

FLATS FAIL TO IMPRESS

Submitted by: Nick Angiulo

With many New Jersey Bass Federation anglers more than anxious to get the season started after a long and bitter winter and cold and windy early spring, few would have predicted what transpired at the 2014 season's first event. That event, held on April 27, 2014 on the usually reliable Northern Chesapeake Bay (also known colloquially as the Susquehanna Flats), proved to be among the more disappointing events in recent history. A combination of factors undoubtedly led to the less-than-stellar fishing. As mentioned above, the long, cold winter and late spring had an obvious significantly adverse effect on the Flats. With little new weed growth, stained to muddy water that dropped in temperature over the past week, and strong mostly northerly winds, it's no wonder the event proved to be a challenge and a struggle for the Federation anglers. Regardless, several anglers found ways to post impressive numbers and weights and happily walked away with the top prizes.

Boater Division

Capturing first place in the Boater Division with a solid five fish limit totaling 18.84 pounds was Dave Piscopo, who hails from Morrisville, Pennsylvania. Piscopo, a member of the Limiters, also posted the Boater Division lunker, a 5.00 pound largemouth, which was just .03 pounds bigger than the next biggest fish weighed from the Boater Division. While his overall weight may not seem impressive for a spring tournament on the Flats, given the factors detailed above, and the fact that his individual weight would have **won a buddy event held on the Flats the day before by more than two pounds**, shows that Piscopo was more dialed into the fishing than any other angler. For the Boater Division victory, Piscopo received \$990 as well as an additional \$165 for his Boater Division lunker.

Taking second place with a five fish limit of 17.16 pounds was John Carpenter of the K.O.B.A. chapter. Carpenter, from Marmora, New Jersey tapped into his vast knowledge of the river system and his past successes there to easily capture the second place position. For his efforts, he received the \$726 second place Boater Division check. Third place in the Boater Division went to Keith Cowan from Mt. Ephraim, New Jersey and a member of the Jersey Giants. Cowan also posted one of the rare limits on the day with five fish for 15.41 pounds. Cowan received \$495 for his third place Boater Division finish.

Co-Angler Division

This year's Co-Angler Division finish was dominated by a rookie angler. Taking first place in that Division by a full four pounds was Dan Schoneveld, a member of the Warren County Bassmasters. Schoneveld, from Hopatcong, New Jersey posted the only five fish limit in the Co-Angler Division totaling 13.06 pounds. For his victory, he was rewarded with the Co-Angler Division first place check worth a healthy \$870.

Second place was taken by perennial Co-Angler threat, Joe Sodora. Sodora, from Garfield, New Jersey and a member of the Limiters, also had a successful day on the water, bringing in two healthy fish weighing 9.06 pounds. Sodora received \$638 for his second place finish. Third place went to Mark Donio, who is a member of the Raritan Valley Bassmasters. Donio, who hails from Millington, New Jersey only brought one fish to the scales, but he made that fish count! Donio's 5.86 pound largemouth not only captured third place, but also was the lunker winning fish in the Co-Angler Division. Donio's third place Co-Angler Division finish was worth \$435 and he received an additional \$165 for the Co-Angler Division lunker.

Miscellaneous Notes

1. Only 4 anglers brought five fish limits to the scales and 63 fish totaling 200.00 pounds were weighed in. All fish were released alive. Additionally, the average weight per fish in this event was an impressive 3.17 pounds.
2. Hutchinson Cabinets has graciously sponsored this season's points tournaments where in each event, the Boater and Co-Angler not in the top three with the next highest weights in their Division who **are present at the awards presentation at the end of the weigh-in**, will each receive \$50. In this event, the \$50 was awarded to Sean Loll in the Boater Division and Mike Wotanowski in the Co-Angler Division.
3. By virtue of being the highest placing eligible Ranger Boat owner in the event, Darren Pincus will receive \$120 in Ranger Cup bonus money. The second highest placing eligible Ranger Boat owner, George Hutchinson, will receive \$100 in Ranger Cup bonus money.