

YOUTH DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Junior bassmasters open year fast

The Four Corners Junior Bassmasters is starting its fourth year and has already conducted three qualifier tournaments in 2008. If the junior anglers had a choice, we would have conducted a qualifier every weekend starting the first day of the new year, and continued that schedule until the week before the JWC. These junior anglers simply love to fish; it's a passion and lifestyle that consumes their spare time like no other sport.

A Junior Bassmaster Chapter is more than a day here and there, devoted to our youth, it's an investment in our youth that directly impacts the future of the sport, membership in our adult clubs and the overall health of the industry.

In the three years that the Four Corners Junior Bassmasters has existed the families of our junior anglers have purchased 14 boats,



David Herrera
Youth Director

seven new and seven used. Add to that the tackle, clothing and fishing related purchases and you can estimate the impact that one club has had on the industry.

Our youth are not only engaging in a sport they enjoy they are actively engaged in an educational process. Our Junior Club meetings are a platform for education, not only related to fishing techniques and tackle, but ethic's, conservation, boating safety, public speaking, meeting protocol, rules and regulations, personal, commu-

nity and club responsibilities and sportsmanship. Any activity that consumes so much of our youth's time demands more than an acute focus on the activity itself.

As our youth skill level grows they branch out competing in adults tournaments. Last year was not a fluke when one of our junior anglers took home a check from a Federation Nation tournament. We have had four major tournaments so far this year on Morgan Lake, three Team Bass tournaments with 33 plus teams competing and the E.H Queens Tournament the small one with only 24 teams.

In each of these tournaments one or more of our junior bassmasters has cashed a check. You would think that each one of the 20 or so adults who have provided boats and mentored our youth was watching one of their own children walk to the pay

window.

There is nothing more rewarding, any gratification sweeter or satisfaction longer lasting to a mentor than the realization that your investment is paying off. Bonds are made that will enrich the lives of all and relationships created that will last a lifetime.

With the realignment of the Federation Nation Youth Program this year, our youth will compete at both the Divisional and Federation Nation Championship levels. We will conduct two State Championships this year. The first will be on March 29 on Morgan Lake, and the second in late September at the Butte.

It's time you invest in the future of your community, club and the sport; contact me now for information on how to start your junior club chapter.

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