

Toledo Bend Hosts the 59th Annual Texas State Bass Tournament

Sam Scroggins
Tournament Director

The 59th Annual Texas State Bass Tournament was held on Toledo Bend Reservoir on April 26-27, 2014. The tournament dates back to 1955 when Earl Golding, then a sports writer for the Waco Tribune-Herald, organized what is believed to be the first major invitational bass fishing contests. In 1956, the competition was repeated but opened up to all Texas anglers as The State Bass Tournament. Though never offering prize money to the winners, it has remained a staple of Texas competitive fishing ever since by maintaining its highly competitive Individual, Teams, and Couples Divisions while reaching out to families and seniors. It extended its reach again this year by adding a new competitive Division for the rapidly emerging High School Bass Teams.

Fin & Feather Resort hosted the tournament for the third time in the last four years. Over 200 anglers were greeted with almost perfect fishing conditions on Saturday followed by stiff winds often gusting to over 30 miles per hour on Sunday. Regardless of the conditions, numerous five-fish limits were brought to the scales on both days. Tournament anglers reported that most fish were caught shallow on a combination of spinner-baits, jigs, and soft plastics.

Dick Murray (Aledo) topped the Individual Division with an impressive two-day total of 31.05 pounds. Dick was followed in second place by the host of the Honey Hole All Outdoors Television Show, Bill Wilcox (Burleson), with 29.77 pounds.

The team of Dale Rabe (Arlington) and Charles McFarland (Burleson) captured the Team Division championship with a two-day total of 31.88 pounds. They were followed in second place Chance Mitchell (Burleson) and Tony Rogers (Arlington) with 28.77 pounds.

The Couples Division championship was claimed by Jeff and Michelle LeBlanc (Sugarland) with a two-day total of 24.95 pounds. Brandon Booth and Amanda Schwede (both of Bryan) teamed up to take second with 20.88 pounds.

The Senior Team Division was won by former State Champions William and Anna Polster (Riesel) with a two-day catch of 29.13 pounds anchored by a huge 10.18 pounder. Jim McDonald and Stan Verret (both of Hemphill) finished second with 23.91 pounds.

Top honors in the Adult/Girl Division were claimed by Mark and Natalie Wych (Huntington) with 9.87 pounds. Stephen and Kristin Adkison (Willis) took second with 3.33 pounds.

The Adult/Boy Division Championship was won for the third time in the last five years by William and Hunter Muncrief (Pineland) with 26.76 pounds. Dan and Jace Wilson (Pilot Point) placed second with 23.27 pounds.

The Champions of the new High School Team Division were Emily Hamilton and Lesley Sallas (Huntington High School) with a two-day total of 23.46 pounds. Zach Starling and Colton Kirk (Quinlan Ford High School) finished second with 16.89 pounds. With their Division win, Emily and Lesley will each be eligible for \$1000 Higher Education Award upon their high school graduation and entry into secondary education at a college or trade school. The Higher Education Awards are made possible by Fun-n-Sun Marine and the Jeff England Motor Co. of Cleburne.

The Tournament's Big Bass honors belonged to Anna Polster (Riesel). Her 10.18 pounder was the second largest bass weighed in the 59 year history of the Texas State Bass Tournament, bested only by a 10.81 pound lunker caught by David Cothren on Toledo Bend in 1987. High School Division angler Lesley Sallas (Huntington) took second with a 7.70 pounder and her partner Emily Hamilton (Huntington) took third with a 5.97 pounder. Boys' Big Bass honors went to Hunter Muncrief (Pineland) with a 3.78 pounder while Natalie Wych (Huntington) bested the Girls with a nice 3.11 pounder.

In the Bass Club Top 6 competition, the No Frills Bar & Grill Bass Club (Tarrant County) topped all competition with a combined weight of 70.30 pounds. Two teams from Fort Worth's West Side Bass Club, who had captured the Tournament's Top 6 crown for 6 years in-a-row, took second with 49.63 pounds and third with 47.08 pounds. Houston's Two-of-Us Bass Club was fourth with 40.04 pounds.

In other activities, three new members were inducted into the Texas State Bass Tournament Hall-of-Fame. The Hall-of-Fame was formed in 1998 by Tournament Founder Earl Golding to honor those recognized as "Legends of the State Tournament". The new Hall-of-Fame inductees were Freddy Bowling (deceased) of Mansfield, Eddie Toole of Hemphill, and Gary Vick of Mansfield. The new inductee's names will be displayed at the Texas Parks & Wildlife Freshwater Fishing Center in Athens, Texas along with 74 other members named previously.

The Tournament's 2014 Sponsors were Strike King Lure Company, Fun-n-Sun Marine & Tackle, Skeeter Boats, No Frills Bar & Grill, S&A Sportswear of Quitman, and Toledo Bend Area Tourism.

The complete list of top finishers can be found as an addendum to this Press Release and on the Tournament's web-site.

For more information contact Tournament Director Sam Scroggins at 903-763-2191.