

Bassmaster Elite

By Doug Robinson, PPR Special Events Office



Philadelphia Parks & Recreation had the unique opportunity to a part of a first time ever Bassmaster Elite event on the Delaware River. What many didn't realize is that PPR was the backbone of the staging area and launch for all 105 anglers and their sleek bass boats. The pro anglers came from all over the country and entered into the Delaware River via the newly acquired Frankford Arsenal Boat Ramp. They were greeted by PPR employees, park rangers and Philadelphia Police which provided security, and a top-notch boat launch area that gave them space to prepare for each of the four tournament days. Although the spotlight was on Penn's Landing, which is where the televised weigh-in was happening, our staff provided our own spotlight with only a week to prepare the site for this event and to provide what was needed by the anglers, the public and the organizers.

Each day brought a slightly new challenge to the staff.

The first day was simply to overcome the challenge of never experiencing an event like this and not knowing what to expect. The second day was to adapt our set up to compensate for the amount of public which arrived, at sunrise, to watch the anglers take off at high speeds from the launch. The third day was to change the traffic patterns inside the park, to alleviate the complications that we were met with the previous day, and an increase of public attendance. The final day was a showcase of the best

anglers, and PPR showed them who was the best by maintaining the highest level of service to the anglers, the public and the organizers possible.



When all was said and done, PPR staff received nothing but compliments from the public about how we were accommodating to them so that they could have a great experience for this first time ever event. We received many thanks from Bassmaster and the local organizers, and from the anglers who had doubts, at first, that their vehicles and equipment would be safe at a city facility. One angler was quoted in saying that "knowing I was coming back to a well secured location allowed me to focus more on fishing and a lot less on what I was going to find when I came back." Winner of the Bassmaster Elite and Philadelphia native Michael "Ike" Iaconelli was the last to leave and treated us to a showing of how it's done before giving us many thanks of his own.



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