

Northwestern Ontario

FREE

Outdoors

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO
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Summer Walleye

By Tamara Spence

With summer come memories that will last a lifetime. It is the season where moments are shared and family and friends alike get outside to explore our region or drop a line in the lake. Northwestern Ontario is an excellent location with countless waterbodies for some of the best walleye angling opportunities and table fare.

The vast majority of anglers are chasing those gold and green beauties we call pickerel in Northwestern Ontario and the tips and tricks are endless. When the summer months are heating up many anglers are booking time off and preparing to head to camp or hike to lakes untouched by the masses. Much like humans, walleye have fluctuating patterns and it is important to remember that conditions matter. Summer walleye are challenging to catch especially in peak periods of heat. Walleye activity changes based on water temperature, structure and time of day.

In the early weeks of the summer, you can expect to be catching a fair share of walleye in the shallows of 4-7 feet of water. For lakes that do not have a lot of structure try to find weeds; walleye will often sit in these spots for relief from the sun. During this period of time locations such as river mouths and shallow bays are equally promising and are going to be your best bang for your buck. However, when that full summer sun comes out it is best to focus on the deeper parts of lakes and rivers.

Many lakes offer prime spots to start targeting walleye. Locations such as drop offs or sloped ledges are where you can find walleye waiting for passing prey.

One struggle that many face is repetition and staying within our comfort zones. Another point to keep in mind is that you cannot always sing the same of song and expect results time and time again. If fish are not on your line chances are you should switch your approach, location, or even your lure. Natural colours are a classic and tend to offer success to most anglers within our region. Colours such as white, silver, bronze, and copper seem to work universally for walleye, though never rule out purples, chartreuse or pink when natural colors are not working. Staying true to the classic approach, if you are using jigs, depending on depth, you can go with 3/8-oz or 1/2-oz based on water levels are desired depth.

Walleye are just like humans on those unbearably hot days when the sun is winning and taking away all of your will to go be active outside. One tip that can be suggested on these lazy walleye days is to get a smaller jig, 1/8 will do the trick, and toss on a live minnow or even a twister tail. Toss the line out in a river or lake as far as you can. Now, the trick to this approach is you are going to be as slow as the walleye. Working this presentation slowly and dragging the bottom with a soft jig here and there to remove any sort of residue that may be acquired along the way.

In an interview with Adam Levanen, owner and operator of Larry's Baits and avid walleye angler, Levanen offered up his tips for walleye fishing in the summer: "With the warmer temperatures it is best to find points of higher oxygen levels. You can find these areas if you focus on dams, Inlet Rivers, creeks or deep drop offs on rocky shores. This is where you find the larger fish." Levanen also makes mention that he finds most success with leeches when using live bait to target walleye.

It goes without saying that there is still a great deal to be learned about walleye fishing. What may work for one person in particular conditions may not be beneficial to another. Whenever there is an opportunity to try a new lake or fishing location, remember to keep it simple. If all else fails, at least you may get a chance to watch a rusty sunset. Good luck out there fellow walleye anglers!

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Lessons Learned Through Tournament Angling

By Samantha Boyce

I'm not a professional tournament angler by any means, but the past 5 years in the tournament scene have taught me some good and hard lessons. If your looking to get into tournaments, or improve your tournament game have a read!

- ### 1. Keep Calm Fish On

Arrive on the water with a positive attitude knowing that anything can happen. If your day isnt going so well, allow yourself the time to think and come up with Plan B. My day sometimes goes from not having it figured and not catching fish to having it figured out and catching fish at the flip of a switch. Keep calm, fish through it, have patience and it will pay off.
- ### 2. Day 1 Wont Always Be The Same as Day2

I've learnt this the painfully hard way. The first day couldn't have gone any better for us. We were on to the Bass and everything we were doing was working. Big Bass were filling the livewell. We landed a position in the top 10 with a field of 75 teams & went home high fiving that night overly confident we would be onto them again in the morning. Day 2 however was the complete opposite. The weather was not the same. The temperature dropped. We were stuck on what we were doing the previous day and we weren't catching Bass. Needless to say we had to go onto stage weighing in only 1 fish. If conditions are different on Day 2, you need to be able to adapt to the change have a Plan B.
- ### 3. Your Going To Need More Than 1 Rod

Every tournament angler I know fishes with a heavy selection of rods. Going into my first tournament I didnt realize the importance of this until the end of the day. For those in the same boat as I was, your going to need at least 2 or 3 rods. Rig each of them up with something different and a few of your favorites. I wasted too much time rigging different lures all on one rod and it probably cost me a fish or two, not good in a tournament. This will save you the hassle of re trying and also save time.
- ### 4. Never Give Up

One of my most memorable days was the last half hour during a tournament on Shebandowan. Our livewell was full of 5 fish, but we just didnt have anything of decent weight to be happy. We pondered for awhile if we should head back early and get a head start on the weigh in, or head over to a new spot for 15 more minutes. 3 of our fish were culled in those 15 minutes we decided to fish which drastically increased our final weight. Now we always stay fishing until the bitter end.If your not confident enough in the weight of the fish in your livewell, dont pack it in early. Stick it out until the end, it might be worth it and you'll know you gave it your all!
- ### 5. Pre Fishing Is A Good Idea

If you can find the time to prefish and get to know the lake your about to fish, its a good idea to do it. Nothing is worse than arriving tournament day with no idea where to start or what to use. Ive had days where I don't figure it out until its too late. Prefishing allows you to come up with a game plan. Find a handful of spots that will produce fish and get them to bite under different conditions. While fishing on a hot calm sunny day is nice, you'll want to know where and how to catch them if its cold, rainy, or windy.
- ### 6. You Will Constantly Be Learning

The more you fish different lakes, under different conditions, use new lures, and fish with different anglers, this is what will make you a better tournament angler. Only being in the tournament scene for 5 years now, each tournament I still come out with a lesson learned. On your worst days, figure out what NOT to do for next time. On your best days, remember what worked and do it again.

Good luck!



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Sea of Blue

By Rich Brochu

Summer is the best time of the year to harvest the tastiest of wild edibles. One of the most popular fruits of the forest to stock up on would be the almighty blueberry. Although the picking may not be very appealing to some people, the pay off is great! There is nothing like the thrill of walking into an area filled with plants loaded with berries.

While writing this article I decided to look up the benefits of blueberries on the internet. Here are some facts I found in my search. According to a University of Michigan Cardiovascular Centre study blueberries can reduce belly fat as well as risk factors for cardiovascular disease. The top ten health benefits of eating blueberries according to a woman's health magazine.

1. Blueberries have the highest antioxidant capacity of all fresh fruit.
2. They neutralize free radicals which can affect disease and aging in the body.
3. They aid in reducing belly fat.
4. They help promote urinary tract health.
5. Been proven to preserve vision.
6. They promote brain health.
7. Help with heart disease.
8. Help with digestion.
9. Help fight off cancer.
10. Give you energy, keep you fit and sharp.

With all these benefits you just cant go wrong. For more information look up the benefits of blueberries on the internet and you will be amazed at how important these wild edibles are.

My main reason for picking and eating blueberries is the fact that they taste great and it's always an adventure when we head out into the forest. We are very lucky to have blueberry fields in abundance across northern Ontario. As a family we often look for berries in early August. We explore bush roads with three to four year old cuts to see how the berries are doing and figure out when they might be ripe enough to pick. Any area with such cuts may offer you a sea of blue. Once you find such an area you will be able to pick berries till your back aches and buckets are filled. Berries usually start to ripen mid July and can be picked late into August or till the first frost arrives. Every year is different, a frosty spring can at times mean a poor crop. When it comes to wild berries, mother nature will decide if it is a good year or not. A good idea is to bring a small stool to sit on as you pick to avoid back strain.

My favourite days to pick are when its cloudy with a slight breeze. Personally I find that when the hot sun is beating down on you, it is too hard to concentrate on picking. If it's a family affair remember to bring snacks and lots of water. Blueberry picking is not an easy task. Staying hydrated is important. It is also important to remember we are not the only creatures looking for this delicious treat. Many of the forest creatures enjoy eating berries including birds, squirrels, chipmunks and bears. At times they can be spotted eating till their stomachs are full. Take a camera along for some wildlife pictures and capture some memories. You never know what you might encounter. Some safety tips to remember are:

1. Do not wander off too far from your group.
2. Make noise-it to help keep the bears away.
3. Call out to one another every so often to let you know where everyone else is.
4. Bring water to keep you hydrated.
5. Sunscreen for those sunny days.

Remember to enjoy the outdoors and please keep the forest clean. It is disheartening when someone leaves garbage in the forest. Get out and enjoy berry picking this summer, stock up for the winter, you wont regret it.

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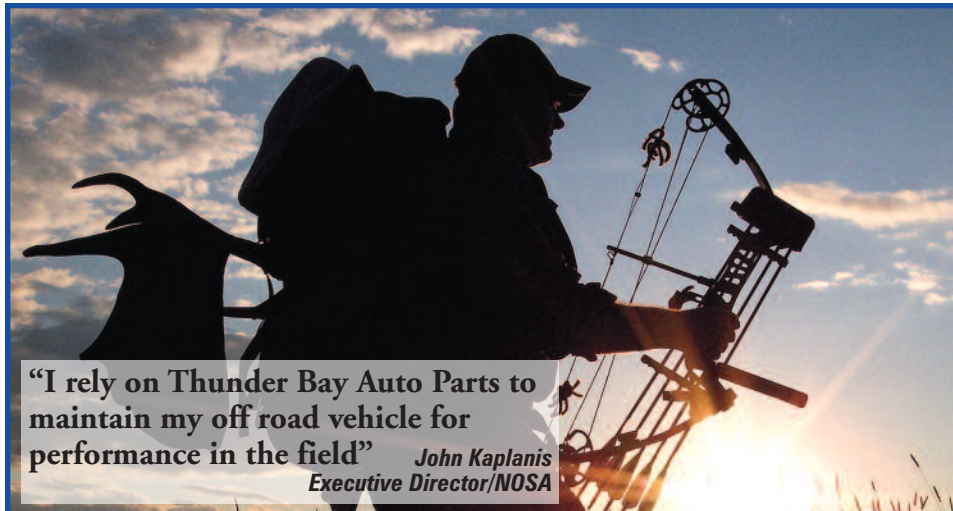
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THIS MONTH'S NEWS

A new face joins NOSA Board of Directors

At the 2017 NOSA AGM this past June, it was out with the old and in with the new! In June at the NOSA annual general meeting (AGM) there was a new addition to the board of Directors. A nomination was submitted on behalf of member Sara Fisher, who was hoping to run for the position of Vice President of operations, a position held by Director John Hay.

However, the BOD also accepted correspondence on behalf of long time board member Bert Johnson, who indicated his intent to resign from the BOD as he cited the need to open up spots for new and younger blood. An honourable thing to do, however his service to the BOD will be surely missed.



Sara Fisher was welcomed to join NOSA's Board of Directors at the 2017 AGM

So with the vacant seat for Bert's position of Executive Vice President, board member John Hay stood down from the post of Vice President of Operations thus allowing for an election-free transition of Sara Fisher into the position of Vice Pres/Ops by appointment during the AGM. The membership welcomed Sara Fisher to her new post. Sara is the second woman to join NOSA's BOD in the last two years.

The vacant position left by Bert Johnson for Executive Vice President was also filled by appointment after Executive Director John Kaplanis submitted a motion to the BOD thus nominating John Hay to fill this role. With his acceptance and with the BOD's unanimous approval, John Hay is appointed to this role and he will sit for two years as NOSA's Executive Vice President.

The NOSA board of Directors has been strengthened with the addition of Sara Fisher who brings added financial handling skills and credentials to our team. We look forward to her service to NOSA and our members.

2017 AYA Walleye Tournament

NOSA Supporting Youth Angling!
By John Kaplanis



Mike Sawatzky presents 2017 AYA championship trophies to Emma LeClair, Destiny Tetreault and team captain Jason LeClair.

On Saturday July 8th a new champion Angler Young Angler (AYA) team was crowned. The 2017 Thunder Bay AYA youth walleye angling tournament hosted its 9th year here in Thunder Bay with 40 teams consisting of a total of 80 youth anglers and 40 adult team captains who competed for the coveted 1st place trophies and prizes for landing a top weight of a three walleye total limit. And once again, NOSA supported the event mightily!

Mike Sawatzky of North Country Cycle and Sports is the new tournament organizer and despite having his hands full with putting together prizes and making sure all logistics and safety measures were in place, he reported that the 9th annual AYA in Thunder Bay was a huge success. Mike also was excited to unveil a new award and prize package to the Thunder Bay AYA with the Sandro Fragale Memorial Big Fish Award, handed out to the team with the largest weight walleye caught during the tournament. Anyone who knows the history of the AYA on the Kam River knows all to well how the late Sandro Fragale was the initial founder and driving force behind introducing the AYA to Thunder Bay youth anglers. The prizes that accompanied the award were St. Croix rods and Daiwa reels for each of the youths on the team that weighed in the big walleye. D&R Sporting Goods owner Adrian Hagar thoughtfully put together this lucrative prize package because he knew how Sandro shared a love for these two company's and their products.

This year's championship team was the Team of Jason LeClair with his two youth partners Destiny Tetreault (age 17) and Emma LeClair (age 17) who brought in a total of 9.88 pounds of walleye. It was a big day for Team LeClair as they claimed the grand prize of Lund boat and motor package in addition to other prizes and trophies to recognize their title!

They also managed to land the single largest walleye of the day at 8.39 pounds! So before walking off the podium with their grand prize trophies, Team LeClair received an emotional presentation of the Sandro Fragale Memorial Big Fish Award by Sandro's close friend, Gord Ellis. Team LeClair landed an 8.39 pound walleye to take home the inaugural memorial award. Gord gave a heartfelt tribute to Sandro who only recently passed away, to recognize Sandro's selfless efforts to always promote youth angling in a most humble and generous manner. There were a few tears under the big tent during Gord's presentation of the Sandro Memorial award to Team LeClair. Sandro would have been very proud to look upon his handiwork at that moment.

In all, each team enjoyed a trip to the podium to collect an AYA medal and a turn at choosing a prize off the tables that were loaded with loot that was generously sponsored by key organizations and businesses who devote their support to this youth oriented "catch and release" event. A special thanks goes out to these fine sponsors: D&R Sporting Goods, North Country Cycle and Sports, Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance (NOSA), Canadian Tire Arthur St., Thunder Bay Salmon Assoc., North Shore Steelhead Assoc., Boston Pizza, Tim Hortons, Print Pros, Play it Again Sports, Snap On Tools, Safety First Consulting, Best Buy, Allard Design.

A huge shout out was given by organizer Mike Sawatzky, who gave thanks to the support given by volunteers at this event: the team of NOSA members that stepped up to ensure safe launching and landing of boats, the quick and efficient weigh-in station manned by Dustin Clark and Cheryl Ellis, as well as efforts by St. John's Ambulance, OMNRF and the OPP who were all involved in supporting and making sure the event was handled safely and successfully for all the participants. When so many people and agencies come together to support a youth angling event like this one, it truly demonstrates how important the future of sport angling really is to northern communities like Thunder Bay!



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THIS MONTH'S NEWS

Attention Moose Hunters: Know The Difference



The Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance (NOSA) will initiate a billboard campaign starting in fall of 2017 in an attempt to help draw awareness to the need for hunters to make sure they identify cow moose versus calves during the open adult moose season and closed season for calves. This project will be a joint effort with partial funding by OMNRF, however bill board design and messaging will be produced by NOSA.

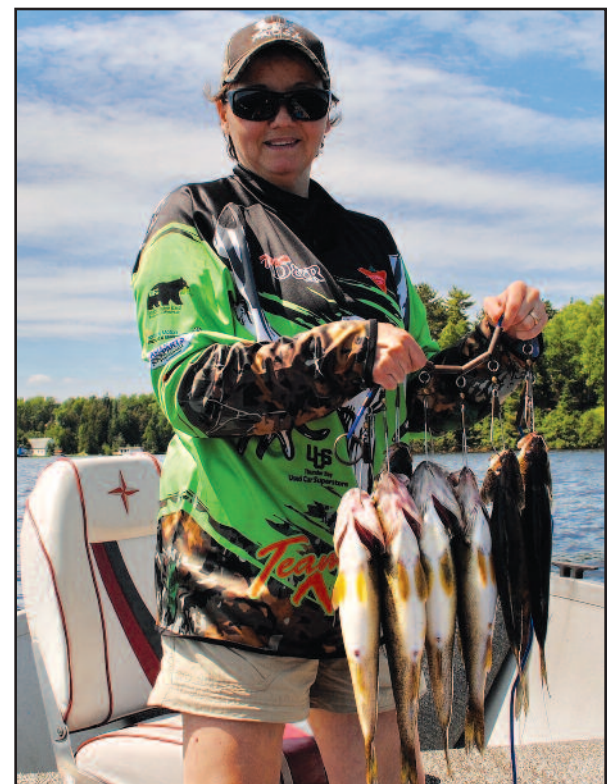
The reason for the project very simply is to educate hunters to make them aware of the need to properly identify moose when hunting in various seasons throughout the fall. Conservation Officers are encountering incidences of misidentified cows and calves being mistakenly shot during the various hunting seasons in the fall in northern Ontario.

Therefore there is a need to educate hunters on the importance of making sure they take the time to accurately identify their targeted animal as per their license allocation. To report a natural resources violation, call OMNRF TIPS line at 1-877-847-7667 or call your local OMNRF office during regular business hours. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477.

Members In The Field



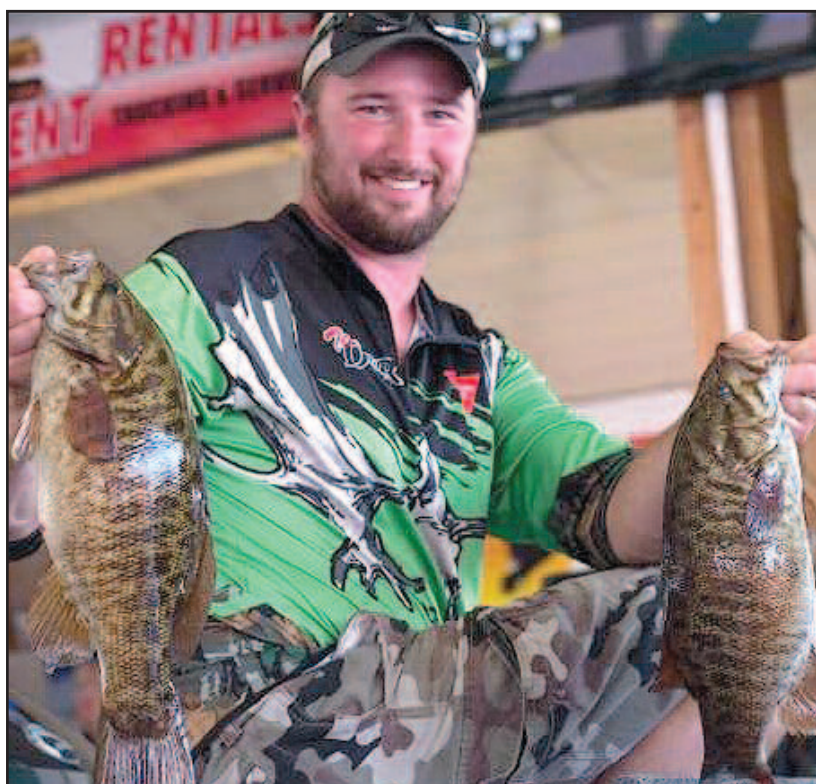
Team NOSA volunteers helping out at AYA tourney



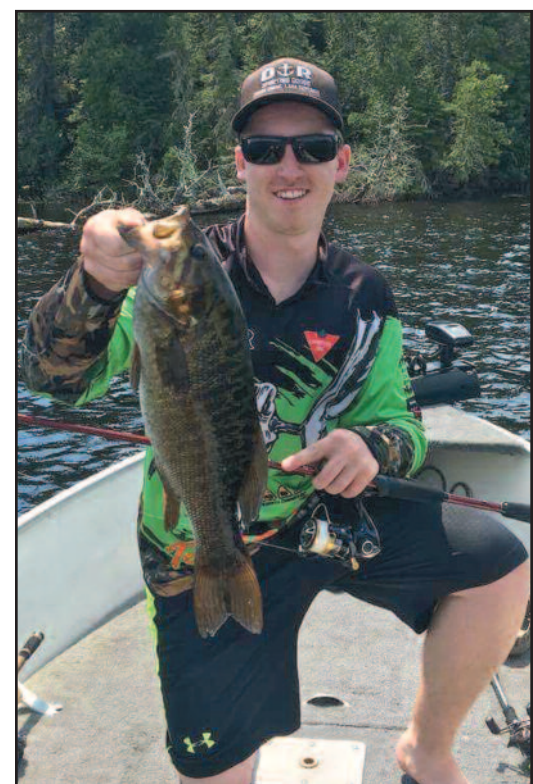
Maria Fornaro after a great day on the walleye waters



Shaye Mascarin proudly shows off her trophy Brook Trout



Brian Neureuther representing NOSA at the Atikokan Bass Classic



Justin Reid shows off a nice bass and his Team NOSA jersey at a recent Thunder Bay Bass Masters event



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Side Imaging Summer Smallies

*Close only counts in horseshoes and hand
grenades...and Side Imaging!*

By James Hill

The most revolutionary improvement in the sport of angling in my opinion...was, is and will be for the foreseeable future side imaging. Side Imaging enables you to cut your hot spot search time to mere fractions.

Yet from what I see at local ramps, is guys aren't utilizing this technology; any angler can benefit greatly from side imaging especially the most casual ones who maybe don't have the luxury of logging hours upon hours of just driving around looking for areas that hold fish. Instead of having to drive directly over top of a deep rock pile or a ledge you just have to drive past it in the area you're looking at. With newer technologies coming out yearly, side imaging has been pushed to the side or even somewhat forgotten about; it's a feature you can get on most base models making it relatively easy to get this invaluable technology into your boat without breaking the bank.

It would take forever to explain all the benefits and little tweaks to the features involved with side imaging. So I'm going to focus on the default settings "turn on and go" basic use of it.

When I'm out searching for summertime smallmouth I like to set up my side image range at 90 feet on both the port and starboard side of the boat. 90' is an easy distance to visualize in my head how far an object I see on the unit is above the surface of the water. (I'm 5 and a half feet tall so it's roughly 16 of me lying down or the distance of home plate to first base!). It also helps when side imaging shore line stretches so you can position the boat the ideal distance from shore to get a full picture of what's there.

When looking off shore I generally pick an area and start making zig-zag patterns across the area (I find being in that 4-6mph or 6-10km/h offers the clearest readings on your screen). Rock piles in the distance will pop off the screen in a brighter and bolder yellow. Continue driving but move your cursor over top of it and hit "Mark" this will drop a way point right on top of it without having to drive over to it; This way you can come back to that exact spot at a later time. Once you've completed searching an area you'll likely have half a dozen waypoints to go check out and surely one of them will be holding smallmouth!

While side imaging shoreline I like to find a 100-200 yard stretch (some people like to turn off the open water side of the side imaging to make the shoreline side bigger. Personally; I like to keep the open water side active just in case there is something out there that looks like it could be juicy!) While travelling parallel to the shore (4-6mph or 6-10 km/h) I'm searching for small rock points that come out from shore, isolated boulders and lay downs. Once again, as I see specific things I'm looking for I like to move the cursor over top of it and hit "Mark" I'll do this on the whole stretch of shoreline in its entirety and work my way back to the start and fish all the waypoints I've put down. Doing this gives the fish a few moments to forget about the sound of my engine and shadow I casted while driving by. I make my way back to the start and stealthily make accurate casts at each individual waypoint moving from one to the other with my trolling motor.

Get out there early on a calm summer morning with a thermos full of coffee and start side imaging some summer smallmouth hot spots. While idling around be sure to keep your ears and eyes open for fish busting the surface. You'll find that your fishing hot spots have doubled after just a few trips!



THIS MONTH'S NEWS

NOSA Support helps Shebandowan Smallmouth Showdown

By George Clark



The 13th annual Shebandowan Smallmouth Showdown Bass Tournament was held on the weekend of July 15th & 16th. Another sell out field of 75 teams angled throughout some tough fishing conditions to try to become champions and take home the top prize of \$6,500.00 and the bragging rights.

Day 1 - After all the teams had weighed in on day one, the team of long time Thunder Bay friends, Dave Walker and Jason Wright held the lead with a 5 fish bag weighing 15.72 pounds. Close behind in 2nd place was Luc Diotte from Nakina and his partner Pierre LaPointe from Longlac. They finished the day with 15.13 pounds. Big fish of the day was weighed in by Terry Nicol and his son Troy, from Nipigon. Their biggie weighed in at 3.78 lbs.

Day 2 - On day two at the final weigh in, Walker and Wright were last to get weighed in. Would they hold their lead and take the crown? Team Diotte/LaPointe came to the scale with a hefty bag of 14.73 lbs. This gave them a two day total of 29.86 lbs. They took the hot seats and sat nervously while Team Walker/Wright approached the scale. They would need 14.15 lbs to be crowned the champions. Their lively catch of fish finally settled down on the scale and the read out showed 13.90 lbs., only .25 away from winning. Your 2017 Shebandowan Smallmouth Showdown (SSS) Bass Tournament champions are Luc Diotte and Pierre LaPointe!

On day two, the big fish of the day and also the heaviest to be weighed in throughout the weekend was brought to the scale by the Thunder Bay team of Dan Daciw and Andy Colla. Their big fish weighed 3.98 lbs.

As with most events, volunteers are necessary. Well the SSSBT is no different. The weekend of the event saw 25 volunteers give up one of the prime summer weekends to help make this annual event the huge success that it is. Along with volunteers, the sponsors are a huge part of the success of the live release smallmouth bass tournament. There are some major sponsors who have embraced this event and each and every year they reach out with sponsoring partnership.

Northwestern Ontario Sportsman's Alliance(NOSA) is one of those continuous partners. With a big cash donation each year, prizes are awarded to the 'B' side. This year the winners of the 'B' side after day one are as follows:

1st Place B Side from Top 3, Day Two from Bottom Half Day One NOSA Award-\$350.00 Cheque-Compliments Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance-Team NOSA

Winning Team of Kevin Green & Adam Green 13.16 lbs

2nd Place B Side from Top 3, Day Two from Bottom Half Day One NOSA Award-\$325.00 Cheque-Compliments Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance-Team NOSA

Winning Team of Mike Sawatsky & Jack Gaudry 13.14 lbs

3rd Place B Side from Top 3, Day Two from Bottom Half Day One NOSA Award-\$300.00 Cheque-Compliments Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance-Team NOSA

Winning Team of Jeff Rooney & Pat G. Slivinski 13.09 lbs

This year there was over \$35,000.00 in cash and prizes. Congrats to all of the prize winners, huge thanks to each and every sponsor and a round of applause to the many volunteers.

I encourage you to check out the SSSBT website www.sssshowdown.ca

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