

Bojangles Pro Am Tournament Trail held in Edenton

BY ANGELA PEREZ
Staff Writer

Last Saturday, 88 teams quietly fished their way through the Chowan River in an effort to win the 6th stop on the 7th annual Bojangles Pro Am Tournament Trail at Pembroke Fishing Center in Edenton. Starting out at 6:00 a.m., the teams fished until 3:00 p.m. at which time they had to make their way back to Pembroke Maria for the weigh-in. A large crowd of on-lookers stood by to watch the gleaming boats stream into the dock. The sun-burned faces on the teams ranged from exultant to extremely disgruntled.

There were plenty of fish caught but not all of them met the new 14-inch requirements. Conditions on the Chowan River and Albemarle Sound were good with calm, sunny weather prevailing. However, with the many thunderstorms and rain over the past few weeks, overall conditions have been less than favorable. The cool, rainy weather and influx of fresh water has spread the fish out to prevent schooling. The thunder and lightning storm the night before also contributed to breaking them up.

Despite the overall conditions, 209 fish at a total weight of 476.68 lbs. were caught. The two-man team of Dr. Jesse Lee and James Seabolt (Dunn, N.C.), sponsored by Mid Atlantic Power & Equipment of Dunn, N.C., brought in 8 bass at 19.52 pounds which captured them first place in the Pro Division for \$2,368. Seabolt attributed the win to using "an outside

tree pattern using plastic lures. Our strategy was to make about 2 to 3 quick casts at each tree and then move on to the next tree."

Ray West and Al Garris (Rocky Mount, N.C.), sponsored by Webbs Fiberglass and Sports of Rocky Mount, N.C., brought in the heaviest catch of all with 9 bass at 24.74 pounds to capture 1st place in the Am Division for \$400. They also had the biggest fish weighing in at 4.76 pounds for an additional \$115.

Contestants this year are competing on the Trail for a shot at winning the Classic to be held on Sept. 19th and 20th. The prize this year is a \$53,000 Pro purse including a Murphy/Brown LLC \$25,000 Triton 186 Boat and Trailer with a Mercury Outboard. Edenton's own Pembroke Fishing Center was chosen in a drawing held after the weigh-in to determine the location of the Classic. This is a stroke of luck for Chowan County. The contenders for the Classic will immediately begin to practice fishing in the Chowan County area and continue until close to Classic time. The Classic itself will bring over 120 contestants from across North Carolina and Virginia for two days. Danny Joe Humphries, owner of Carolina Fish and Fur, stated, "This tournament will create a lot of dollars for Chowan County. It's one of the premiere places to fish. There is good parking and plenty of food, ice, and drinks. We're pleased with the outcome of the drawing."

Jerry Stotesbury, owner of Pembroke Fishing Center,

was thrilled that the Classic will be held at his establishment. He announced to the teams, "Edenton is happy you're going to be here and we're going to take care of you. I'm just tickled to death about this."

The public is invited to come out for the weigh-in and share in the excitement of this challenging sport. Call 1-800-527-0918 or visit the web at dannyjoelures.com for more information.



Contestants weigh-in after 9 hours of bass fishing



Left: 1st Place Pro Div. - Dr. Jesse Lee and James Seabolt, Dunn, N.C. Right: 1st Place Am Div. - Ray West and Al Garris, Rocky Mount, N.C.



Photographs by staff photographer Angela Perez

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