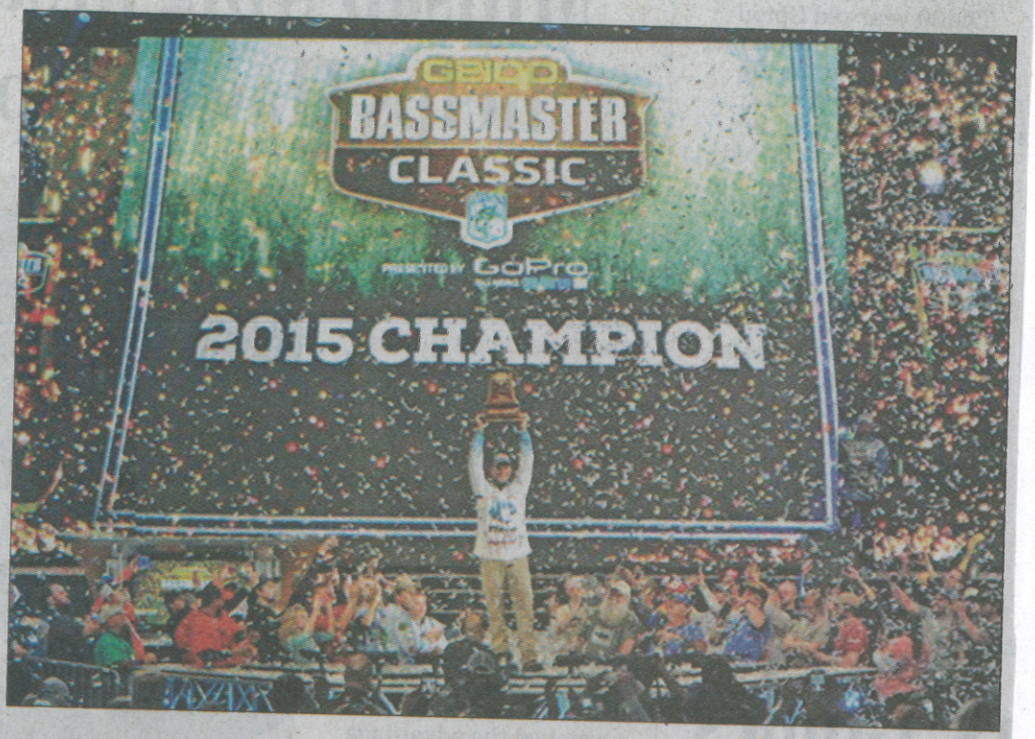
Field notes from the Bassmaster Classic

BY PHILLIP GENTRY
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COURTESY OF BASSMASTER

The 2015 Bassmaster Classic left a lasting impression on a number of local sportsman while leaving $300,000 with local angler Casey Ashley.

If you are like a lot of sportsmen, it's taken several days of being snowbound to get things back to normal after the Super Bowl of bass fishing came to town.

For those who attended this year's Bassmaster Classic, whether that was watching the anglers blast off from the Green Pond Landing in Anderson, visiting the Bassmaster Classic Expo at the TD Convention Center in Greenville, attending the weigh-in at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena or maybe even getting out on Lake Hartwell and following one of the anglers, it was one of those rare events that come to town once in a blue moon but leave lasting impressions.

Whether you attended all, some or none of the events, here are a few observations that stood out in my mind:

— I had never seen a fiberglass boat freeze solid to a trailer. The temperatures on the first day of competition were in the single digits. Everyone was concerned with ice on the boat ramps, but it never occurred to most that it would take some shaking, maneuvering and versing in to the water to get some of the boats off the trailer. Likewise for small amounts of water freezing in bilge pumps, live wells and boat hatches, rendering them inoperable.

— The online coverage of the competitors in action is either the greatest thing or the worst thing for the sport. The camera footage that was available by streaming online was awesome. On Sunday morning, most of the visitors to the Bassmaster Classic Expo knew that Casey Ashley had already caught a limit of fish by 8:30 a.m. and started to cull small ones while other competitors had only caught one or two fish.

— Likewise, the online Bass Track feature, where the on-board marshal or cameraman enters the number and estimated weight of fish caught and it updates on the Bassmaster website immediately, either needs to be improved or scrapped. As an example, Takahiro Omori wasn't on anyone's radar on the second day until Bass Track said he had three fish, and when he came in he was the leader.

— There is a ton of money in bass fishing and just recreational fishing in general. The winner got a check for $300,000. The competitors all have $80,000 bass boats pulled by $60,000 trucks and are outfitted with another $15,000 of electronics, gear, and tackle — most of which is sponsor-provided — in the hopes that one day fans like you and I will buy one at retail price.

— The most impressive gadgets at the Bassmaster Classic Expo were the sonar units now offered by folks like Lowrance, Humminbird and Garmin. Side imaging, down scan, 360 sonar, HD resolution, Ethernet connections, USB ports, digital mapping in 1-foot increments — if you spend more than a half-dozen days a year fishing and you aren't up-to-speed on today's sonar technology, you are cheating yourself.

— Funniest quote I heard all week was from Ashley about winning the Classic: "How much of that money do you have to split with your crew that travel around with you?" "Crew? My crew is the four tires under the truck I'm driving."

— Funniest video of the week was Glenn Corley and Dan Kibler sitting at a media table grilling bass pro Cliff Crochet from Pierre Part, La., whose only tongue-in-cheek response to the questioning was "I'm just here so I don't get fined."