

Southeast Region Top 40 Championship

Grissom and Miglicco Claim Victories on Lake Palestine

The Southeast Region Individual Trail held its 2026 Top 40 Championship October 17-18 on Lake Palestine, launching out of Lake Palestine Resort South in Frankston, Texas.

The championship field featured 10 Boaters and seven Non-Boaters competing for four coveted spots on the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Team. The top two finishers in each division earned the opportunity to represent Texas at the 2027 B.A.S.S. Nation Central Qualifier, with the lake and dates to be determined.

Under the tournament format, Boaters competed with a five-fish daily limit, while Non-Boaters were allowed a three-fish daily limit.

Lake Palestine offers anglers a diverse fishery and has long been a popular destination for largemouth bass tournaments. The reservoir was formed by the construction of the 5,720-foot-long Blackburn Crossing Dam on the Neches River. Construction began in 1960 and was completed on June 13, 1962. The resulting reservoir stretches approximately 18 miles from northwest to southeast, features roughly 135 miles of shoreline, and reaches nearly four miles across at its widest point. The lake is primarily fed by the Neches River and Kickapoo Creek.

Since I was unable to attend the event personally, there isn't any pre-tournament dock talk or predictions to report. But once the anglers hit the water, the results told the story.

Day One

At the conclusion of the Day One weigh-in, Mason McQuerry of The Bass Club sat atop the Boater Division after bringing three fish to the scales weighing 14.89 pounds. His bag was anchored by an impressive 8.38-pound largemouth.

Tye Grissom of the Vidor Bass Anglers Association was close behind in second place with a five-fish limit weighing 12.79 pounds, setting the stage for what would become a dramatic second day.

In the Non-Boater Division, Charlie Miglicco of American Anglers took the early lead with a three-fish limit weighing 6.63 pounds.

Garrett Gilmer of The Bass Club finished Day One in second with three fish weighing 4.77 pounds.

With four Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Team berths on the line, everything came down to the final day.

Day Two and Final Results

Boater Division

Tye Grissom made his move in a big way on Day Two.

Grissom brought a five-fish limit to the scales weighing 23.43 pounds, anchored by a 7.23-pounder. Combined with his Day One weight of 12.79 pounds, Grissom finished with a two-day total of 36.22 pounds, clinching the Southeast Region Top 40 Championship and earning a spot on the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Team for the 2027 Central Qualifier.

Grissom said he expected many competitors to focus on docks, so during practice he intentionally searched for a different pattern, particularly with a cold front approaching. He turned his attention to rocky points and bridge pilings, while still mixing in some docks.

On Day One, he targeted those areas primarily with a Piney Woods ChatterBait and had enough success to keep himself within striking distance of the lead.

When Grissom returned to the water on Day Two, he noticed the water temperature had dropped a couple of degrees. That prompted him to put even more emphasis on rocky points and bridge pilings, although he continued mixing in a few docks later in the day. His better fish came from rocks and bridge pilings while throwing a chartreuse-and-blue-back crankbait.

The adjustment paid off with the tournament's heaviest Boater bag and a come-from-behind victory.

Mason McQuerry of The Bass Club followed his Day One leading weight with a five-fish limit weighing 12.62 pounds on Day Two. His two-day total of 27.51 pounds earned him second place overall and, more importantly, the second Boater position on the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Team.

McQuerry entered the tournament with no previous knowledge of Lake Palestine. During practice, he covered water looking for areas where he believed bass would position under the cold-front conditions the anglers were expected to face.

He located a flat and several stretches of docks where he could generate bites, but initially he wasn't finding the quality he needed.

That changed on Day One when McQuerry switched his ChatterBait to black and blue. The color change immediately began producing better-quality bites and helped propel him into the Day One lead.

On Day Two, however, McQuerry found himself catching mostly smaller fish. With time running out, he made another color adjustment at approximately 2 p.m. The late change paid off, allowing him to fill his five-fish limit during the final 15 minutes of competition and secure his Central Qualifier berth.

Allen Harwell of The Bass Club rounded out the Boater Division's top three, finishing with eight fish over the two-day event weighing 24.43 pounds.

Non-Boater Division

The biggest fireworks of the final day came from Charlie Miglicco of American Anglers.

After leading the Non-Boater Division with 6.63 pounds on Day One, Miglicco brought an outstanding three-fish limit to the scales on Day Two weighing 18.40 pounds.

His final-day bag was anchored by an 8.94-pound giant, giving him a two-day total of 25.03 pounds and a wire-to-wire victory in the Non-Boater Division.

The win also secured Miglicco a spot on the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Team for the 2027 Central Qualifier.

Miglicco said his Day One boater concentrated primarily on docks, where he used a Texas-rigged K&R Brush Hog to catch his limit.

Day Two turned into a completely different story.

On his very first cast, Miglicco threw a Yellow Magic topwater to a rocky point and connected with a 6.60-pound bass. From there, they concentrated on rocky points and bridge pilings, with a few docks mixed into the rotation.

The highlight came when Miglicco worked a 6XD crankbait around a bridge piling and connected with an 8.94-pound bass, the largest fish caught by either division during the championship.

Garrett Gilmer of The Bass Club entered the final day in second place and did exactly what he needed to do to hold onto the second qualifying position.

Gilmer brought three fish to the scales on Day Two weighing 5.33 pounds. Combined with his Day One weight of 4.77 pounds, he finished with a two-day total of 10.10 pounds, securing second place and the remaining Non-Boater position on the Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Team.

Gilmer said his Day One boater began the tournament targeting main-lake points, but the pattern produced very little action. They eventually moved to docks, where they found plenty of bites but struggled to generate keeper-size fish.

Gilmer targeted the docks with Texas-rigged Baby Brush Hogs in watermelon/red and a shaky head paired with a black or Junebug Trick Worm.

On Day Two, Gilmer's boater started in deeper water around stumps. The decision paid off quickly, and Gilmer had his three-fish limit by approximately 9 a.m., with all three coming on a shaky head with a black Trick Worm.

They later moved to docks, where Gilmer said he had opportunities to improve his weight but unfortunately lost a couple of quality fish. His early limit, however, proved enough to secure second place and his trip to the Central Qualifier.

Mark O'Brenckman of the Seven Coves Bass Club finished third overall in the Non-Boater Division with a two-day total of three fish weighing 6.27 pounds.

Big Bass Honors

Mason McQuerry captured Boater Division Big Bass honors with the 8.38-pound largemouth he caught on Day One.

Charlie Miglicco claimed Non-Boater Big Bass as well as Overall Big Bass of the Tournament with his 8.94-pound Lake Palestine giant caught on Day Two.

Texas B.A.S.S. Nation Team Qualifiers

Four anglers emerged from Lake Palestine with spots at the 2027 B.A.S.S. Nation Central Qualifier:

Boater Division

- 1st: Tye Grissom, Vidor Bass Anglers Association: 36.22 lbs.
- 2nd: Mason McQuerry, The Bass Club: 27.51 lbs.

Non-Boater Division

- 1st: Charlie Miglicco, American Anglers: 25.03 lbs.
- 2nd: Garrett Gilmer, The Bass Club: 10.10 lbs.

Congratulations to Tye, Mason, Charlie, and Garrett on earning the opportunity to represent Texas B.A.S.S. Nation at the 2027 B.A.S.S. Nation Central Qualifier.

We would also like to thank Southeast Region Director Tye Grissom and all of the participating anglers for their time, effort, and commitment in making the 2026 Southeast Region Top 40 Championship a success.

Written by:

Robert Royal

Southeast Region Secretary



Pictured L-R – Tye Grissom Boater Champion, Mason McQuerry 2nd Place Boater; Charlie Miglicco Non-Boater Champion & Garrett Gilmer 2nd Place Non-Boater



Mason McQuerry shows off his first day bag of 3 at 14.89 and the Boater Big Bass of 8.38 pounds.



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Charlie Migglico shows off two from his 3 fish limit of 18.40 pounds including the Big Bass of the tournament an 8.94 pounder.



Miglicco & Grissom show off a few of their final day catches.