

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Kicking off the tournament trail

The 2008 New Mexico Bass Federation Nation's tournament trail is just around the corner and with an above average snow pack and a wet spring predicted, the water levels for this year's tournament sites are looking good.

One of the reasons the 2007 season was a great success was because of the tournament crew. I am pleased to announce that the same wonderful crew will be returning to run the 2008 trail:

My wife and Assistant Tournament Director, Denise Hansel, her sister Diane Cones, Lacey Cones, Melissa Cones, Russie Benavidez and Kathy Adams.

Those of you that are new to the trail will see that these individuals all have a lot of experience running tournaments and are a big help to all of us throughout the season.

Keep in mind though; we will always be looking for more help so don't be shy.

Just like last season, we will be holding four qualifying tournaments at four different lakes within New Mexico. Navajo Lake was the final stop for the '07 season so what better way to start the new season than by returning April 26-27 for the 2008 season opener.

The lake should have plenty of water in it and as it proved last fall, an abundant number of good size bass. The local rumor has it that this lake fishes much better in the spring than in the fall, so we are going to put it to the test.

As far as the weather, well, just be ready for anything — remember we will be at the base of the Rockies in Northern New Mexico around 6,100 feet at the end of April. So, heads up Mike Cones your sheep might need a few extra blankets, you don't want her to be sick on pre-fish day.

There is a new rule for the 2008 season that will give the NMBFN another tool when it comes to non-boater issues. We feel that this rule will perhaps encourage new membership into the federation as nonmembers will get to experience what one of our tournaments is like, first hand, and hopefully decide to participate as a member in future events. This rule will allow a "Boater" to bring an "Observer" to



Kenny Hansel
Tournament Director

the tournaments this year in lieu of a "non-boater." The rule will work as stated:

The "observer" doesn't have to pay the tournament entry fee but will go out in place of a "non-boater." The "boater A" that brought the "observer" in lieu of a non-boater will be assessed a fee of \$40-\$50 at registration. This money will be used to pay for the "observer's" boat gas to the day 1 "boater B" and day 2 "boater C" that takes the "observer" out each day. The money (boat gas) will be given to the Day 1 "boater B" (\$20-25) and the Day 2 "boater C" (\$20-25) by the tournament director each morning before takeoff. The "boater B" and "boater C" will not collect boat gas money directly from the "observer" unlike the normal non-boaters that will pay the boaters directly. That "observer" will be put into the draw just like a "non-boater" but doesn't have any control of the boat or any "say" of where or what they fish but is just allowed to fun fish from the back of boat (front of the boat if "boater B or C" agrees) and assist (if willing) with the netting of fish. The observer is not allowed to discuss, share, or divulge any information with anyone in the tournament (similar to BASS Elite series). The "observer" will not weight in any fish and must go out each day of the tournament with the designated Day 1 "boater B" or Day 2 "boater C." If the "observer" does not go out for any reason, and there is more than one boat with one person in it, then the "boater A" that he/she registered with will have to give up his boater privileges for the day and must go as a non-boater and the "boater A's" assigned non-boater for that day will be

reassigned to go with "boater B or C" in place of the "observer" that didn't show, if a non-boater spot is available. A coin flip will decide an odd man out and the tournament director's decision is final. NMBFN and B.A.S.S. rules states that only one boat is allowed to go out without an observer or non-boater during the tournament, and if at all possible this should be avoided.

This rule will be on a trial bases and will be modified as needed or eliminated if proven not to work. The observer will need to be of legal age, 16 years old and doesn't need to be a member of BASS, Federation Nation, NMBFN or a N.M. club, they are a guest.

Please try to co-operate and be patient while we iron out any flaws/problems not foreseen. If you have any suggestions please bring them to my attention so we can address them as quickly as possible.

All the rules that were in place last season will remain effective for 2008 and as a reminder here are some of the important changes made last year:

- All boaters are required to have \$300,000 liability (\$100,000 in the past) and must keep proof of this in the boat while participating in a NMBFN/BASS sanctioned event. This includes any official pre-fish days. Random checks will be conducted at all the events.

- All NMBFN qualifier tournaments will have an off-limits so please read the official tournament announcement in each *BigMouth* for the correct dates.

I will be handing out and going over an updated copy of all the NMBFN rules at each tournament registration.

One more thing, Brian Stangel has volunteered to post the NMBFN tournament results, BigMouth and all the Federation clubs information on his Web site: www.abqsportfishing.com.

I will get him the results within two days after the tournament so he can post them for all to see. It is a very nice Web site and a person can find information on almost all

TOURNAMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

NMBFN 2008 TOURNAMENT TRAIL

First Qualifier
Navajo Lake
April 26-27
(Saturday and Sunday)

Registration:
Friday, April 25
from 4-6 p.m. at
Rizuto's San Juan River
Lodge & Tackle shop
Pairing meeting: 7 p.m.

Entry Fee: \$100
Big Bass Option: \$5
Nonboater Pot Option: \$15
Cash or Checks only. No credit cards accepted

Top 3 places draw for a G-Loomis 60 percent off rod certificate.
(12-man traveling team using best 3-of-4 qualifiers)

Off-limits:
Monday, April 21 through Thursday, April 24

Official prefish: Safe-light, Friday, April 25

Random Checks for proof of insurance will be conducted.
* \$300,000 liability, proof must be in boat while on the water.

of the tournament trails in New Mexico. Take a look at it and next time you see Brian let him know that you appreciate his time and effort.

I have always stated that if you have any concerns, questions, or suggestions about the tournaments, feel free to contact me anytime. I will do my best to try and address them as quickly as possible.

Don't forget that all New Mexico fishing licenses expired March 31.

Hope to see you all at Navajo in April.