

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Final stop on the tourney trail

By Kenny Hansel

This tournament was the final stop for the NMBFN 2007 season. For many people it all came down to this tournament to make or break their chances for qualifying for 12-man traveling team. Here is a recap for those of you that missed the tournament.

The first day's launch took off at around 5:30 a.m. from the Navajo Dam Marina. The weather was beautiful, lots of sun and very little wind. The first day's weigh-in was held at 3 and 3:30 p.m. at the marina.

With a lot of limits being brought to the scale the weights were very close, Paul Chavez took the lead by weighing in 11.14 pounds, Bob Lechel in second with 11.10 lbs and third place going to Andy Robinson with 10.8 pounds. The second day's launch took off around 5:30 a.m.; a small frontal system had entered the state over night, causing a drop in temperature and light winds.

The weigh-in was held at 1 and 1:30 p.m. at the Navajo Dam Marina. The frontal system seemed to take its toll on the fishing; fewer limits were brought to the scale and people that did extremely well the first day, struggled the second. Some people still put it together despite the tough bite and when it was all said and done, Franco Vallejos took first place with 22.2 pounds, Johnny Johnson in second place 20.6 pounds and Andy Robinsons in third place with 18.12 pounds.

Overall Big Bass honors went to Randal Bell who weighed in a really nice 4.1 pound smallmouth. The G-Loomis 60 percent off gift certificate drawing between the top-three places for Navajo Lake was awarded to Franco Vallejos, and since the G-Loomis certificate drawing was not done for the Ute Tournament, a drawing was also held and was awarded to Richard Stockton. Congratulation guys and nice job!

Here are the top-three patterns:

First Place: Franco Vallejos' pattern included flats on the main lake in 30-40 feet of water. He was fishing with a 4-inch green



Top row, from left: Mike Cones, Bob Lechel, Franco Vallejos, Chuck Rizuto, Fritz Staver and Kenny Hansel. Bottom row, from left: Andy Robinson, Dustin Joiner, Mickey Trousdale, Ubaldo Benavidez, Randell Bell and Homer Pirkey (not pictured Alternate Richard Stockton).

Photo provided by Kenny Hansel

pumpkin tube on a ¼ ounce mushroom jig head. Equipment used: St. Croix 7-foot med-heavy spinning rod with 10 pound PLine monofilament line and a Shimano Stradic reel.

Second Place: Johnny Johnson's pattern included main lake flats in 30-40 feet of water. Johnny was fishing a flat in couple of key depressions (which he believed had tumble weeds collected in them) with a green pumpkin Pat Mauers 3.5 inch tube on a 3/8 ounce jig.

He was also drop shotting senkos and smallie beavers in watermelon/green pumpkin with a ¼ oz drop shot weight. Equipment used: Various rods/reels spooled with Seagar fluorocarbon line in 8 pound test for the drop shot and 10 pound test for the tube.

Third Place: Andy Robinson's pattern included main lake flats in 40 feet of water. He was drop shotting smallie beavers in watermelon/red color. Equipment used: 6-foot, 6-inch St. Croix Legend, Med action spinning rod, with 12 pound PLine Fluorocarbon line.

The NMBFN 2007 overall final standings proved to be very close. The top 13 finishers in these standings make up the NMBFN 2007 12-man traveling team and are as follows:

Boaters:

First place: Fritz Staver (team captain); second: Bob Lechel; third: Chuck Rizuto; fourth: Mike Cones; fifth: Franco Vallejos; and sixth: Kenny Hansel.

Nonboaters:

Seventh place: Randell Bell; eighth: Andy Robinson; ninth: Homer Pirkey; 10th: Ubaldo Benavidez Jr.; 11th: Mickey Trousdale; 12th: Dustin Joiner; 13th: Richard Stockton (alternate)

In May 2008 the NMBFN 12-man traveling team will be heading to Idaho to fish the 2008 BASS Federation Nation Western Divisional at Couer d'Alene Lake. Congratulations to everybody and good luck!

I can never say this enough but I would like to thank everyone who helped out with the tournament. I really appreciate all their hard work. These people are as follows: Denise Hansel, Diane Cones, Kathy Adams, Yolonda Smith, Peggy Gutierrez, Rusie Benavidez, Deborah Tafoya, Lacey Cones and Jake (AKA - Harry Potter).

Thank you guys very much and a job well done. I would also like to thank Chuck Rizuto, Danny Nelson and the Four Corners Bass Club for organizing everything.

They did a wonderful job. Also, thank you to Rizuto's Lodge and Navajo Dam Marina for allowing us to hold the registration and weigh-ins at their businesses.

One more very important thing I want to say. I really want to thank two individuals that have helped out all year long. Without these two people, I would have never been able to run the tournaments so flawlessly, on time and without problems.

In reality I am just a figure/spokesperson for the tournament director position, the real tournament directors are my wonderful wife-Denise Hansel and her exceptional sister Diane Cones. They deserve all the credit for making these tournaments such a success.

I consider myself lucky to have a wife and sister-in-law who go above and beyond to help and are so dedicated to making our tournaments a great success.

So ladies, thank you very much for making the 2007 season a success. I know all the NMBFN members agree with me on this.

The next time you see any of these fine people I have mentioned, tell them "thank you." Without them the NMBFN wouldn't be the strong and successful organization we are.