

VJA Bass Fishing

Special Interest Articles (pg. 1):

APRIL 3rd

- District 230
Tournament (2nd
annual)

April 10th

- DesPlaines River
"Spring Showdown"
(1st annual)

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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 is Only Days Away!

On April 3, 2010, District 230 schools—Sandburg, Andrew, and Stagg—will compete in the 2nd annual District 230 tournament, launching out of Big Basin on the DesPlaines River, a change from the originally planned launch site. Last year, Andrew won the event by weighing in 5 fish for 9.47 pounds, a solid weight. Looking at the forecast, the weather looks unbelievable for the tournament, and water temperatures are on the rise! This should result in explosive, shallow water bites. Hopefully, VJA will end up on top again.

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 traveling trophy. Please come out to the weigh-in at 12:00 pm (noon) at Big Basin off of Bluff Road in Channahon, Illinois. **WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE TO SUPPORT THE VJA ANGLERS!**

1st Annual VJA DesPlaines River *Spring Showdown* on April 10th is shaping up

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. There is a change from last month: we will be launching out of Big Basin (Bluff Road) in Channahon, Illinois, at 7:00 am sharp, instead of launching out of the DesPlaines Conservation Area.

As of March 30th, 2010, all of the schools participating in the Spring Showdown have committed, the scales have been purchased, the permit is approved, flags have been made, and the trophies are complete. The only thing we have to worry about now is catching the fish. Again, we would like to thank many staff members and friends for helping us organize and plan this tournament.

We hope to see our fans at the official weigh-in, and again, there has been A CHANGE: we will be weighing-in at Big Basin 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

Pre-Fishing the Mighty DesPlaines

When Coach Bartgen, Coach Arndt, and Coach Flynn planned the 1st pre-fishing trip on the DesPlaines River, no one planned for a rough launch, getting stuck on a sandbar, or batteries dying out, but the students had an opportunity to learn about the “tough-luck” sometimes experienced on the water. It was a great learning experience for the VJA anglers, and the level of responsibility and maturity our anglers demonstrated helped make our trip successful.

Despite the boat troubles and the cold weather and considering we only fished for 4 hours, our VJA anglers were able to garner 10 quality keeper bass between the three boats. Jeremy Bilecki led the VJA anglers by catching 3 quality fish, weighing approximately 5 pounds, not a bad first day out on the water!

The VJA Anglers headed back out to the DesPlaines the next day, and Danny Yara and Brian Watters landed two nice fish, while Coach Bartgen slammed a giant bluegill, approximately 12 inches.

Overall, the coaches and anglers have worked extremely hard to pre-fish the DesPlaines for the upcoming tournament. They have studied reports, talked to local tournament fisherman, and have come up with a confident game-plan for the next two weekend tournaments. In the end, many great memories were made, and that is the ultimate purpose for fishing!

March Meetings/Outings

The VJA March meetings were well rounded, focusing on shore fishing; lure techniques such as texas rigging, shallow cranking, and wacky rigging; bluegill and crappie fishing; and videos.

A common spring topic that all anglers need to consider is cold front conditions. During the spring, the weather can fluctuate as much as 50 degrees in a 24 hour period, and the importance of being a knowledgeable, versatile angler was pointed out. The anglers learned first hand during their shore fishing and pre-fishing experiences when the temperature was 40 degrees and windy one day and then 60 degrees with no wind the next day.

March is a great month for the VJA bass club because those cabin fever moments are relinquished, and the anglers are able to wet a line and catch some great fish. March also signals the end of winter's harsh coldness and the beginning of the warm weather months! We look forward to a productive and successful April!

“In the end, many great memories were made, and that is the ultimate purpose for fishing!”

The weather is warming up, and so is the water! Get a rod and some bait (or lures), and get out fishing.

Tip: find a local retention pond, and there are usually fish there! ENJOY!



March Meetings and Speakers

Fishing Connection, Big Len, Rob Kasjanski, John Kennedy

Greg Katello, owner of Fishing Connection in Tinley Park, IL, has continued to work with the VJA Bass Fishing Club, and on March 11, 2010, at 6:00 pm, the club spent 1-2 hours listening to Greg Katello, Big Len, Rob Kasjanski, and John Kennedy talk about lures and techniques used to catch bass. While talking to patrons of his store and buying much needed lures/tackle for the upcoming fishing season, our anglers were able to learn from some of the best fisherman in the area. Family members and friends showed up, and it was an enjoyable experience. We even got to see some awesome pictures of Evan Connolly's various fishing trips throughout his life!

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. WE LOOK FORWARD TO UTILIZING GREG'S EXPERIENCE IN THE FUTURE!

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

PS: Similar to "Where's Waldo," see if you can find Jake Reinbolt in the array of pictures at Greg's store!

Cesare Montefusco and George Liddle, a Wealth of Knowledge and Two Great Gentlemen

On Monday, March 8, 2010, Cesare Montefusco and George Liddle ventured to Victor J. Andrew High School to speak to our club, and they were welcomed by more than 30 eager fishermen.

George Liddle, known by virtually every bass fisherman in the south suburbs as the "Boat Guru" and an excellent fisherman, walked into our classroom with over 65 years of fishing knowledge and experience. During George's years of fishing, he has fished nearly every tournament circuit available to him, from BASS sanctioned events to local tournaments on the Lake, Cal-Sag, and DesPlaines. Even today, George fishes tournaments on the Lake and the Cal-Sag with his partner—Cesare Montefusco—who is also a great fisherman. Cesare, much like George, has a wealth of knowledge about the sport of Bass Fishing, mostly because he has made fishing a true passion of his. While Cesare was presenting to the students, it was evident that he genuinely loved the outdoors and hoped to instill his passion in our kids. Most of Cesare's presentation focused on confidence in both lures and locations. Similar to any other sport, confidence—according to Cesare—is the primary component that makes a great angler.

At the end of Cesare and George's presentation, they allowed for an informative and productive question and answer session. During this session, students asked a variety of questions, ranging from fishing questions to personal questions. At the end of the presentation, Cesare made a great point to the students: fishing is a privilege and a passion and a sport that requires intelligence and proper decision making. He ended by telling the students to make the right decisions in life, and that fishing is something that can complete their lives, if they take care of the other important aspects of their lives first: school, family, health, etc. The VJA bass club would like to thank Cesare and George for a memorable experience, and we are very lucky to have these two gentlemen in our corner.

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

Thank you, Greg.



Above: Rob Kasjanski with two nice fish in his recent 6 man qualifier tournament.

Check out George Liddle and Cesare Montefusco's progress on Anglers-Dream.com. They generally fish the Cal-Sag division! Good luck, Boys!!!

FUTURE Events and Meeting

Ron Mazur: A Local Expert is coming to VJA

Ron also runs a guide service, and anyone interested can contact him. His contact info will be in the next edition! Sorry about the inconvenience.

Head bass fishing coach at Argo high school and avid tournament bass fisherman—Ron Mazur—will be coming to VJA on April 7th to discuss the latest bass fishing techniques.

About one month ago, the VJA coaches had the pleasure of listening to Ron speak at a Fish Tales meeting, and the VJA coaches immediately made plans for Ron to share his wealth of knowledge with our kids.

We look forward to Ron coming in to speak with our anglers, and we are fortunate to have developed another great relationship with a top-notch area angler.

Tournament Season

Tournament Schedule

1. **April 3rd**- DesPlaines River
2. **April 10th**- DesPlaines River
3. **April 23rd**- Wolf Lake
4. **May 6th, 7th, and 8th**- Carlyle Lake

Over the next two months, the VJA bass team will be competing in some of the most competitive bass fishing tournaments in the state of Illinois. The first two tournaments are on the DesPlaines River—April 3rd and 10th—and will launch out of Big Basin in Channahon (Bluff Road Exit).

The following tournament on April 23rd is the sectional event at Wolf Lake, which is the qualifying tournament for the state championship. In this tournament, we must place second or better to move on, and the kids are pumped for the challenge.

The final tournament of the season is the State Championship at Carlyle Lake in Carlyle, Illinois. Practice on Carlyle is May 6th, and the State Championship tournament is May 7th and May 8th. Last year's tournament was a great experience for the kids, and it was a weekend that hopefully our anglers will experience this year.

For this year's tournament schedule, we added an extra tournament in order to practice for the sectionals and the state championships, and the anglers have worked extra hard in order to achieve success in our tournaments. Overall, everyone has had fun fishing,

Fish Tales Meeting

"Fish Tales has played a vital role in our club's success this year, and we will continue to work closely with them to promote fishing and environmentalism in our community and state!"

Every 3rd Thursday of the month, Fish Tales—a south side fishing club—has their club meeting at the Bremen Township community building off of Oak Park Avenue in Oak Forest, IL.

Anyone interested in attending a meeting as a guest can attend for \$5.00, and the meetings are extremely informative and enjoyable. If you are interested in joining or participating, go to a meeting and talk to the many members who are very caring and giving.

Fish Tales has played a vital role in our club's success this year, and we will continue to work closely with them to promote fishing and environmentalism in our community and state! Thanks, Fish Tales!



Fishing Tip #3: Fishing Carlyle Lake

By: The US Army Corps of Engineers

Carlyle Lake, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is Illinois' largest inland lake at approximately 26,000 acres. The Corps maintains an office of full-time staff on-site at Carlyle, including Park Rangers Jody Harris and Doug Wasmuth. Jody and Doug have been fishing Carlyle Lake for about 25 years each, and they know a thing or two about Carlyle's largemouth bass. Before getting into Doug and Jody's bass tips, it is important to understand that Carlyle Lake is a flood control device for the Kaskaskia River valley area of Illinois. The Corps maintains complex rules and regulations that govern the level of the Lake and the flow of water through its dam. The Corps attempts to hit water levels, which are dependent upon the time of year it is. During the winter, the Corps draws down the Lake to an elevation of 443'. Right on May 1 of each year, the Corps tries to raise the Lake up a bit to 445'. Judgments on lake levels are based upon these marks.

Right off the bat, when asked about lake conditions to monitor, Jody and Doug mentioned water levels and water clarity. "Pay attention to water levels, whether the Lake has been dropping, and whether it is high or low," reported Jody. "The Corps works closely with IDNR Fisheries and Water Control during the May spawn season, to try to make sure that the Lake isn't dropping more than a 10th of a foot a week. Ideally, the lake will be raising a tad in April and May," said Jody.

Jody stressed to pay attention to water levels during the bass spawn. "If water is high, bass will be scattered among woody vegetation. You'll probably find a majority of the bass there if the water is high."

And if the water is low, Doug countered that, "rip rap will come more into play. Especially look for where there's transition (of water depth) from low to high." Doug stressed points of transition, as well. "Transition of rock to sand along the Lake bottom is usually a good spot for bass. There's not a lot around Carlyle, but they do exist." Lake levels are monitored and reported daily for the public to see. The easiest place to obtain this information is by visiting the Carlyle Lake website at www.mvs.usace.army.mil/carlyle/. Click on "Lake Level" and scroll down the screen to find Carlyle Lake's levels under "Midnight Pool Level." The "Seasonal Rule Curve" also provides a reminder for where the Lake level should be for the time of year.

The Corps does monitor for water clarity at Carlyle, but varying conditions make reports difficult to make. "Clarity will be different from Dam West, to Allan Branch, to Keyesport," said Doug. Jody commented further that clarity will depend upon recent rain. "If it rains, feeder ditches will bring some dirty water into the Lake."

Spring 2008 for Carlyle Lake and much of the Midwest was a very rainy season. Lake levels at Carlyle were quite high. "Some structure was created by fallen trees in the branches. Look for the clay points that will come out in the coves. Trees fall into the Lake often at these points, and it's good for the fish," Jody said.

Although Doug Wasmuth points out the rip rap may be the most abundant structure at Carlyle Lake, the Corps does make efforts to create other forms. "(We) put a lot of structure in the Lake. In the coves, we fabricate stuff," said Jody Harris. The "stuff" referred to includes brush piles and multiple, natural Christmas trees that are tied to cinder blocks and dropped in the Lake. The Corps implements an annual program in which the public is encouraged to drop off their used Christmas trees for placement in the Lake. "We put them, basically, in the coves. Look in Allan Branch and Peppenhorst Branch," said Jody. "This year, we put in roughly 25 (sets). Some of them will be in shallow water so you'll see them."

In addition to monitoring water levels and creating structure, the Carlyle Lake Corps staff also work to generate fishing and temperature reports. Temperature and fishing reports are found on their website. The fishing reports are also recorded as a phone message, updated almost daily, that can be accessed by calling 618-594-4637.

Doug and Jody had a lot to say about lures. According to Jody, lots of fishermen at Carlyle like to use plastic crawfish and spinner baits in the shallows. For Doug, plastic lizards, spinner baits, and jigs work well. "During the spawn, you have to use a slower presentation," said Jody. "The bass are more apt to be just sitting in Lake beds. During April and in the fall, they are often active on a feeding frenzy." Doug concurred, that May usually finds bass more relaxed in bedded areas.

The knowledge shared by Doug Wasmuth and Jody Harris, and their combined 50 years of fishing experience at Carlyle Lake, have served them well. Although no longer active in bass tournaments, Doug has fished club events at Carlyle Lake where his team brought in 20 pounds on a five fish limit. Doug's largest single bass caught at Carlyle was a five pounder. As for Jody, the biggest largemouth bass he has caught at Carlyle was a seven pounder. "I caught him in Peppenhorst Branch, and it was in May."





Angler Profile



**Victor J. Andrew
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JBartgen@d230.org

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Name & Grade: Evan Connolly

Hometown: Tinley Park, IL

Fishing Aspirations: To see Pohlman actually catch one fish.

Fishing Role Model(s): Pat Connolly (father) and Jimmy Flynn (coach)

Favorite Professional Angler: Dean Rojas

Favorite Species to Fish for: Black Bass (Largemouth and Smallmouth)

Favorite Fishing Technique: Cranking

Favorite Fishing Television Host: Bill Dance

Favorite Memory Fishing: Catching his first muskellunge on Eagle
Lake in Ontario, Canada

Favorite Lake/River to Fish: Retention pond in Oak Forest, Illinois

Biggest Fish Ever Caught: 6' 210 pound Sailfish caught in Mexico

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!

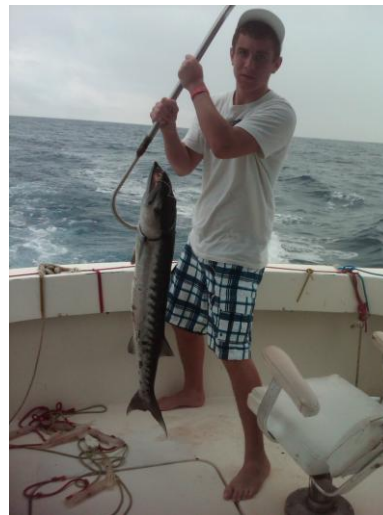
We're on the Web!

See us at: Coming Soon

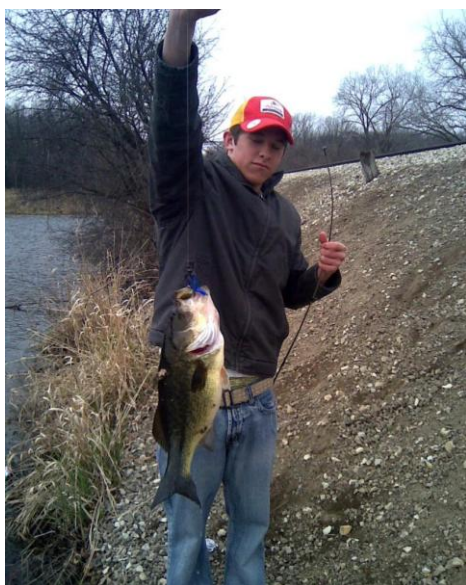
VJA Bass Fishing Pictures



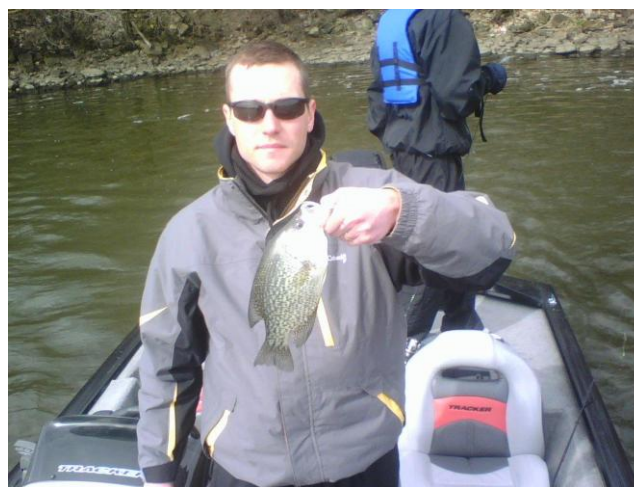
Above: Justin Agresti's uncle (Brent Michalek) last June in Ontario, Canada, with a beautiful musky.



Above: Justin Agresti with a giant gaff sticking in the side of a lunker!



Above: Jake Hamilton with a pre-spawn female bass caught on a craw imitator. Nice Fish!



Above: Coach Bartgen hoisting a nice crappie, which was caught on a Rat-L-Trap.

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. 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 Warehouse (online shopping): <http://tacklewarehouse.com/>
12. IHSA Bass Fishing: <http://www.thefuturefisheshere.org/>