

District 230 Bass Fishing Tournament

Des Plaines River, Channahon, IL, 4/5/2009

Victor J. Andrew Brings Home the Title in the First Ever

On April 4, 2009, Consolidated High School District 230 (Carl Sandburg, Victor J. Andrew, and Amos Alonzo Stagg) hosted its first annual Bass Fishing tournament on the Kankakee River (DesPlaines Conservation Area). Each school was allowed two boats, and in each boat were a coach and two fishermen. The tournament rule's meeting was at 6:15 a.m. in which the rules, procedures, and regulations were covered to ensure each student's safety, while at the same making sure each student had a memorable, enjoyable experience. The boats took off at 7:30 a.m., and the fishermen fished until 2:30 p.m.; in the end, Victor J. Andrew High School was victorious, bringing in a five fish limit weighing 9.47 pounds.

The Sandburg Eagles, coached by Scott Plaiser and James Corcoran, mentored six fishermen today: Mark Hanson, Brent Kondziolka, Andy Nolan, Mike Hansen, Billy Rivard, and Anthony Panagopoulos. The Eagles hooked a couple largemouth bass but were unable to score a keeper. Most of their fishing was done in backwater areas, flipping laydowns and throwing rattle traps near visible cover.

The Stagg Chargers, coached by Brian Jackson and Coach Banik, competed well by scoring three keepers in Boat 1 and one keeper in Boat 2. The fishermen who competed in Boat 1 were Brandon Weber and Frank Lauth; their weight for three fish was 5.67 pounds. Competing in boat 2 were Walter Brzoska and Matt Anchor; their weight for one fish was 3.25 pounds. Stagg's alternates were Jon Williams and Alex Beebe. Most of Stagg's fishing took place at discharges where the fishermen threw crankbaits and tubes near warm water; some fish were also caught in cold water near current breaks.

The victorious Andrew Thunderbolts—coached by John Bartgen—entered one boat into the District 230 tournament, and his team performed wonderfully. Captain of the Andrew Bass Fishing team—senior, Eric Multon—led the Thunderbolts by scoring 4 out of the 5 keepers in route to a victory. The other keeper, a 3.86 pound pre-spawn largemouth, was caught by Robert Pohlman who was ripping a rattle trap off of a main river point. The Thunderbolts third participant, Mike Oliosi, will look to regain his efficiency during the next tournament. Coach Bartgen commented on Mike Oliosi's performance, "Mike did a great job for us today, even though he didn't bag any keepers. Some days are tough; Eric was sticking fish on plastics, so Mike kept throwing the typical pre-spawn, moving baits. I think today was a good learning experience for my guys. Although Mike didn't catch any keepers, he did his job. This was a true team effort today." The Thunderbolts focused most of their fishing in backwaters, flipping laydowns. Occasionally, a rattle trap off a point picked up a keeper bass, thus the 3.86 female Robert Pohlman caught off a point. The Thunderbolts fished water that was 3 to 4 degrees warmer than the main river channel (ex: cuts, channels, marinas, backwaters, etc). Although not as many fish were caught on rattle traps or cranks as originally anticipated, Eric Multon came through for the Thunderbolts as he flipped his way to earn his team a first place finish.

Congratulations to all participants from all schools in District 230 for a job well done! For the first ever District 230 tournament and for 15 athletes and 5 coaches who worked hard and had fun, the tournament was a great success! I am certain that Bass Fishing in Illinois will continue to prosper if the schools, students, parents, and the IHSA continue to push and promote its advancement. Fishing is more than tournaments; its being a humanitarian and an environmentalist; it is learning about nature, catching fish, and making memories. Kudos to the schools and to the IHSA for taking the initiative and being the first state in the country to promote Bass Fishing as an activity educationally worthy of school participation. Keep up the good work, and keep working hard!!!