

YOUTH DIRECTOR'S NOTE

CastingKids make a big splash

By David Herrera

Fall is upon us and for our youth it's the postseason. On August 26 we held the Casting-Kids State Championship at the Sportsman's Warehouse in Albuquerque. Courtney Reynolds dominated the 7 to 10 age group, and along with Garrett Wilkinson, both from the Socorro Club, they advanced to the CastingKids National semifinals representing New Mexico in Kissimmee, Fl. The competition was held in conjunction with the BFN Championship.

I would encourage each club to schedule a Castingkids event. You can schedule one at any time after the State Championship for the following year, with the BFN Championship moving to November you can look for the State Championship to be again held in August. Kudo's to the Socorro Club for their continued support of the CastingKids competitions, their devotion to the program is evidenced by the strength of the contenders they send each year to the State Championship.

On September 22-23 we held the Junior Bassmaster State Championship at Conchas Lake. The State Championship is an invitational format with the top-three qualifiers from each Youth Club in the state invited to attend. Each contender qualifies via point system through a tournament series that rewards angling consistency.

With a newly formed youth club in Las Cruces the Four Corners Junior Bassmasters faced competition from outside the Four Corners Club. The contenders in this year's championship fished a lake that was foreign to the majority of the junior anglers from both clubs. As important as fishing skill was the ability to read an unfamiliar body of water and locate fish. The lake provided seasonably low-water levels and tougher fishing than we would have liked, but both clubs showed a competitive spirit and all the contenders performed well.

In the 11 to 14 age group, last years State Champion, Jordan McMorris captured the title on the strength of his ability to locate fish. He was the only contender to weigh in a five-fish limit and pulled away from the field with a two-day total of 10.68 pounds. His total weight bested the rest of the field by nearly 8 pounds.

The 15 to 18-year-old age group proved to end in a more dramatic fashion. Aztec's Cole Bingham, the State Champion in the 11 to 14-year-old age group in 2005, was the odds-on favorite following a second-place finish with over 24 pounds in the adult Federation Nation Qualifier on the same lake in April of 2007. He was challenged early by a tough bite for the older age group and fell behind Chase Rahm



Photos provided by David Herrera
Bottom photo, from left: CastingKids' Garrett Wilkinson and Courtney Reynolds. Top photo, from left: Junior Bassmaster 15 to 18 age group State Champion Chase Rahm, David Herrera and 11 to 14 age group State Champion Jordan McMorris.

from Bloomfield and Nickolas DiCamillo of Las Cruces. A second day rally found Cole just short of his second State Championship title with Chase Rahm besting his two-day total by a mere .07 ounces. This will be Chases first trip to the JWC.

The JWC will be held in conjunction with the Classic in February of 2008 in Greenville,

S.C. BASS and the Bass Federation Nation has been so impressed with the skills and maturity demonstrated at past JWC events that Junior Bassmasters at age 16 or older will now be able to participate in Bassmaster Tournaments at the same level as adult BFN members. What a testament to the Junior Bassmaster program.

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