

# Rus Snyder wins the Dakota Lithium Bassmaster Kayak Series AOY

*Shallow-water consistency lifts Snyders to Bassmaster Kayak Series AOY title*

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, UNITED STATES, October 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Rus Snyders entered the [2023 Yamaha Rightwaters Bassmaster Kayak Series powered by TourneyX](#) season with one goal in mind: win the [Dakota Lithium Bassmaster Kayak Angler of the Year](#) title.

With a total of 746 points accumulated across four events, Snyders accomplished his goal and claimed the AOY title, earning the \$5,000 top prize. He capped off his incredible season with a second-place finish at the Susquehanna River last weekend.

“It means a lot to win this,” he said. “It is always the goal of any tournament series that I enter. The AOY is the first thing on my mind as far as my goals to accomplish. Even more so than winning a championship event. It is a reflection of the entire year as a whole and not just one tournament. I cashed a check in every tournament, and I’m happy anytime I can get a check.”

“

It is gratifying when you accomplish such a large goal”

*Rus Snyders*

The California native turned Tennessean outlasted Alabama’s Nick Dyer, who finished second with 727 points, and Elite Series pro Greg DiPalma, who finished third with 726 points.



Winner of the Dakota Lithium Bassmaster Kayak Series AOY Rus Snyders

Throughout the year, Snyders continually picked apart shallow-water cover and structure. While the season spanned across vastly different fisheries, his understanding of how water moves

around these shallow areas contributed greatly to his success.



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"When you are fishing shallow, it is important to recognize ambush points, feeding areas and to be as efficient as possible in mechanics," he explained.

"Efficiency is everything, and the better you can recognize those areas they will use to feed, the more you can eliminate the areas that aren't going to be as effective."

Of the four Bassmaster Kayak Series tournaments he fished in 2023, Snyders finished in the Top 15 or better in all four. He opened the season with a third-place finish at Lake Guntersville before traveling to Lake Hartwell and finishing in 15th place.

Between those two events, Snyders also won the Yamaha Rightwaters Bassmaster Kayak Series Championship at Chickamauga Lake and hoisted that trophy on the 2023 Academy Sports + Outdoors Bassmaster Classic stage.

"It is gratifying when you accomplish such a large goal," he said.

With one drop to give for AOY eligibility, Snyders did not participate in the Possum Kingdom Lake event but came back strong in La Crosse, Wis., with a second-place finish on the Upper Mississippi River before his runner-up showing at the Susquehanna River.

"That was my fourth tournament in La Crosse, and I fished in the same area I fished in the last three events. It paid off," he said. "I had to take it tournament by tournament, I didn't want to get too ahead of myself. But as soon as the La Crosse tournament ended, my main focus at that point was working really hard for the last tournament."

While he is more comfortable fishing shallow-water situations in a kayak, lakes tend to cater to Snyders' strengths. So although the Susquehanna River is a shallow fishery, Snyders wasn't super-confident about his prospects when he arrived in Pennsylvania.

Although calm conditions prevailed most of practice, producing some of the best smallmouth fishing many anglers had ever experienced, a major cold front also moved through the area the last practice day. That made Snyders even more unsure if he could finish where he needed to in order to wrap up AOY.

"When I got into bass fishing, it was in a bass boat," Snyders explained. "Coming from that world, we go to a lot of the lakes that are similar to what I grew up fishing out of a boat. Drew Gregory, Jody Queen and some of those people, that's not what they specialize in. But when we go to a place like the Susquehanna River, you can take all of the top guys and they won't be the favorite because you are competing against guys who have fished rivers like that their whole lives. When

we go to these rivers, it is so difficult to do well.

“So I didn’t have a ton of confidence going into that event, even though it is something I really like doing and spend a lot of time doing.”

Snyders combated that by working harder than he has for any other tournament, and when the weather changed on the final day of practice, he marked over 100 waypoints in his primary area to ensure he had enough to fish.

“In order for me to lock it up, I knew I needed a sixth-place finish or better,” he said. “I just tried to keep an open mind. Knowing the weather conditions were playing out that way, I had a strategy to really find as many targets as I could. The bass were really living in places where they could tuck under something. I zigzagged back and forth and between the cuts of every island. I left no stone unturned.”

That hard work paid off, and while he couldn’t see the majority of the targets he marked because of the rising water, he was able to cast to them with a Megabass Magdraft swimbait and a Neko-rigged Z-Man Bang StickZ. His Torqeedo motor was also imperative to proper boat positioning. Snyders made just a few casts at every target before moving to the next waypoint.

That tournament will go down as his favorite of the season.

“When you look at the amount of fish caught, it was the best week of smallmouth fishing I have had in my entire life,” Snyders said. “I’m glad my hard work paid off.”

Snyders will now look ahead to next season and attempt to become the first back-to-back Bassmaster Kayak Series AOY champion in the short history of the kayak series. The 2024 season will kick off at Lake Murray in late February.

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