

VJA Bass Fishing

Special Interest Articles (pg. 1):

- Open House
- DesPlaines River
Spring Showdown

Highlights:

- Past News/
Accomplishments **2**
- Meetings/Speakers **3**
- Future Events **4**
- Fishing Tips **5**
- Angler Profile **6**
- Supporters **7**

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Open House for Incoming Freshman

On Monday, January 25, 2010, Victor J. Andrew High School hosted its Open House in the south gymnasium, and the Bass Fishing Club had a booth with handouts, sign-up sheets, videos, and clothing.

From Coach Bartgen, Coach Flynn, and Coach Arndt, we would like to thank the future freshman for signing up at our booth, and we are excited to meet them when they get to Andrew High School in the fall of 2010.

Please contact us with any questions you may have.

VJA DesPlaines River *Spring Showdown* Set for April 10, 2010

On April 10, 2010, Victor J, Andrew High School will be hosting their first annual *Spring Showdown* bass fishing tournament on the DesPlaines/Kankakee rivers. We will be launching out of the DesPlaines Conservation Area at 7:00 am sharp.

Our first annual tournament will be a grand one, consisting of approximately 10 schools and 20 boats. Participating in this event will be about 60 student/athletes from various Chicagoland high schools.

The official weigh-in will take place at the Conservation Launch on the Kankakee River at the I-55/Wilmington exit at approximately 1:30 p.m.

If there are any questions regarding the tournament, please contact John Bartgen at JBartgen@d230.org or 708-342-5900.

PAST EVENTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Victor J. Andrew Brings Home the Title in the First Ever District 230 Bass Fishing Tournament (April 2009)

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.

"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."

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!!!

Inaugural 2010 Meeting

During the meeting, additional information was given regarding our fundraiser. Students will be selling Omaha Steak coupons and Restaurant.com certificates. If you are interested in purchasing one, please contact John Bartgen.

On January 20, 2010, Victor J. Andrew High School kicked off another bass fishing season by having their 1st meeting of the year. At the meeting, official VJA bass gear was distributed to those who purchased clothing. Also, club rules and procedures were covered.

The Victor J. Andrew Bass Fishing club consists of two parts: a tournament division and a novice division. For the tournament anglers, their emphasis relies heavily on targeting and catching Black Bass. These anglers study biological make up, seasonal patterns, environmental factors, lures, rods and reels, tournament strategy, water safety, and boat maintenance.

For the novice division, anglers focus on the basics of fishing: casting, simple terminology, fishing for multiple species, tying knots, shore fishing, etc.

Weekly meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays after school will be held for both divisions, and the coaches will use meeting time to teach students about fishing.

As the warm weather approaches, we are looking forward to another successful fishing season at Victor J. Andrew High School.



JANUARY Meetings and Speakers

Meetings: Fish Tales Provides Advice and Hope for VJA Youth Anglers

One of the largest and most well-respected fishing clubs in the state of Illinois—Fish Tales—held their first meeting of 2010 on January 20th, and Chuck Cook, president of Fish Tales, invited the Andrew Bass club out to meet their members and enjoy a night of learning about how an actual bass club functions.

At the meeting, the student athletes listened to rule changes, planned trips, and guest speakers—the entire event was a great experience for the student/athletes and coaches of Victor J. Andrew because we were able to see how an actual club functions.

We would like to especially thank all members of Fish Tales for helping our club achieve our goal of providing our student/athletes with the best possible experience during the 2010 fishing season. We look forward to developing a great friendship with the many caring people within Fish Tales.

Speakers: A Great Coach, an Experienced Fisherman, and a Life-long Role Model: Jim DaRosa.

It was an absolute pleasure to bring three Andrew students to hear Jim DaRosa speak at the Fish Tales meeting on January 20, 2010. Along with Coach Bartgen and Coach Flynn, Jeremy Bilecki and his father, Mike Oliosi, and Robert Pohlman went to meet some local anglers and learn about smallmouth bass fishing tactics.

We try to instill in the student athletes a sense of pride to be able to fish, and throughout Jim's speech, it was evident that he is truly passionate about the great sport of fishing. His speech embodied all of the values we try to teach our student/athletes, and we would like to thank him for giving us the great opportunity to listen to him speak.

During Jim's speech, the valuable knowledge the students learned focused on where fish live. Jim stated the three key characteristics that aid fish in living in certain locations. Those three characteristics are (1). Access to deep water; (2). Food present; and (3). Structure. Listening to speakers as knowledgeable as Jim will help our students as they get ready to "hit the water!"



Freshman angler, Jeremy Bilecki, with a beautiful Smallmouth he caught.

Visit Jim at his website:

www.fishsmallmouthbass.com

FUTURE Events and Meeting

Tinley Park Fishing and Outdoor Show

Tinley Park High School
6111 W. 175th street
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Saturday and Sunday
February 13 and 14
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

This two day show boasts some of the top vendors in the Chicagoland area, as well as some of the top pros. This event is great for all anglers to attend, for there are great deals on rods, reels, and lures. Also, great advice from local fisherman can be a valuable tool for catching more fish in our area.

Bass Pro in Bolingbrook

Bass Pro Shops is located at 709 Janes Ave, Bolingbrook, IL 60440,
Phone: 630 296-2700.

The VJA bass club will be traveling to Bass Pro Shops in Bolingbrook, IL, to look at rods, reels, lures, marine gear, etc. While at Bass Pro, the students will have a chance to speak with sales associates about the latest fishing techniques and gear to catch bass.

Also, the students are looking forward to meeting with a local professional who will speak to them about early spring, pre-spawn fishing. The students and coaches are very fortunate to have this chance to listen to a local professional. Thank you for this opportunity, Bass Pro Shops!



Fishing Connection in Tinley, Park IL

Thank you, Greg.

Greg Katello
Fishing Connection
Phone: 708-532-1476
7897 W. 159th Street
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Greg Katello, owner of Fishing Connection in Tinley Park, IL, has a full service fishing store where he sells rods, reels, lures, and other needed fishing equipment. From the beginning angler to the touring professional, this store has all the gear a fisherman or fisherwoman could want or need.

Greg has been a valued asset to our club and to IHSA bass fishing. His knowledge, advice, and service is unparalleled. As a club, we hope to take a field trip to Greg's store to gain knowledge of fishing in our area before the fishing season begins.

For more information about Fishing Connection in Tinley Park, please contact Greg at 708-532-1476.



Fishing Tip #1: Confidence Baits

By: Bill Wilcox

If you had only one lure to use in your next tournament season, what would it be? Would you choose a worm, spinnerbait, topwater, or something else? They all have advantages and disadvantages at certain times of the year.

If I could only choose one, it would have to be a crankbait. It's not my favorite way to fish, but for tournaments I strongly believe that it is the most versatile and productive of all lures.

The crankbait can be fished anywhere. You can fish it on top, everywhere in between and all the way to the bottom. You can even add weight to make them suspend. If you're fishing heavy cover with a crankbait with a large bill, the bill will act as a guard for the hooks. This is especially true if you'll cut off the bottom hook on the treble, which also makes it weedless.

These days there's no excuse for dull hooks either. There are several brands of hooks on the market that are better at holding their sharpness and you can replace hooks that don't.

Something a lot of anglers overlook is a split ring. These can get rusty and weak just like the hooks. Whenever one looks weak or worn, change it out. Don't let something simple, like a defective split ring, defeat you in a tournament. On crankbaits that don't have split rings such as Mudbugs, I'll add them. This helps to keep you from losing fish when they jump and try to throw the bait.

When fishing a deep-diver, I'll use one that actually goes deeper than the water I'm fishing. If I'm fishing in 10 to 12 feet then I'll use a crankbait that will run 15 feet.

Not all crankbaits will run as deep as they advertise. A good way to find out is to take the time to do some trolling and whenever you bait starts to hit the bottom, check to see how deep the water is and mark on the bait how deep it runs. To get an accurate idea of how deep your bait is running, only let out as much line as you can cast when testing the bait.

The lighter your line, the deeper your lure will go and if you'll run your rod tip down into the water, it will run about a foot or deeper than if your line is on the surface.

Learn the characteristics of the different kinds of crankbaits that you use. Plastic ones will be easier to throw than wooden ones, but by and large wooden ones have better action and more buoyancy than plastic ones.

Think about the action of the lures in reference to the application. Flat-sided cranks have a tighter wobble and will work better in cooler water. I've found that almost without exception a stop-and-go retrieve will out produce a steady one every time. In off-colored water, no matter what your lure color might be use one with rattles. In clear water, go with smaller baits and subdued hues.

If I have a crankbait that seems to really catch fish then I'll mark it and only use it in tournaments. Now it might only be confidence in that lure that makes it so good, but that's the best lure in my tackle box anyway. I probably will fish them harder and longer and in better areas than other baits, but so what if it works.

Probably the foremost reason I would choose crankbaits for tournaments is that on pre-fish practice days I can cover a lot more water than with other lures. So naturally the bass I find, I know will bite a crankbait and then I'll end up catching them on cranks during the tournament.

However, in tournaments you don't have to fish just one lure. That's the good part. The bad part is that we sometimes get stuck on one method and get in a rut. If you want to be successful in tournaments, or even just everyday fishing, you must be versatile in lure selection. But I do feel you must also excel in at least one of them. Whatever that is, for you, keep confidence in the bait. For me that just happens to be a crankbait.

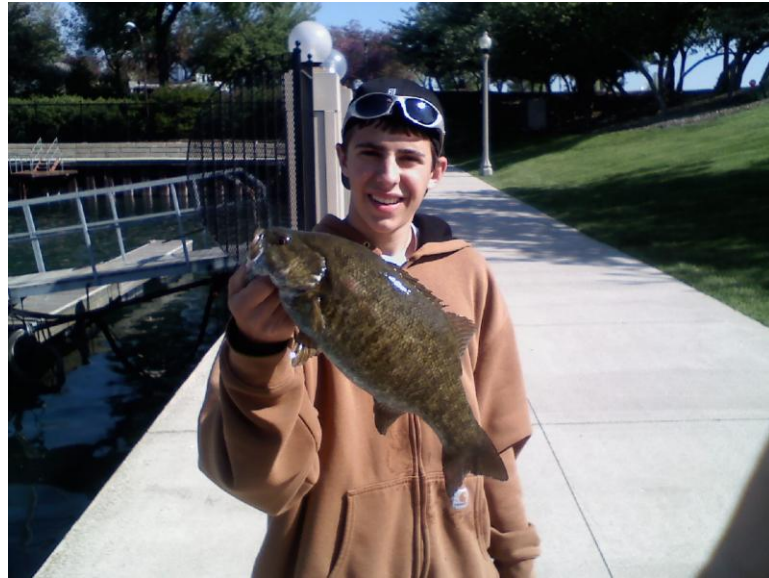
Good luck and I hope to see you on the water.

Bill Wilcox is sponsored by Ranger Boats, Yamaha Outboards, MCMC, BG Products, Pro Rule, Johnson Fiberglass, Brown's Automotive, Continental Batteries, Kistler Rods, Swamp Hog Lures, Strike King Lures, and Fun-n-Sun Sports Center.





Angler Profile



Name & Grade: "Uncle" Mike Oliosi / Alumni (State Championship Qualifier, 2009, Carlyle)

Hometown: Tinley Park

Fishing Aspirations: To fish tournaments; to enjoy the outdoors

Fishing Role Model(s): Uncle Reno and Cousin Chris

Favorite Professional Angler: Kevin VanDam and Mike Iaconelli

Favorite Species to Fish For: Largemouth Bass

Favorite Fishing Technique: Moving Baits (Spinnerbait)

Favorite Fishing Television Host: Denny Brauer

Favorite Memory Fishing: Lake Carlyle, State Championship (2009)

Favorite Lake/River to Fish: Kaskaskia River and Lake Shelbyville

Biggest Fish Ever Caught: 35 pound Flathead Catfish

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We're on the Web!
See us at: *Coming Soon*

About our Club:

The VJA Bass Fishing Club strives to give every student the best possible outdoor's experience. Throughout last year—which was our first year of existence—a little over 40 students benefited from the club. This year, we have registered over 60 students thus far, and we are looking to enhance our club's ability to provide for such a large number of students. If you have any questions or comments, please contact John Bartgen at JBartgen@d230.org or 708-342-5900. Thank you for all of your help and consideration!

VJA Bass Fishing Pictures



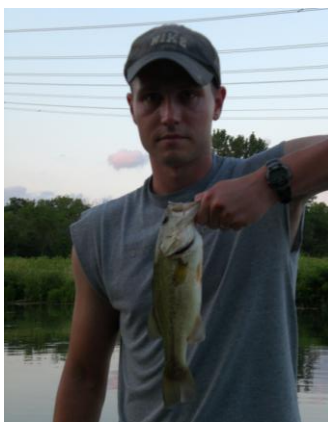
Above: Ashley Gregor's father with a beautiful 5 pound largemouth. Great Catch!



Above: Coach Flynn with a nice 2.8 pound Largemouth from the Kankakee River.



Above (Left to Right): Eric Multon, Robert Pohlman, and Mike Oliosi with their 9.47 limit they caught on the DesPlaines River.



Above: Coach Bartgen with a healthy largemouth caught in the special place!



Above: Jeremy Bilecki with a 5 pound largemouth caught in a pond.

If you have pictures that you would like submitted in an edition of our newsletter, please email them to jflynn@d230.org.

