

VJA Bass Fishing

Special Interest Articles (pg. 1):

APRIL 3rd

- District 230
Tournament (2nd
annual)

April 10th

- DesPlaines River
"Spring Showdown"

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- **Head Coach, John Bartgen:** JBartgen@d230.org
 - Assistant Coach, Jimmy Flynn: JFlynn@d230.org
 - Assistant Coach, David Arndt: DArndt@d230.org

District 230 Tournament set for April 3rd

On April 3, 2010, District 230 schools—Sandburg, Andrew, and Stagg—will compete in the 2nd annual District 230 tournament out of the DesPlaines Conservation Area on the Kankakee River. Last year, Andrew won the event by weighing in 5 fish for 9.47 pounds, a solid weight that would have finished top 5 in all of the adult, semiprofessional circuits from last year on the same river system. This year, Andrew has its work cut out for them, and Stagg and Sandburg will come into the tournament with one more year of experience. It should be a fun, exciting day on the water.

In this year's tournament, 9 boats are projected to participate, with the potential for over 35 students and 10 coaches. This will be a great tournament, and Andrew hopes to keep its hand on the "Billy Bass" trophy (a floating trophy so-to-speak for the winner of this tournament)! Go T-Bolts!!!

VJA DesPlaines River *Spring Showdown* on April 10, 2010, is Setting up to be Amazing

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.

As of February 24, 2010, almost all of the schools participating in the Spring Showdown have committed, and the many plans are underway to make this a grand spectacle. So far, scales, tables, chairs, awards, flags, t-shirts, auction items, and other essentials have been gathered for tournament day, and we would like to thank many staff members and friends for helping us organize and plan for the tournament. Also, the Department of Natural Resources has recently approved the permit for the tournament, so we are "Good-to-go!"

We hope to see our fans at the official weigh-in, which will be at the Conservation Launch on the Kankakee River at the I-55/Wilmington exit at approximately 1:30 p.m. Get there early to see the boats arrive back at the dock. If there are any questions regarding the tournament, please contact John Bartgen at JBartgen@d230.org or 708-342-5900.

PAST EVENTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Tinley Park Fishing Show



Above: Zach Kowalzyk with a giant fish! What a catch!

On Saturday, February 13, 2010, the Tinley Park Fishing and Outdoor's Show opened its doors to a 100-yard-long line of approximately 300 eager fishermen! Once in the show, there were many booths to visit for the aspiring angler, the vacationer, the hunter, or the novice.

Also at the show were local shops such as Bass Pro Shops, Fishing Connection, Strictly Fishing and Archery, Mik Lurch (from Indiana), etc. The greatness of the fishing show starts with the many stores but its real greatness comes from the conversations and priceless knowledge from the visitors and exhibitors. Some of the best Chicagoland fishermen attend this show and for the beginning angler (or even the tournament angler), much knowledge can be gained from listening, looking, and investigating. Guys like Chauncey from *Chauncey's Great Outdoors* and others like Jim DaRosa and Ray Ludkevicz from *The Fishing Line and Outdoor Radio Show* were nice enough to give advice and share valuable knowledge of fishing.

"The harder we work to promote the great outdoors, the more students and our youth will benefit from priceless, valuable lessons."

Many of the Andrew students had a chance to attend the show, and they were amazed by the millions of dollars of fishing goods available. It is breathtaking to think about how far bass fishing has come in our area, so much thanks goes to show innovators, teachers, and stores who have promoted and advocated bass fishing in the Chicagoland area. The harder we work to promote the great outdoors, the more students and our youth will benefit from priceless, valuable lessons. I just wish I had bass fishing when I was a kid; that would have been awesome! In closing, I highly suggest every angler get out to as many shows as possible this spring. Fishing is a sport where you never stop learning, and at the shows is an infinite amount of knowledge from which every angler can learn! Once this snow subsides, get out on the water and have a blast! It'll be here before you know it.

February Meetings



Above: Dan Rogers boasting a beautiful Alaskan Salmon.

The February meetings were multifaceted; we focused on proven bass fishing techniques, we ordered new clothing, and we ended a very successful fundraiser.

We discussed and demonstrated drop shotting, wacky rigging, texas rigging, knot tying, flipping with a baitcaster, spinnerbaiting and crankbaiting. The students, on many occasions, were in the hallways flipping their practice weights into garbage cans, boxes, and recycle bins. Overall, Coach Bartgen was the best "flipper" followed by Evan Connolly. Others such as Anthony Leno and Mihir Chavda are working hard to improve their already good baitcasting techniques. They will for sure look good in their new Bass Fishing gear, which should be in soon!

The end of the fundraiser was February 24, 2010, and what a great job done by all. The club member's efforts will raise money for trips, rods, reels, lures, food, gear, gas, lodging, etc, providing for quality equipment and memorable experiences. So, to the participants who worked extremely hard for the VJA Bass Fishing fundraiser, **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

February Meetings and Speakers

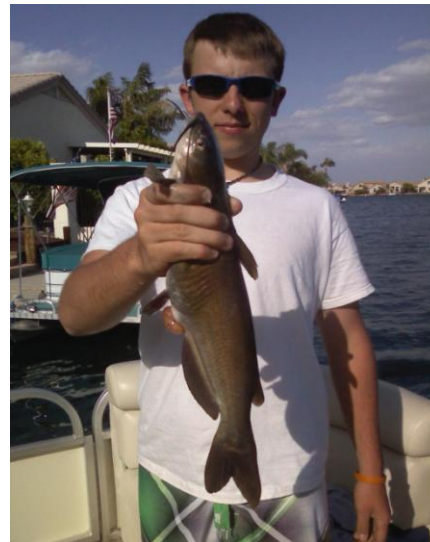
Meetings: Fish Tales

On February 18th, the Andrew Bass coaches attended their second “Fish Tales” meeting. “Fish Tales” is one of the largest and most well-respected fishing clubs in the state of Illinois. Chuck Cook, president of Fish Tales, along with his members has welcomed our team with open arms and has done much to help our coaching staff create a successful season for our kids.

At the meeting, our coaches listened to rule changes, planned trips, and guest speakers. Furthermore, Coach Bartgen discussed the intricacies of the Andrew Bass Team pointing out that the VJA Fishing Team consisted of over 50 kids, both boys and girls, and how greatly appreciative we were to Fish Tales for their commitment to the fishing community and love of the outdoors.

Also at the meeting, our coaches had the opportunity to listen to guest speaker Ron Mazur. Ron is a well know fisherman in the Midwest, and he discussed topics regarding proper lure selection and seasonal patterns when fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass. Such a presentation allows our coaches to bring that knowledge into our own classroom setting in an effort to teach the intricacies of bass fishing to our kids, and we would like to thank Ron for giving us the great opportunity to listen to him speak.

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.



Above: Senior angler, Evan Connolly, with a beautiful Arizona retention pond catfish.

Speakers: A Night at Bass Pro Shops listening to Kevin McLean and Shopping.

On Wednesday, February 24th, the Andrew Bass Club was invited to attend a bass fishing presentation at Bass Pro Shops in Bolingbrook. As I sat on the bus thinking about IHSA Bass Fishing, I became amazed at how great this sport really is. I was with 35 student/athletes on my way to listen to Kevin McLean—Bass Pro Shops Pro Staff—speak about bass fishing in our area, and I was able to share stories and memories about bass fishing, our hobby and our passion! What a great time it was for everyone involved.

Kevin’s main topic of discussion was how to catch pre-spawn bass on the DesPlaines River in early spring. Knowing that our club will compete in three possible tournaments on the DesPlaines River, Kevin gave up his fishing secrets in an effort to give our kids an edge over the competition. During Kevin’s presentation, he pointed out his favorite spots on the river and discussed how selecting the right lure with the proper technique can put you in the winner’s bracket. His speech was extremely helpful, and he reinforced many of our classroom meetings when we talked about Texas Rigging, Shallow Cranking, and Carolina Rigging. Kevin’s helpfulness was greatly appreciated, and his knowledge is unparalleled!

Following the presentation, our kids were given an hour to explore the store and take advantage of a 15% discount extended to them. During this time, our kids met with the many employees at Bass Pro who were eager to answer questions and offer advice. This was truly a positive learning experience for our kids and will be something they remember for some time. Overall, what a great time our students had, and we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to Bass Pro Shops for making this experience possible! Their staff was welcoming, appreciative, and proud of our students!



Above: Danny Yara holding up a fish for the camera.

FUTURE Events and Meeting

Cesare Montefusco and George Liddle

Much thanks to Cesare and George for helping out our club!!!

When bass fishermen in the south suburbs hear names such as Cesare Montefusco and George Liddle, their immediate thought is “those guys can fish!” There is no better way to improve our student’s knowledge of bass fishing than to have speakers as knowledgeable as these two guys come in to talk to our kids.

On March 11, 2010, Cesare and George will be coming to Andrew High School to cover the latest bass fishing techniques and to have a question and answer session where the students ask informed questions to better their knowledge of bass fishing. This should be a great experience for our kids, and we want to continue having speakers teach our student/athletes.

Opening Day Fishing Can’t Come Soon Enough

As the weather begins to warm, the smell of artificial bait looms in the air. The sight of a tackle-box becomes familiar again after the dormant months of winter have passed. For many fishermen, early spring brings the most anticipated time of the year: the opening of bass fishing season. Before any rod is ever cast into the water, a feeling of excitement overwhelms anglers of all ages and skill levels. Coming with this excitement is usually some sort of goal or ambition for the upcoming season.

An accomplished, veteran fisherman may aspire to become more competitive in tournaments he enters. For those who are experienced in fishing but prefer to do it at a leisurely pace, a goal might be to go on the fishing trip of a lifetime and catch the monster ten pound bass only heard of in legends. Someone like the conventional weekend fisherman may simply want to get out and hit the water more times than they did last year. Having ambitions for the year keeps motivations high and fun at the forefront. As is the goal for most of us, we must continue to increase our knowledge of the sport. Good luck to everyone as they begin their bass fishing seasons!

—Jeremy Ward

Fishing Connection in Tinley, Park IL

Greg Katello, owner of Fishing Connection in Tinley Park, IL, has continued to work with the VJA Bass Fishing Club by scheduling an outing at his store on March 11, 2010, at 6:00 pm. The club will spend about 1-2 hours listening to Greg, talking to patrons of his store, and buying much needed lures/tackle for the upcoming fishing season. Family members and friends are invited to Fishing Connection as well. Hope to see you on March 11th at 6:00 pm!

Greg’s store is a full service shop 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.

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



Above: Tina Garcia holding a beautiful Walleye!

Thank you, Greg.

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



Fishing Tip #2: The Texas Rig

By: Jim Reaneau

In 1964, the Texas Rig became a part of bass fishing, and it's still catchin' the heck out of bass.

No bass fishing arsenal is complete without knowledge of Texas rigs. All kinds of plastics from worms to lizards and grubs can be fished in extremely dense vegetation and brush on this rig. Line sizes vary from 14- to 20-pound or more depending on whether you're fishing open water or the thick stuff.

Texas rigs shine when used to flip worms into vegetation or brush because they can be made almost weedless by proper insertion of the hook point into the bait. It's imperative that the bait be aligned straight on the hook so that presentation appears more natural. A bunched up worm doesn't enter the water as well as one that hangs straight.

The hardest part about fishing both a Texas and Carolina rig is learning when to set the hook. Many anglers fail to do so soon enough or can't "feel" when they need to. You will only feel a slight tick sometimes as the fish picks up the bait and moves off with it. This is often confused with the bumps and snags of underwater limbs or strands of vegetation that can cling and cause almost the same feel. Stage two, setting the hook, can be ultimately as difficult as feeling the tap. Wait too long, the fish drops the bait, set the hook too soon and you have missed the actual strike. Time spent fishing the rig is the best way to gain experience and feel.

Before I get started with this article I would like to give you a little background on the development of the worm. In 1949 Nick Creme produced a prototype that would change the fishing industry. This bait had a set of hooks attached to a leader and were imbedded in the worm and at the end was a couple of beads and a small propeller. This bait was in almost every tackle box across the country not long after being produced.

Twenty years later bass fishing became a very popular sport and soon tournaments began to hit the area lakes. The worm was one of the most widely used baits. Creme's Manufacturing Company was in Tyler, Texas. This set the stage for the ever popular name Texas Rig. Nick Creme started adding a slip sinker with his worms and instructions on how to fish this weedless bait. The 1964 catalog was the first to mention the Texas Rig by Creme.

As fishing became more popular, the worm followed suit. Fishermen now have weights, hooks and a variety of worms in lots of colors in his or her tackle box. The rig consists of a slip sinker or bullet weight, sometimes a small glass bead, and a hook. The preferences in worm, weight, and hook size vary from fisherman to fisherman.

This is one of the most versatile rigs for fishing. The bait is cast out and allowed to settle to the bottom. Then a slow sweeping motion is used to retrieve it.

You can fish almost anything on a Texas rig when it comes to soft plastics. Line size plays an important role, as with any type of fishing, but the biggest problem with a Texas rig is hanging up. As you drag the bait through stumps and logs, the worm or weight will hang. When the bait is pushed down, the hook becomes exposed and then hung up you are.

Most anglers wanted to use a limber rod back when this rig first appeared, so they could feel the fight when they caught a fish. This was probably the cause of more hang ups than anything. The rod you use is the most important part of fishing this rig correctly. You need a medium-heavy rod about six-foot six-inches long with a moderately stiff tip. Some people hate worm fishing because they hang up too much. You need to realize that your bait will be where the fish are and hang ups are just part of it.

When setting up the rig I like to use the smallest weight possible as this makes the bait appear more life-like and it won't settle into the bottom sediment as quickly. There are days I like to put a bead between the hook and weight, and I have had days the fish don't want the noise.

In the spring, or when pitching the bait, I like to peg the sinker to the top of the worm so the weight won't move. During this time I will use a heavier sinker because I want control over where the bait lands. I have fished 10-inch worms with 1/8-ounce weights. If I fish deep water, I like to use a heavier weight to get the bait down a little faster. A grub fished Texas rigged over grass or just cast out and swam back to the boat can be deadly. There is no limit to what you can fish or how to fish it on a Texas rig.

Jim Reaneau is a professional guide on Lake Fork.





Angler Profile



**Victor J. Andrew
High School
9001 West 171st Street
Tinley Park, IL 60477**

PHONE:

JOHN BARTGEN
(708) 342-5900

E-MAIL:

JBartgen@d230.org

JFlynn@d230.org

DArndt@d230.org

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

Name & Grade: Robert Pohlman

Hometown: Tinley Park, IL

Fishing Aspirations: Fish Small Tournaments

Fishing Role Model(s): Coach Bartgen

Favorite Professional Angler: Mike Iaconelli

Favorite Species to Fish for: Smallmouth Bass

Favorite Fishing Technique: Finesse (Wacky/Shakey Head)

Favorite Fishing Television Host: Bill Gillespie

Favorite Memory Fishing: Uncle Mike's "Woo-ing" at Carlyle

Favorite Lake/River to Fish: DesPlaines River

Biggest Fish Ever Caught: 50" Muskie in Tamarack Flowage (Wisconsin)

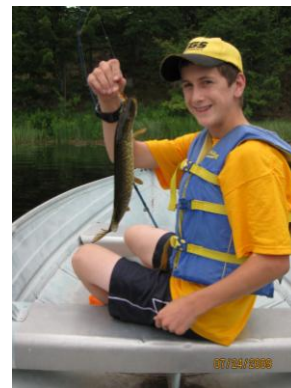
About our Club:

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!

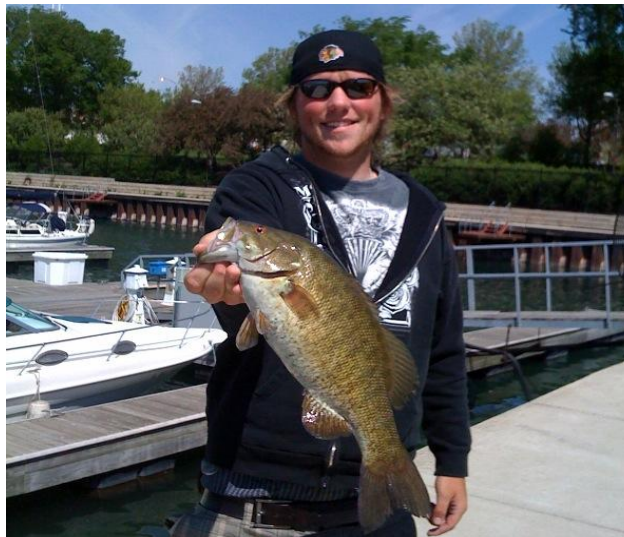
VJA Bass Fishing Pictures



Above: Evan Connolly's father, Mr. Pat Connolly, holding a gorgeous Alaskan King Salmon.



Above: Mark Sivak holding up a northern pike.



Above: Eric Multon with a beautiful Burnam Harbor Smallmouth.



Above: Justin Agresti's father and younger brother enjoy an ocean fish on the beach.



Above: Cameron Simak with a beautiful smallmouth bass.

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



Bass Fishing LINKS

1. Cabelas: <http://www.cabelas.com/>
2. Bass Pro Shops: <http://www.basspro.com/homepage.html>
3. Gander Mountain: <http://www.gandermountain.com/>
4. ESPN : Bass Master's Magazine:
<http://sports.espn.go.com/outdoors/bassmaster/index>
5. 10. Field and Stream: <http://www.fieldandstream.com/>
6. Bass Resource: <http://www.bassresource.com/>
7. Bass Fishing Techniques: <http://www.bassfishingtechniques.net/>
8. Pro Bass Network: <http://www.probass.net/>
9. Bass Boat Central: <http://www.bassboatcentral.com/>
10. Angler's Pride 'Tackle Coverings': <http://anglerspride.com/>
11. Tackle Wharehouse (online shopping): <http://tacklewarehouse.com/>