time at the XRRR competition. Although being one of the first trucks on the course cost the team about 20 seconds in their first run, Roger quickly recovered on the second circuit and finished within three seconds of the fastest time. At the end of the day, Lovell stood in seventh place overall, but finished first among rookie drivers.

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Roger Lovell races his AMSOIL Ford at an April XRRR event.