

YOUTH NOTES

► **CUB SCOUTS TO CASTINGKIDS**

ROGERSVILLE, Ala. — The Lake Guntersville Bassmasters discovered that an annual Cub Scout Fishing Jamboree was the ideal event to introduce youngsters to the Bassmaster CastingKids contest. The event was held Sept. 16 at Wheeler State Park in Rogersville, Ala., and drew about 200 kids from Cub Scout packs throughout northern Alabama.

"This is the first year we have participated in this event with the CastingKids contest," said Don Gowen, Lake Guntersville Bassmasters member and District 2 director of the Alabama B.A.S.S. Federation Nation (www.albassfednation.com). "The Cub Scout master called me and asked what we could do to show them something about fishing. I told him about the youth and the CastingKids programs that BASS has and I said I would see what I could do to put it together."

Gowen was out of town during the Jamboree, so his son and fellow club member, Blake Gowen, coordinated the event. More than 30 Cub Scouts competed in CastingKids, but several youngsters under the qualifying age were given the opportunity to practice and score on the flipping, pitching and casting stages.

Before the CastingKids contest, Blake conducted a fishing seminar for the scouts along with local pro angler Ed Guice and local guide Jim Burks. Guice also brought in fishing tackle for giveaways. "He had a pickup truck full of stuff to put in bags for the kids so everybody got a prize," said Don Gowen. Other club members helping run the CastingKids contest were Doug Stevenson, Greg Polston and Dennis Morgan.

► **BIG AND UGLY**

ZANESVILLE, Ohio — Having a love of bass fishing is one thing, but being able to catch bass is another. Recognizing this fact, Todd Thompson, president of the Ohio B.A.S.S. Federation Nation (www.ohiobassfederationnation.com), developed Ohio's Big Ugly Award.

The award is bestowed upon the youth angler — one from each age group — who catches the biggest fish other than a black bass. Award rules require the fish to be legally caught, under all applicable rules of the tournament. Absolutely no live bait is allowed.



J.C. Webb received the Big Ugly Award because of his bluegill catch.

Photo courtesy of OBFN

"It's very popular," said Thompson. "There are times when the kids chase carp they see swimming in shallow water. Sounds silly, but the award is popular among the kids. They fish for fun and a love of the sport. That's what we're trying to instill in them."

This year's Big Ugly Junior Classic winners were 8-year-old J.C. Webb for his 3-ounce bluegill and Mahmoud Elarossi, from the older division, who caught a 10-pound carp. Each received a bag of fishing products from Boat Boys of Newark, Ohio.

► **UTAH'S YOUTH**

SALT LAKE CITY — Zach Alexander and Sunny Hawk are having a good year. The Utah B.A.S.S. Federation Nation youth anglers have qualified to represent the Beehive State at the Junior Bassmaster World Championship on Alabama's Logan Martin Lake, Feb. 18, 2007. It'll be a first trip to the big event for Hawk; the third for Alexander.

The road to Logan Martin wasn't easy for



Last year's near miss has Zach Alexander hoping the third time's a charm.

Photo by Gerald Crawford

either young man. Utah uses a point system to qualify. Forty youth anglers were offered three qualifying tournaments. Points from their best two performances were totaled to determine who would represent the state.

Next year will be even tougher. It'll take four solid performances out of five to qualify for the 2008 Junior Bassmaster World Championship. "We want to get the kids involved and give them lots of opportunities to fish," said Utah's president, Rick Quattlebaum.

Hawk, competing in the 15 to 18 age group, likes to throw a Boze Sumo Frog or a Pepper Jig. "I hope conditions are right for those baits at Logan Martin," said the hopeful first-timer.

Alexander, representing the 11 to 14 age group, has 2006 to think about, where he finished 1 ounce short of first place. "I was proud of what I did last year, but I wanted to win. I hope this year will be my time," said the Olympus Jr. High ninth-grader.

Hawk and Alexander are fast friends, fishing and hanging out in their off time. They're looking forward to their trip. "We'll have a good time no matter what," says Hawk.

► **JUNIOR OKIES**

LAWTON, Okla. — Drew Creel, 16, and Hunter Reilley, 13, bested the other anglers in their respective age groups and will be representing the Oklahoma B.A.S.S. Federation Nation (www.okbassfednation.com) at the 2007 Junior Bassmaster World Championship.

A cold front had blown through the area dropping water temperatures in Lake Lawtonka 10 degrees overnight. Strong winds and bluebird skies made for a tough day of fishing which produced few fish for the junior anglers. But Creel and Reilley, members of the Oklahoma City Junior Bassmasters club, won their titles by bringing in bass that weighed only an ounce more than the second place finishers.

Creel is following in the footsteps of his older brother, Ryan, who represented Oklahoma in the 2005 JWC.

In addition to BASS Youth program funding for the contenders, the OKC Junior Bassmasters hosted fund-raising tournaments, sold merchandise and received private donations to help provide travel assistance for the Creel and Reilley families in February.

► **INLAND EMPIRE SENDS ANOTHER**

OTHELLO, Wash. — The Inland Empire Junior Bassmasters club of Spokane, Wash., won its sixth state title in eight tries when member David Slater became the 2006 junior champ of the Washington B.A.S.S. Federation Nation (www.bassfedwa.homestead.com).

The 12-year-old angler won the 11-14 age division in the competition on Potholes Reservoir after landing two largemouth weighing 2.3 pounds with a Carolina rigged lizard. A first-time state champion, Slater advances to the Junior Bassmaster World Championship this February at Alabama's Lake Logan Martin.

Slater, last year's state championship runner-up, will be joined at the championship by Damon Hollingsworth, who took top honors in the 15-18 age division. Hollingsworth, of the Tri-Cities Bassmasters, caught two largemouth weighing 6.57 pounds using a large soft plastic tube to win his title.

Hot weather, heavy boat traffic and an abundant supply of baitfish contributed to the tough fishing conditions, according to the Federation Nation's Joel Nania.

Tri-Cities member Jori Clark took the runner-up spot in the 11-14 division. Last year, she was a Washington state champion and national finalist in the Bassmaster CastingKids competition.

The volunteer boaters for the event came from the Inland Empire Bass Club, Tri-Cities Bassmasters and the Ranier Bass Club.

► **A SPECIAL EFFORT**

HAMILTON COUNTY, Ohio — Athletes from the Special Olympics didn't have enough functional rods and reels to compete at their annual fishing event held at Ohio's Lake Isabella. When Bill Donaldson, president of the Warren County Bassmasters (WCB), heard about the problem, his club sprang into action.

"We received 50 rods and reels in a state of disrepair that can't be described. They needed serious attention," says Donaldson.

Ted Hegner, treasurer of the WCB, contacted the Cincinnati Bass Pro Shops. The store



Special Olympics competitors were able to fish, thanks to the Warren County Bassmasters.

Photo courtesy of WCB

readily agreed to a steep discount on parts and materials. With \$300 donated by the club, the rods and reels were repaired, refurbished and tuned up by club members. Each competitor now had the use of a serviceable rod and reel, along with a chance to catch a fish or two.

More than 130 competitors fished in the Special Olympics. "They had a terrific time," said Janet Smith, executive director of the Hamilton County Special Olympics. "We caught more fish this year than we have in the past. The fishing days [were] more enjoyable for the Special Olympians by having fishing equipment that actually worked."

The WCB members plan to continue their relationship with the Special Olympics. Future plans include a CastingKids competition as well as tackle repair services. "It's good for everybody," said Donaldson.

► **OKIE KIDS CAST TO SEMIFINALS**

OKLAHOMA CITY — Devin Dixon, 11, who was a national CastingKids finalist in 2005, earned a perfect score of 150 this year, qualifying for the semifinals.



Dixon is looking for another trip to the national CastingKids finals.

Photo by Gerald Crawford

To win the state championship, he had to perform better than his brother. It turns out he was able to beat him by a margin of 20 points. Also, now that he has won in the 11- to 14-year-old division, Dixon has won a state championship in both age groups.

Ryan Williams, 9, won the 7-10 age group. Dixon and Williams will represent the Oklahoma Federation Nation (www.okbassfednation.com) at the semifinals in Gadsden, Ala., in conjunction with the B.A.S.S. Federation Nation Championship. There, they will compete against state champions from across the United States (plus Ontario) to determine five finalists from each of the two CastingKids age divisions. The 10 youths will advance to the CastingKids finals set for Birmingham, Ala., in February, during the Bassmaster Classic.

Federation Happenings contributors this month were Ed Harp, John Neporadny, Craig Lamb and Gene Gilliland. Please send news of your club or Federation to bass.times@bassmaster.com, or mail to BASS Times, Attn.: Tyler Reed, P.O. Box 10000, Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830.



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