

He's ready, eager for start of new bass season



BILL PARKER

OUTDOOR INSIGHTS

An a kid, the lure of the mid-night hour was half of the excitement. Mom and Dad would never stand for my two brothers and I staying out past the time when the street lights came on. But if we explained we would be rowing out to the shallows on the far side of the lake to catch some midnight summer bass, their attitude usually took an about face. At least then they would know exactly where we were and what we were doing with our time.

The most productive nights were the cool ones following a hot, sunny day. Once the mist began to rise from the mirror-like surface of the lake, we

would begin our assault on the shallows and inside edge of the drop with our tempting assortment of frog-colored surface plugs including Jitter Bug, Hula-Poppers and Crazy Crawlers.

Usually, we wouldn't be able to see the lure touch down in the water, but after waiting a few seconds for everything to calm down, there'd be no mistaking the distant gurgle of the water as we'd begin a slow, steady retrieve. And when that same gurgle surfaced, it would be a hum-ary largemouth decided to make a meal of our offering, the excitement culminated in an exhilarating fight with an unscen lunker bass. Even the smaller bass seemed to fight like monsters in the cool darkness of the summer nights.

Over the years, I've lost my zip to stay up until 3 a.m. to catch bass. Now, I prefer the early morning and early evening

trips to the lake so I don't interrupt my sleep quite as much. The bass is still a worthy opponent and a strike never fails to bring excitement into the boat.

Opening day is here

Bass anglers across the state have been anxiously awaiting the arrival of Saturday and opening day of the 1996 bass season. (The season opens June 15 on Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair and Detroit rivers.)

This year's late arrival of spring has been a thorn in the side of trout, salmon and walleye anglers as the unseasonably cold weather has postponed most traditional spring opportunities. But for bass anglers, the delayed arrival of warm sunny days should equate into an opening-day bass bonanza.

"It should be a great opening day," said tournament angler Ed Dietrich of Livonia. "The weather is about three weeks behind. They've just started going to

their beds the last couple of days when this warm weather finally came in. A lot of big females will probably be caught spawning up in the shallows."

Many bass anglers practice catch-and-release throughout the summer and with the spawners still on their beds, it would be a good idea to release the females this spring as well. You don't want to take the producers out of the lake in the middle of their reproduction cycle.

"Bass usually practice in the middle of the lake in Detroit. Some will come in and spawn, then leave and another flight will move in. They usually spawn in about three different flights," explained Dietrich, who will be competing in the \$100,000 Operation Bass/Redman All American, May 31-June 2, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. "This year, since the fish have been held back for three weeks, it will be a mad rush to get to the beds."

Most inland lakes support a population of largemouth bass while a few also hold smallmouth. The two fish can be distinguished from each other in a couple of ways. The easiest is the color on the side of the fish. Largemouth have a telltale dark horizontal stripe which runs down the middle of the side from just behind the head to the tail. The smallmouth has several vertical marks which sometimes give an appearance of vertical stripes. The mouth of a largemouth is also bigger than the mouth of a smallmouth. When closed, the mouth of a largemouth extends beyond the eye while the mouth on a smallie extends to the eye.

Largemouth are usually found near some sort of structure whether it's a weed bed, a submerged stump or log, a dock or an overhanging branch. Smallmouth prefer cooler water and are usually found around

stony areas and gravel beds.

Lake St. Clair and Saginaw Bay support some of the best bass fisheries in the world, but southeastern Michigan's inland lakes produce some pretty fair catches as well. Some of the top largemouth bass waters in the area include Cass Lake, Maceday and Lotus lakes, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake, Union Lake, Wolverine Lake, Pontiac Lake, Kent Lake, Lake Orion, and Lakeville Lake in Oakland County, Belleville Lake, Huron Lake, Newberg Lake and the Detroit River are the best bets for largemouth in Wayne County.

Hunters and anglers are urged to report their success. Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to *Outdoor*, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Fax information to (810) 644-1314 or call Bill Parker evenings at (810) 901-2673.

Falcons rout Raiders, 4-0

Farmington High was a decisive winner in its soccer rematch with North Farmington in the first round of district tournament play Monday, 4-0. The game was called at halftime because of inclement weather.

Emilie Villenotte, Amanda Porter, Jodi Guilford and Dianna Boyer scored goals for the Falcons, who played Farmington Hills Mercy in a semifinal Wednesday.

Porter also had an assist as did Tiffany Okopny and Angela DeDomenico, who sent a cross from the opposing wing that Boyer timed perfectly to redirect into the goal for the fourth marker.

The teams had tied 3-3 on May 8, and Farmington coach Bob Neff attributed his team's dominance in the second game to improved passing.

"Every since our Harrison game (May 8), we've been trying to raise the level of our passing game, and it's really coming together," he said. "As a team, we're passing the ball better and that's really the difference."

"We're making passes to teammates and stringing passes together. It's not kick ball. As long as we do that, it won't be."

With their effective passing, the Falcons (6-6-2) controlled play in the field, and Neff cited the efforts of half-backs Porter, Jodi Guilford, DeDomenico, Kelly Kandt, Jamie Jakacki, Boyer and Dana Babinsky.

"Everybody was doing super in the midfield," Neff said. "That's really the story. (North) couldn't get it through the midfield to the other side. This was

really the midfielders' game."

Kate Adams was in goal for Farmington and had to stop just two shots. The Raiders had 12 chances. The Falcons finished with a 5-1-4 record.

"After tying them, I was really concerned about a close game," Neff said. "We were determined we didn't want it to be a close game. Maybe the tie game scared us and caused us to be a little more ready. We spent a lot of time being prepared for them."

MERCY 3, HARRISON 0: Jona Kluska scored the first two goals and Colleen Solson the third for the Marins in the district tournament Monday at Farmington Harrison.

Mercy (8-6-3) outshot the Hawks (2-8-3) by an 11-3 margin. Kluska and Laurin Hendrickson had one assist each.

The game was called with 26 minutes remaining because of a severe thunderstorm.

The goaltending of Harrison keeper Sara Kloosterman "was a big concern, because we have a lot of respect for her," Mercy coach Deepak Shivraman said. "In my book, she's one of the top three goalkeepers in the state. If not the best."

"It's a kinda bittersweet because you like to see good players play. It was similar to last year. We enjoyed playing North Farmington because they had one of the best forwards (All Lord) in the state."

Shivraman also cited the offensive pressure applied by Dety Gynoc, Kluska and Solson as well as the play of Hendrickson and Mary Duggan on defense.

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