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– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

ARNDT AND HUJAR WIN NEW YORK B.A.S.S. NATION HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIP ON OWASCO LAKE

Auburn, New York---Mother Nature had some surprises waiting for the twenty four High School Bassmasters this weekend to add to the challenges of Tournament bass fishing. Twenty four anglers, three young women and eighteen young men, from West Irondequoit, McQuaid, Corning Painted Post, Spencerport, Cicero, Sandy Creek and Phoenix High Schools competed on Sunday as two angler teams for the opportunity to attend the B.A.S.S. Nation High School Bassmasters National Championships July 22nd to July 25th on Kentucky Lake at Paris, Tennessee. Huge thunderstorms on Friday which caused muddy water on the entire lake, a strong North wind on Saturday's practice day followed by even stronger South winds for Sunday's tournament day made fishing difficult for all. Twelve volunteer boaters took on the challenge of taking the two angler teams on the lake for both practice time and the eight hours on tournament day. With high hopes for success, New York BASS Nation past President Chuck Rowlee sent the boats out in order for the day at 6:30 AM. Little did anyone realize that while he was the last to leave in the morning, his two anglers would reverse that order at the end of the day.

At two thirty, all of the boats had returned safely. As this time of year is still the Catch and Release season for bass, all of the teams were assigned special scales to weigh the fish on the water and then immediately release them. They recorded their weights and when they arrived back at the docks, the weight sheets were collected by tournament officials. Everyone returned to Bass Pro Shops Auburn, the co-sponsor for this event where the anglers did some shopping and enjoyed hot dogs and sodas. The weights were recorded and the order of placement determined, all the anglers, the boaters and the families met at the fishing department aquarium where Fishing Manager Patrick Spencer and New York BASS Nation President Fred Blom began the awards presentations.

The top finishers for West Irondequoit Eagles Fishing Club were Kaitlyn Garbanzo and Lillia Rodriguez, both seniors who were determined to attend and compete. Following a Friday night Senior Prom, both young women woke up early and were driven to Auburn to practice on Saturday and then returned on Sunday to catch four largemouth bass including a 3 ½ pounder to have a total weight of 9 pounds, 9 ounces. A fantastic achievement for these two young women who have set the stage for the future fishing clubs to show that young women are just as proficient as the young men in learning and competing as well as enjoying the outdoors.

In Fifth Place from Corning Painted Post, with 10 pounds 13 ounces of smallmouth bass were Earl Leonard and Chris Mattison with boat captain Mike Morrin. In Fourth Place from Sandy Creek Isaac Eisch and from Phoenix Dominick Krause caught a total of 11 pounds 4 ounces. In Third Place from McQuaid Jesuit High School, with 15 pounds 2 ounces of smallmouth bass were Aiden Blake and Lock Holmes, both Freshmen who will be continuing their school's fishing club in the coming years.

The top two teams in this competition earn the invitations to compete at the National Championships. Each state in the B.A.S.S. Nation is allowed to send two teams. In 2014, we only had four young men

who had qualified to attend the competition. This year, four clubs had a total of 80 members who chose to send the twenty four who competed this weekend. Many thanks to Anthony Lipani at West Irondequoit, Matt Thomas and Chris Mullroy at McQuaid Jesuit High School, Kevin Scanlon from Corning Painted Post High School and Dereck Bigford from Cicero High School who lead the New York Club for their many hours working with all of the young people to learn about and to go fishing.

Finishing in Second Place, from McQuaid were Liam Blake and Matt Brien with a solid limit of smallmouth bass weighing in at 18 pounds 8 ounce. Fishing with New York BASS Nation Angler of the Year Chris Obrien as their boater, these young anglers fought the wind in twenty foot deep water to catch their fish.

Finishing in First Place, the 2015 New York BASS Nation High School Champions were Michael Arndt and Ryan Hujar. This will be Michael's second trip to the National Championship as he competed there last year. Fishing with past president Chuck Rowlee as their boater, they had found a school of big smallmouth bass in practice that were also in 20 foot water. Anchored by two 4 pound 6 ounce fish, Michael and Ryan had a total weight of 19 pounds 15 ounces to win the championship. During practice the young men and their boat captain had found two spots where they found bass schooled together. They spent an hour in the morning on the first spot but the wind was blowing so hard, they just couldn't stay there. Mother Nature again must have had a plan because when they moved to their second spot, they caught all of their fish and won the championship!!

About the NYBN...The New York B.A.S.S. Nation (NYBN) has been operating for over 40 years and its 50 plus B.A.S.S. sanctioned bass chapter clubs, represent more than just tournament fishing. We strive to promote and protect the sport of bass fishing by organizing award winning programs in youth, conservation and community service. Associated with Bass Anglers Sportsman's Society, the NYBN is the New York region's foremost advocate for bass fishing and fisherman's rights. The organization offers a competitive annual tournament tour and extensive youth and conservation projects. Some of our members have proudly advanced into the professional ranks and competed in national level competitions.

The New York BASS Nation High School program is in its second year with clubs forming to help young people learn how to fish. By affiliating with their high schools, the young men and women take pride in representing their schools and in competing for championships at the state and national level. This is intended as a lifetime journey to enjoy fishing and carry on the cycle of learning and participation for both men and women. Any school representatives wanting to learn more about starting a program at your school, please contact Fred Blom, NYBN President at 585-748-6222.

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Photo Attachments:

Photo #1 – 2015 High School Championship competitors

Photo #2 - 2015 High School Champions and National Championship Qualifiers.
L to R Patrick Spencer, Michael Arndt, Chuck Rowlee, Ryan Hujar

Photo #3- 2015 High School National Championship Qualifiers
L to R Patrick Spencer, Matt Brien, Liam Blake, Chris Obrien