



Spartan Fishing Team



For all the latest news and information on the Spartan Fishing Team, be sure to check out our teams [website!](#)

The best way to contact Coach Kuchyt is through email: ckuchyt@olchs.org

Spartans Enjoy Good Fall Fishing!

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The year 2013 will go down as the year of the *big fish* in Spartan Fishing Team history. Since the teams inception in 2008, there has never been a summer/fall with some many large fish being caught by Spartan anglers. Check out the pictures on page 9.

The team also hosted one of the largest fall high school bass tournaments in the state. You can read about the **Rayjus Outdoors-Oak Lawn High School Bass Tournament** on page 3.

Team new comer and freshmen Jonathon Osipczuk discusses his favorite fishing memory on page 5, which just happened to be his first bass tournament experience. Andy Jensen researches whether or not fish feel pain when hooked on page 5, and Nate Nauseda researches



Boats staging for the start of the
2013 Rayjus Outdoors-Oak Lawn High School Bass Tournament

the senses of a bass on page 7.

Junior Mike Sutko finishes off the issue with a great article about his experience in making soft plastic baits with the owner of [Convincing Custom Baits](#). Any coach interested in having their team learn how to make soft plastic baits is encouraged

to contact Convincing Custom Baits for a demonstration.

The final page of our newsletter is a "fun page". Check out our *Fish Fact*, *Stewardship Tip*, *Video of the Month*, *Fishing Quote*, and our *Recipe of the Month*.

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Advertise in Our Newsletter

The Spartan Fishing Team would like to welcome any businesses interested in advertising in our newsletter to contact Coach Kuchyt for more information. Our newsletter is our primary team fundraiser and offers students the unique opportunity to refine their academic skills by researching and writing about the outdoors while offering promotional opportunities to partnering businesses. Coach Kuchyt can be contacted at: ckuchyt@olchs.org

Tip of the Month

If you are flipping or pitching into heavy cover always peg your Texas Rig with a bobber stop. That way you will have a better chance to hit the bottom through that thick cover.

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Rayjus Outdoors—Oak Lawn High School Bass Tournament!

Excitement was running high for over 170 high school anglers from 21 schools from across northern Illinois who assembled at the Des Plaines Conservation Area. [Rayjus Outdoors](#), [Unique Bassmasters](#), and the [Spartan Fishing Team](#) partnered together to present the [2013 Rayjus Outdoors - Oak Lawn Community High School Bass Tournament](#) on the Kankakee/Des Plaines River at the [Des Plaines Conservation Area](#).

A steady stream of teams began to arrive to the conservation area at 5:20am. As teams registered, each student angler received a gift bag from [Rayjus Outdoors](#) containing merchandise from [Mercury Marine](#), [Power Team Lures](#), [Ferrara Candy](#), [Bizz Baits](#), [Cruncher Baits](#), [Culprit](#), [Berkley](#), and [Lake Fork Tackle](#). By 7:05am, all 48 boats were in the water and the tournament was underway by 7:18am.

The weather on October 12 was variable. The morning started sunny and temperatures quickly reached 70 degrees. By late morning, however, the clouds rolled in, winds picked up, temperatures dropped, and every so often, a cloud would open up with a steady rain. Despite the crazy weather, 33 boats out of the 48 taking part in the event weighed fish.

When a bad cast ends up being the best cast of the day...

Hinsdale Central High School duo **Jeff Hopkins** and **Christian Sona** won the tournament with 7.52 pounds. More impressive than their victory was how they won the tournament. Jeff Hopkins caught the tournament's big bass by trying to cast under a dock. He explains "I tried casting my green stick bait under a dock but instead got it through a crack in the dock. It was dangling there and a big bass came up and swooped at it twice. The third time he nailed it! We trolled over to the dock, grabbed him, and got him out." The bass

weighed in at 3.14lbs, making it the largest bass caught in the four year history of the tournament! For his catch, Jeff was awarded a beautiful bass print donated by **Bass Pro Shops** in **Bolingbrook, IL**.

Reading the weather...

Luke Jasper and **Jake Lepczynski** of **Lemont High School** paid close attention to the changing weather to help them claim second place. **Jasper** stated, "in the morning, when the weather was warm, we caught our fish on top water frogs in the weeds." **Lepczynski** went on to explain "as the weather got colder, we slowed things down and we started catching them on green pumpkin shaky heads and wacky rigs."

Rounding out the top five...

Minooka High School claimed two top five finishes, with **Luke Brozovich** and **Colton Welch** finishing in third (5.92lbs) and **Dan DeGraaf** and **Noah Arnold** taking fifth (5.20lbs). Brothers **Matt** and **Tyler Bomba** from **Providence Catholic** claimed fourth place with 5.88lbs.

The Oak Lawn High School team of **John Neubauer** and **Jon Metelski** finished in 17th place with two bass. "Before the clouds rolled in, the fishing was hot! We were fishing a large weed flat and the fish were choking down our stick baits, but most of the fish were just short of the 12 inch minimum" **Neubauer** said.

This tournament was made possible thanks to the **Illinois B.A.S.S. Nation** club **Unique Bassmasters** who conducted the weigh-in and **Rayjus Outdoors** who provided the trophies and gift bags for the kids. A special thank you also goes out to the **Illinois Department of Natural Resources** for preparing the site for this tournament.



Above: First Place team Jeff Hopkins & Christian Sona



Above: Rayjus owner Justin Romines, Big Bass Award winner Jeff Hopkins, and Oak Lawn Coach Chris Kuchyt



Left: Second Place team Luke Jasper & Jake Lepczynski from Lemont High School

Right: Oak Lawn Community High School duo John Metelski and John Neubauer



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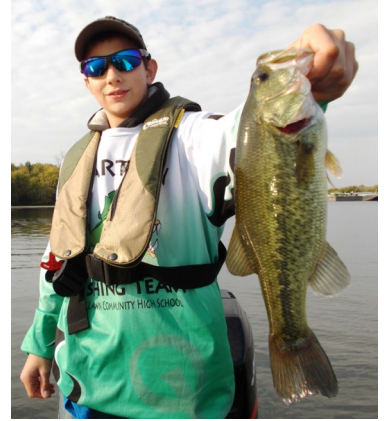
My Best Time Fishing By Jonathon Osipczuk (grade 9)

The best time I ever had fishing was when I took part in my first high school bass tournament at the Des Plaines Conservation Area. This was my first big fishing event I had ever been part of. I was very excited but I did not know what to expect. This was a real cool opportunity to experience. I would have never thought that I would be able to have the chance to fish with a real bass fisherman (Pete Seale) on a genuine bass boat. When I first got on the boat I thought it was the coolest thing ever. When we first got to the spot we were going to fish from, there wasn't much action going on in the water. Everyone was setting up their poles. Then we started to catch small bass, not large enough to keep. I thought that this was pretty cool. I finally had a bite but I didn't set the hook properly so instead of catching it, I dragged it out of the water and the fish flew over the boat and landed on the other side of the boat back into the water. It was pretty funny.

Later on in the day, I had a few more bites. I kept catching little ones, all under the 12 inch length that the fish had to be. So I kept on fishing and I felt a nice bass hit and I waited then I let it strike again and I got the hook set correctly this time. I started to reel him in and I got it in the net. I caught it on a Texas rigged green pumpkin stick

bait. Then we measured the largemouth and it was over 12 inches long, so we put it in the live-well. I was very happy and knew that all we needed was four more bass. The day was going slow now. All I kept on getting was small little bass on my lures. Then it started to rain for about 20 minutes, but it was no big deal, because all we did was throw on some rain coats. We then started to head back and look for some colder water since.

After all that, it was getting close to the time that we had to be back for the weigh in, so we went to the Kankakee River to start fishing for smallmouth bass with some hard bait lures. We didn't catch any more fish, so we headed back to the boat ramp. We then got all of the fish weighed and my fish was 1lb 6oz. I had an amazing experience and so much fun all day with my teammates. Thanks to everyone who made this event possible and Mr. Seale for taking us out.



Do Fish Have Feelings In Their Mouths?

by Andrew Jensen (grade 11)

A common question in the world of fishing is "Does setting the hook in the mouth of a fish hurt the fish?" Well believe it or not, it does not hurt the fish! After I conducted some research I learned that fish like the bass have little to no nerves in their mouths, which helps them eat and digest other fish and creatures they may eat. For example, I'm pretty sure many people have had their fair share of getting pricked by the dorsal fins of a bluegill or any other panfish. Bass feel the same way, so with that being said, having no nerves in their mouths allows them to swallow fish with little to no pain whatsoever.

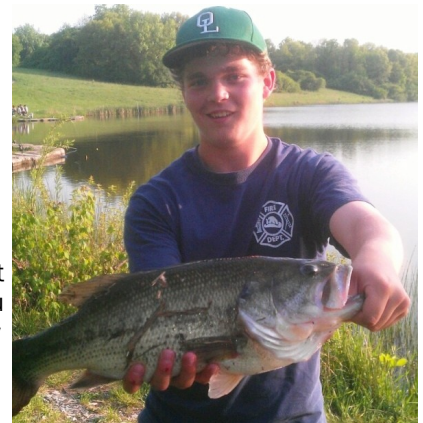
If you ever felt the inside the mouth of a bass, you feel how hard and bony the inside is, so setting the hook in their mouth actually causes them little pain. Fish such as crappie are the same way, but their mouths are even thinner than the mouth of a bass, which is why they have the nickname of a 'paper-mouth'.

The mouth of a catfish is very interesting. Catfish are bottom dwelling fish and usually feed on things on the bottom. Their eye sight is very poor, so they have to feel their way around with whiskers and essentially their mouths. They pick up the scents or vibrations given off by their prey, so having a mouth full of nerves is critical to their survival. A little fun fact is that catfish have about 27,000 taste buds in their mouths, while humans have only about 7,000. It's also interesting to note that catfish have taste buds all over their bodies! That being said, a catfish's mouth is almost four times as sensitive than that of a humans.

Compare the mouth of a bass to the mouth of a catfish. A catfish has a thicker, tougher mouth while a

bass has a thin, bony mouth. But varying on where you hook a bass determines the amount of pain obtained. If you gut hook a bass, or any fish in general, it's going to hurt it a lot more than it would if you hooked it in its lips. An accidental hookset in the eye of a fish or near the gills will also cause it more pain because those areas are more sensitive than their mouths.

So, to answer the question in the title, the answer is yes, fish do feel pain, but not as much as an angler would think. It varies on where the hook is set and the species of fish.



Andy Jensen with a big bass he caught from Bullfrog Lake



Fish Tales Fishing Club

Fish Tales Fishing Club consists of a group of individuals who love to fish. The goal of this family oriented group is to increase angler knowledge.

Meetings with guest speakers to discuss fishing tips and techniques are held on the third Thursday of each month . The group meets at the Bremen Township Building located at 15350 South Oak Park Ave in Oak Forest.

For more information on *Fish Tales*, please visit their website at:

www.fishtalesfishingclub.com



The Senses of a Bass

By Nate Nauseda (grade 10)

What is a bass? How do bass hear or see? Do they feel pain when you set the hook? Do they taste the food they eat? All these questions and more will be answered today. First off, a bass is a freshwater fish that is found in lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. They tend to like mossy or weedy areas of the body of water they are in. There are two types of bass, temperate basses (which include striped bass and white bass) and Black Bass (such as smallmouth, largemouth and spotted bass). I will be writing about the largemouth and smallmouth bass.

The bass invests a lot of its brain to vision. Scientist know this because the ocular lobe (controls vision) in a bass is huge. Also, scientists have conducted tests where one bass was put in clear water and another was put in murky water, the one that was in clear water grew to trophy size while the one in murky water grew at a slower rate. This tells us that fish use sight to find food. Though bass have a big ocular lobe, they have monocular vision which means the bass must face the object and be pretty close to it to see the exact shape and distance. Bass can also see color, though the quality is uncertain. Their eyes are like ours when it comes to color, with light they see color and in dark they see black and white.

Do bass hear? They do, even better than we do. Unlike us, bass don't have an external oratory canals but they do have internal ears that let them hear and helps them orient themselves in the water. They also have an extra organ called the lateral line. The lateral line acts as another ear for the bass. The lateral line is a series of pores or canals along the fish's body from behind the gill plate to the tail. Most freshwater fish have this. These canals contain hair-like extensions surrounded by a gelatinous substance. The lateral line also lets the bass feel. When another fish or a lure goes by the bass, the lateral line feels the changes in the water pressure, even the slightest change is felt by the bass. The fish or lure going past the bass will cause a wave to bend the hairs in the lateral line. The way the hairs are bent tells the bass where the fish or lure is and what it's doing. So if the waters murky and you want the fish to notice your lure, use a loud lure the bass will surely notice it.

A big part of how a bass hunts is smell even though they can see a lot better if the waters murky they won't starve. Bass can smell a lot better than a human can. Bass aren't as perceptive as a catfish or salmon they still rely a little on smell. If a bass is offered prey that smells and prey that doesn't it will go for the prey that smells.

Taste also plays a part in how a bass hunts. If a bass inhales your lure and you don't notice it and if it doesn't like the taste or feel of it in its mouth it can just spit it out and you lose the bass. If you use flavored bait or flavor spray, the bass is more likely to keep the bait in its mouth.

Does it hurt a fish when you set the hook? It is unknown if any fish even feel pain because the part of the brain that controls pain is so small that a fish does not have enough brain power to feel pain. Even if they do feel pain if hooked correctly hooked in the lip the pain would be very minuscule.

Now you know the senses of a bass and fish in general. Remember to use scented, bright and loud baits to catch the trophy bass of your dream and don't worry about them feeling pain.

Spartan Anglers Write Articles Featured in a National Magazine

On the last day of the 2012-2013 school year, **Mike Sutko** and **Jon Metelski** (sophomores at the time) spent an extra two hours at school writing an article that was featured in [Bass Quest magazine](#). Each student had an ENTIRE page devoted to their article. The articles focused on the teams accomplishments over the past few years, the Rayjus Outdoors—Oak Lawn High School Bass Tournament, and our sponsors. It was quite an honor and a privilege for these young men to have this opportunity.



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Making Our Own Plastic Baits

by Mike Sutko (grade 11)

September 4, 2013 was a good day for our team meeting because my teammates and I got the chance to make our own lures! I was very excited to do this. As we began to think of how we wanted to design our lures, we were first taught how to make them.

[Rhett Wheeler](#), a former Oak Lawn Community High School graduate and owner of [Convincing Custom Lures](#), offered to show us how plastics are made. He had a lot of stories to share with us about his homemade baits and how he caught fish. He said that he caught a fish on every lure he has made!

Mr. Wheeler was going over everything on how to make these soft plastics. He said he uses products from three different companies to help him create his plastic baits. The companies are [Make Lure](#), [Alumilite](#), and [Mold Putty](#). He showed us all the molds that he has made and he explained how he made the molds. He then went on to show us how to pour and mix the chemicals to create the plastics. The next step was to color the plastic. I was amazed that you only needed two little drops of coloring for each container of plastic. Once the plastic is colored and in a liquid state, you can add your flake to it. There were many different color combinations to choose from. Mr. Wheeler also showed us how to layer colors on our plastics, which was cool.

The second thing Mr. Wheeler showed us was how to paint lures. The paint is not exactly paint. It is more like a

dust that sticks on to the lure. I got the chance to do this with three other people. Mr. Wheeler gave us "pro tips", as he called them, and it was good advice. He specifically said to use the darker colors first and to work your way from the top of the lure to the bottom. One of my teammates colored a blue gill pattern, another did a bass, another had bright florescent colors, and I painted mine a trout pattern. To keep these paints from wearing off, we had to dip them in a hot plastic so the colors do not wear off.

Another cool thing from the day is that Donna Vickroy from the Southtown-Star newspaper attended this meeting and she wrote a story about our team. This was the first time I, along with all of my teammates, were ever interviewed by a newspaper reporter. You can read her story [here](#).

It was so cool to make our own lures, I can't wait to make more color combinations. I want to thank Mr. Rhett Wheeler for coming out. I just hope that will catch baits on the lure I colored. Check out the custom lures and colors we created below!



Mike Sutko with a nice sheephead he caught on the Wisconsin River.





Jonathon Osipczuk with a 4lb bass caught from a south suburban pond.



Jonathon Metelski with a 4lb bass caught at the IHSA bass tournament.



Bernie Muransky with his first King Salmon caught from Lake Michigan.



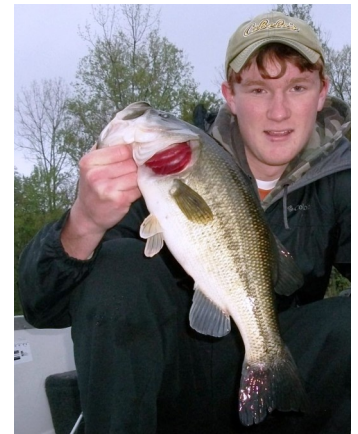
Andy Jensen with one of the largest fish of this life, a huge Asian carp.



John Neubauer caught this 5lb+ smallmouth on an inland lake in Michigan.



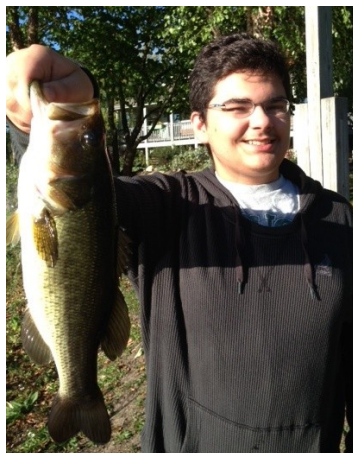
Mike Sutko with one of the largest fish he has ever caught, a 14lb salmon from Lake Michigan.



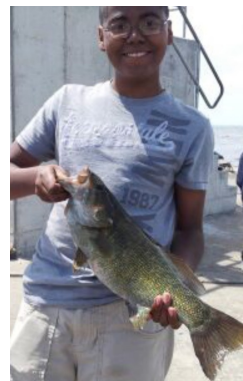
John Neubauer with an almost 6lb largemouth from Michigan.



Mike Sutko with a Wisconsin River sturgeon, his first one!



Dean Kruk with the largest bass of his life, a 3lb monster!



Above: Juan Merez with a nice Lake Michigan smallmouth.

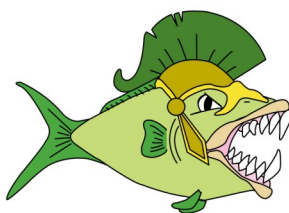


Right: Andy Jensen with a his first northern Wisconsin dogfish.

Oak Lawn Community High School
Spartan Fishing Team c/o Chris Kuchyt
9400 Southwest Hwy.
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

E-mail: ckuchyt@olchs.org

About our logo...



The Spartan Fishing Team logo was created and designed by **Matt Jensen**. Matt graduated from Oak Lawn Community High School in 2010.

Spartan Favorite Recipe: Baked Butter Herb Perch

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 2/3 cup crushed saltine crackers
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 pound yellow perch fillets



Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- Pour butter into a shallow dish. Combine cracker crumbs, Parmesan cheese, basil, oregano, salt, and garlic powder in a separate shallow bowl.
- Dip perch fillets into melted butter and press into the seasoned cracker crumbs to coat. Arrange coated fillets on a baking sheet.
- Bake in the preheated oven until the coating is browned and fish flakes easily with a fork, 25 to 30 minutes.

Source: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/baked-butter-herb-perch-fillets/>



Fishing Quote

"Maybe someday I'll be able to retire!"

-Professional Bass Angler Charlie Hartly

Fish Fact

About 40 percent of all fish are freshwater species.

Source: <http://takemefishing.org/fishing/freshwater-fishing/what-is-freshwater-fishing/>

Stewardship Tip...

Painting or sealing unpainted leads jigs with a protective, chip-resistant sealer will help prevent the leaching of lead into the water should the jig get snagged and break off in the water.

Source: <http://www.recycledfish.org/safe-angling/practices/painting-lead-jigs.htm>

Video of the Month:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/26/sea-lion-pancho-steals-fish-cabo-mexico_n_4166670.html



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