

# WITTIG WINS

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While many visitors to Lake Hopatcong on July 27, 2014 probably had an alleged large exotic snake on their minds, that was the farthest thing from the minds on the New Jersey Bass Federation members who competed that day in the third point event of 2014. While Hopatcong in the summer usually has large expanses of weed beds that reliably produce good numbers of average size bass, with the lake drawdown and cold, long winter, the grass had not fully returned in many areas. That left some anglers scrambling, but, as always, some unlocked the secrets on the day and produced weights that represented what the lake usually puts out in summertime events.

## Boater Division

Winning first place in the Boater Division in a veritable rout was Brian Wittig of the Essex County Bassmasters. Wittig, from Andover, New Jersey, easily won the event with an impressive five-fish limit weighing 15.66 pounds. Included in his catch was the Boater Division lunger winning 4.38 pounds largemouth. Wittig also weighed in a “twin” four pound largemouth that was just ounces short of his lunger winner. This was Wittig’s first win with the Federation. For the Boater Division victory, Wittig received \$750 as well as an additional \$125 for his Boater Division lunger.

Finishing a distant second with a five fish limit of 12.22 pounds was Federation Vice President Mike Hart. Hart, from Stanhope, New Jersey and a member of the Mega Bass Six, reported fishing the weeds to produce his limit. For his second place Boater Division finish, Hart received \$550. Hart placed less than two ounces ahead of Darren Pincus, who was the third place Boater Division finisher. Pincus is from Flemington, New Jersey and is a member of the Blazin Bass. Pincus posted a five fish limit or 12.15 pounds. He received \$375 for his third place Boater Division finish.

## Co-Angler Division

The Co-Angler Division proved to be as uncompetitive at the top as the Boater Division with one Co-Angler obliterating the field. And, apparently, experience counted in this event as the first and second place finishers relied on their years of angling experience to catapult them to the top of the standings. Winning the Co-Angler Division by almost three pounds was the venerable Bill Spindler. Spindler, from Turnersville, New Jersey and a member of the Mega Bass Six weighed in one of only two Co-Angler Division limits, which weighed 11.78 pounds. For his Co-Angler Division victory, Spindler collected \$690.

Second place was taken by another Co-Angler veteran, Ken Bertles. Bertles, from Pennsville, New Jersey and a member of the Gloucester County Bass Club also posted a limit of fish, weighing 8.91 pounds. He received the \$506 second place Co-Angler Division check. Third place in the Co-Angler Division went to newcomer Mike Ferise of the K.O.B.A. chapter. Ferise, from Hampton, New Jersey, weighed

in three fish totaling 8.88 pounds. Included in his weight was the 4.68 pound Co-Angler Division lunker winning largemouth. Ferise received \$345 for his third place Co-Angler Division finish and he received an additional \$115 for the Co-Angler Division lunker.

### Miscellaneous Notes

1. Twelve anglers (23.5%) brought five fish limits to the scales and 113 fish totaling 226 pounds were weighed in. All but one fish was released alive.
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**, each will receive \$50. In this event, the \$50 was awarded to Ralph Campitello in the Boater Division and Dan Schoneveld in the Co-Angler Division.
3. By virtue of being the highest placing eligible Ranger Boat owner in the event, Mike Hart will receive \$120 in Ranger Cup bonus money. The second highest placing eligible Ranger Boat owner, Darren Pincus, will receive \$100 in Ranger Cup bonus money.
4. All anglers who fish in all five point events will have the opportunity to win bonus money at the fifth and last event of the year, to be held on the Hudson River on October 19. In that regard, in the Boater Division, the first, second and third highest placing finishers in that event who have fished all five events will be eligible to win, in addition to any regular prize money, an additional \$1,250; \$750 and \$500, respectively. In the Co-Angler Division, the first, second and third highest placing finishers in that event who have fished all five events will be eligible to win, in addition to any regular prize money, an additional \$750; \$500 and \$250, respectively. Please note that all anglers must have fished all five events exclusively in their respective Divisions to be eligible.