

Bass tourneys gain popularity

OUTDOOR INSIGHTS



Bill Parker

The feisty largemouth circled deeply beneath the boat, making a half-moon out of Terry Sanders' fishing pole. "It's a nice one," he said, as the rod tip dipped toward the water. "If it's a bass it's a real nice one."

The lunker made another run for deep water, doing its best to shake the hook. But Sanders' patient persistence won over in the end as it slipped the net beneath a beautiful 20 1/2-inch, five-pound largemouth bass.

"What a beautiful fish," Sanders exclaimed. "He's a nice one, but he's not the one I wanted." Seconds later the bass vanished its tail as he bade us farewell and disappeared back into the murky water below the boat.

In the past, a night spent in hot pursuit of walleyes on the St. Clair River was enough to pacify Sanders' angling urges, but not any more. That all came to an end a few years ago when he fished in his first bass tournament. "I sold my walleye boat and bought a

bass boat," Sanders explained. "Walleye fishing is a lot of fun and I still enjoy it, but bass fishing is great, too. I really like the excitement of bass tournaments."

Excitement is what Sanders wanted and excitement is exactly what he got. The Southfield resident registered last fall for the Goodyear/Bass'n' Big Bass World Championship. The BBWC, billed as the "World's Richest Fishing Tournament," runs Sept. 1-July 15. Anglers enter their largest single bass caught during the tournament dates. The winner (biggest fish) from each state in the country wins an all-expense-paid trip to the Big Bass World Championship Tournament on Tennessee's Percy Priest Lake, featuring a top prize of \$250,000.

Way back on Sept. 1, opening day of the tournament, Sanders caught another monster largemouth from the same lake on his "very last cast of the day." The bass measured 21 1/2 inches, tipped the scale at 6.5 pounds, and gave Sanders an early lead in the Michigan Division of the BBWC. Last year an 8-pounder won the division. Two years ago a 7-pounder won and three years ago a 5 1/2-pounder won. With just one week left in the tournament,

Sanders remains in the lead as the excitement and tension mount.

"The fishing has been tough this year because of the cold spring," Sanders said. "But I'm really not counting on that six-and-a-half-pounder to hold up. There are some big bass in here and I'd like to catch one for a little insurance."

Which is exactly why Sanders was out on his favorite lake recently, "looking for that 10-pounder."

The lake, which is more of a large pond perched in the midst of an affluent subdivision, has produced a number of large fish for Sanders.

"My best day was six 5-pounders, some fours, threes, and twos, all catch-and-release, of course," he explained.

As he headed out in his 8-foot plastic Bass Hunter Sanders explained the lake held a variety of fish—including a number of "big pike." He suggested I try a rubber worm or a jig with a rubber skirt as opposed to a crankbait to work the odds of hooking up with a feisty, heavy-toothed pike.

It was midday as we launched the boat, and before I could tie a brown and chartreuse "Gitzit" to

my line, Sanders was hauling in a three-pound largemouth.

"This is an average one," he said, as he released the fish. Five casts later he had a similar fish on the line.

The real monsters weren't cooperating this day, but we managed to bring better than 20 bass to the boat. The largest weighed close to five pounds while most were in the 2 1/4- to 3 1/4-pound range.

"There's at least one bass in here that could be a state record," Sanders explained. "Between myself and two friends we have hooked and lost this fish four times. There's no way to be sure until someone catches him, but he could be close to 10 pounds. He's got to be 28 inches long. He's twice as big as that five-pounder."

So far six-and-a-half pounds has been big enough for Sanders. If his luck holds up, he'll be fishing for 10-pounders in Tennessee.

(Anglers are urged to report their success. Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to: Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009 or by fax to 644-1314. Call Bill Parker Monday evenings at 901-2873.)

Hockey teams beat the heat

MSHL ROUNDUP

Barbecuing is nice but no doubt the coolest places to be over Fourth of July weekend were the ice rinks that host the Metro Summer Hockey League. The MSHL got into full gear despite the holiday weekend with three games played Monday followed by two on Tuesday.

The Wildcats moved into sole possession of first place at 3-0 (six points) in the Bakes Conference (which seems like a proper name considering the recent heat wave) with Monday's 13-1 victory over the Spartans.

Redford Bishop Borgess graduate Larry Pilut was missing from the Spartans' lineup but it wouldn't have mattered much the way Bobby Davis played, scoring three goals with two assists. Dave Matthews added a goal and four assists.

Brian Schemmott had the Spartans' lone goal.

The Spartans remained in second place in the Bakes at 2-2 with Tuesday's 10-4 win over the Redskins. Jim Mitchell, from Wayne, scored the hat trick and Matt Coriveau of Livonia had a goal and five assists. Jeff Mitchell, also of Wayne, a recent third-round draft pick of the NHL's Los Angeles Kings, had two goals and two assists.

"We atoned a little from the debacle a day ago," Spartans' coach A.J. Baker said.

The Bulldogs, meanwhile, notched their first win of the season, 8-5, over the Lakers on Monday. The Bulldogs (1-2) and Lakers (1-3) are tied for last place in the Bakes with two points each but the Bulldogs

have a game in hand.

Chris Smith, formerly of Plymouth who plays at Michigan State, led the Bulldogs with two goals and an assist. Matt Allen had three assists.

The Huskies scored a goal with 3:39 left in the third period to break an 8-8 tie and beat the Wolves 9-8 in an Eagle Conference game. The Huskies have five points at 2-0-1 in the Eagle, one point behind the first place Broncos (3-1, six points).

Grant Patterson scored four goals and assisted on another for the Huskies. Matt Brush and Tim Vosenick led the Wolves with three goals each.

The Broncos moved into sole possession of first place in the Eagle with a 14-5 win over the Lakers. The Broncos have six points and a 3-1 record.

Darin Evans had four goals for the Broncos. Tim Osborn added two goals and four assists and Keith Aldridge of West Bloomfield had four assists.

The high-scoring games should continue, according to Baker, who doubles as league commissioner.

"There are a couple defensemen who stay home and an occasional forward who busts his butt for 40 seconds and gets back on defense but everyone knows it's an offensive game," Baker said. "The goalies love it. They want more action."

OUTDOORS CALENDAR

DATES AND EVENTS

ARCHERY

The Michigan Bowhunters Association will hold its 13th annual Bowhunters Rendezvous Saturday and Sunday at the Clare County Fairgrounds in Harrison. The weekend event features seminars, exhibitors, equipment sales, a 28-target 3-D course, arrow speed testing novelty shoots and more.

The Terminator 3-D course, featuring two challenging 30-target courses including one which is handicapped accessible, is open for weekend practice. The course, located 25 miles west of Ann Arbor, features a variety of shots ranging in distances from 20 to 60 yards. The Terminator is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends; call (817) 522-8777 weekends or 478-2830 weekdays.

SAILING

The American Sailing Institute is hosting the Team Interlake Regatta beginning at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, July 10, on Kensington Metropark's Kent Lake; 649-3030 or 645-2726.

TROUT FESTIVAL

The 9th Annual Alpena Brown Trout Festival will take place July 16-25 in Alpena.

FISHING CLUB MEETINGS

The Four Seasons Fishing Club meets 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Maplewood Center in Garden City, 477-3816. (There will be no meeting in July.)

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club meets at 7 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of each month at the Livonia Clarenceville Junior High School, 420-2233.

Romeo B.A.S.S. Busters meet 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month at the Romeo Community Youth and Civic Center, 288-6469.

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

GO BATS

Participants will learn the myths and truths about bats during an evening hike beginning at 8:30 p.m. Friday at Independence Oaks.

DETROIT BRASS

The five-member Detroit Brass will play selections illustrating how the natural world is instrumental to music in this program which begins at 7 p.m. Sunday, July 11, at Independence Oaks.

COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS

Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all Oakland County Parks programs, 625-6473.

METROPARKS

BIKE HIKE

Kids 9-11 can take a bike hike in this program which begins at 10 a.m. today at Indian Springs.

BIRD PUDDING

Children ages 3-5 will make a simple bird feeder and help make a batch of bird pudding in this program which begins at 1 p.m. today at Indian Springs.

ROSCO AND REDHOTS

A program for children featuring Rosco the Clown, hot dogs, magic, jokes, games and more, begins at 7 p.m. Friday at Stony Creek. There is a \$1.50 charge per person and participants should bring roasting forks.

FRIDAY NIGHT CANOE

An opportunity to help paddle the 36-foot Voyager Canoe begins at 8 p.m. Friday at Stony Creek.

STAR PROGRAM

Volunteers from the Warren Astronomical Society will assist participants in viewing the stars in this program which begins at 9:30 p.m. Friday at Indian Springs.

MEADOW MEANDER

Stroll along the Farmland Trail and search for insects, birds and summer wildflowers in this program which begins at 10 a.m. Saturday at Indian Springs.

COUNTY FAIR

A program featuring watermelon eating contests, games, magic, crafts, skits and more runs 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Kensington.

YOUNG ASTRONOMERS CLUB

Kids 8 and older can make a sundial and try to observe sunspots in this program which begins at 1 p.m. Saturday at Stony Creek.

PAINTED FLYERS

Capture, identify and learn about butterflies in this nature program which begins at 1 p.m. Sunday at Stony Creek.

CRITTER STORYTIME

Children ages 3-5 can enjoy stories and activities about our natural world in this program which begins at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Indian Springs.

KITE BUILDING

Kids ages 6-8 will learn to construct a simple kite from easy-to-find materials in this program which begins at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Indian Springs.

KNOT TYING

Kids ages 9-11 will learn to tie several different knots in this program which begins at 10 a.m. Thursday, July 15, at Indian Springs.

CRICKETS

Children ages 3-5 will learn about crickets in this program which begins at 1 p.m. Thursday, July 15, at Indian Springs.

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