



SIUE's Hartnagel and Wesley to compete for Bass Fishing Championship

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Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Bass Master Club members Zach Hartnagel and Dalton Wesley will compete in the 2016 [Fishing League Worldwide \(FLW\) College Fishing National Championship](#) on Lake Keowee in Seneca, S.C., during March 17-18.

To qualify for the championship, 194 teams competed in last year's Kentucky Lake FLW College Fishing Open. Ten teams qualified during the two-day tournament, including the SIUE duo.

Hartnagel is a junior majoring in civil engineering in the School of Engineering (SOE), while Wesley is a sophomore in the SOE. They will square off against 57 teams in the championship.

Hartnagel noted the challenge in preparing for a site with which they are unfamiliar. "We prepare by researching online sources, looking at maps and breaking down different strategies to tackle a tournament," he said. "Fishing this time of year is always so weather dependent that it could change basically in one night with a warm or cool front, so we just have to have as many plans that we think can win according to how the weather and everything plays out."

Hartnagel maintains that much of fishing is confidence. "We fish multiple bodies of water throughout the year where we have no experience or what experience we do have is from a different time of year, so we just have to adjust and adapt to the conditions," he said. "We also get two days of practice before the tournament, where we will be able to run some water and eliminate some water. It's big water, so there is no way we will see it all."

The duo's experience as a team and their similar styles and philosophies provide the foundation for their success. "We both like fishing the same baits and look for the same types of things on lakes, so that helps that we get to work these areas together," Hartnagel said. "Also, we fish together a lot. We fish all of the school competitions. Then we also fish multiple tournament circuits outside of school such as these winter divisions as well as tons of local tournaments. Experience trumps it all. We both can put our knowledge together and go from there."

Hartnagel's passion for the sport came from an early age. "I have to thank my grandpa and father for some of what I've learned, as they taught me so much and made it possible for me to fish all the time," he said. "Again, experience allows for successful trips on the water. I am on the water every chance I get."

Teams will compete for the most prestigious title in collegiate bass fishing along with the top prize of a Ranger Z175 bass boat.