

**KIRKPATRICK WINS BATTLE OF ATTRITION  
AT THE HUDSON RIVER  
PINCUS WINS ANGLER of the YEAR**  
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The Hudson River provides an angler with a variety of challenges, including a 15 inch size minimum, a more than three foot tide swing, and sometimes difficult weather conditions. All three challenges came into play at the New Jersey Bass Federation's last point event of the 2014 season, held on October 19, 2014. Additionally, this event determined the final overall standings and decided the Angler of the Year as well as who would, or would not make the 2015 State Team from the tournament trail. Further pressurizing this contest was the bonus monies added to the event by the Board of Directors. What welcomed the participating anglers on tournament morning were 43 degree air temperatures and sustained 15 mph north/northwest winds, making it feel like 30 degrees. Making matters worse was the mostly all-day incoming tide and the incredible gusts of wind up to 30 mph. With fishing on the main river difficult to impossible, many anglers tucked themselves into creeks, coves or cuts. When the wind-blown field finally reached the scales, no angler managed more than three keeper-sized bass.

**Boater Division**

Capturing the Boater Division was longtime Federation member Scott Kirkpatrick. While only managing three fish, Kirkpatrick's fish weighed a hefty 9.72 pounds. While Kirkpatrick, from Wantage, New Jersey and a member of the Warren County Bassmasters, was not eligible for the bonus money added to this event, he happily accepted the \$660 first prize Boater money as well as the first place plaque.

Finishing in second place is usually not the position that satisfies most anglers. However, this event's second place Boater, George Hutchinson, was undoubtedly tickled pink with his finish. Hutchinson, a member of the Mega Bass 6 from Mullica Hill, New Jersey managed three fish that totaled 8.99 pounds, including the 4.51 pound Boater Division lunker. He received \$484 for the Boater Division second place prize and \$110 for the Boater Division lunker prize. Additionally, Hutchinson was the highest placing eligible Ranger Boat owner in the event, and will receive an additional \$120 in Ranger Cup bonus money. However, and most importantly, Hutchinson received an additional \$1,250 in bonus money. This bonus money was added to the last event and awarded to anglers who fished in all five point events. In that regard, in the Boater Division, the first, second and third highest placing finishers in this event who fished all five events received an additional \$1,250; \$750 and \$500, respectively. The only negative for Hutchinson was that his second place finish placed him in sixth place in overall points (based on a tiebreaker) for the season where only the top five in overall points make the 2015 State Team.

Finishing a close third was Mike Keller, from Newton, New Jersey and a member of the Blazin Bass chapter. Keller also brought three fish to the scales which weighed 8.27 pounds. Based on this finish, Keller received \$330 in regular prize money, and an additional \$750 in bonus money. Additionally, Keller jumped from fourth place in the overall standings to third place, qualifying him for the 2015 State Team as a Boater.

### **Co-Angler Division**

As tough as the event was for the Boater Division, the Co-Angler Division proved even tougher, with only four Co-Anglers weighing in fish. With the difficulty of the event, the Co-Angler standings shuffled significantly as the overall Co-Angler point leader coming into the event fell from the top spot and the third place Co-Angler in the standings catapulted to the top overall spot and captured the coveted sixth spot on the 2015 State Team as the Co-Angler of the Year.

Taking the Co-Angler Division in impressive fashion, in his first-ever Federation point tournament, was Cody Barry. Barry, from Tabernacle, New Jersey and a member of the South Jersey Hawg Hunters was the only Co-Angler to bring more than one fish to the scales. His two fish, weighing 5.93 pounds, included the Co-Angler Division winning 3.16 pound lunker. While Barry was not eligible for the bonus money, he received the first place Co-Angler Division prize of \$630 as well as the Co-Angler lunker prize of \$105.

Similar to the Boater Division, the Co-Angler Division's second place winner reaped a bonanza based on his usually unfortunate finishing position. Finishing second in the Co-Angler Division was Ken Bertles. Bertles, from Pennsville, New Jersey and a member of the Gloucester County Bass Club only managed one 2.62 pound fish. While he was probably surprised that his one fish was worthy of the \$462 Co-Angler Division second prize, he was probably floored as to what else that fish was worth. Namely, similar to the Boater Division, in the Co-Angler Division the first, second and third highest placing finishers in this event who fished all five events were awarded an additional \$750; \$500 and \$250, respectively. That meant Bertles received an additional \$875.<sup>1</sup> Finally, that one fish, coupled with the prior Co-Angler Division points leader's failure to weigh in a fish, placed Bertles at the top of the Co-Angler Division standings for the season. His reward is the sixth spot from the points trail on the 2015 State Team.

The third place Co-Angler Division winner caught only one fish, but it also proved to be quite a valuable fish. Finishing third in the Co-Angler Division was Kevin Szczech. Szczech, from Cranford, New Jersey and a member of the Riggin-N-Jiggin Junior Bassmasters brought one 2.40 pound fish to the scales. That one fish entitled him to both the \$315 third place Co-Angler Division prize as well as \$625 in bonus money.

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<sup>1</sup> Since only two eligible Co-anglers weighed in fish at this event, the third prize bonus money (\$250) was split evenly between the top two finishers.

## Awards and State Team

### Angler of the Year

Congratulations are due to Darren Pincus who captured this season's Federation Angler of the Year. In a hotly contested race, Pincus, from Flemington, New Jersey and a member of the Blazin Bass chapter showed how consistency can pay off. Among the five events, Pincus finished no worse than 15<sup>TH</sup> and posted three consecutive mid-season 3<sup>RD</sup> place finishes as well as a 6<sup>TH</sup> place finish. His 973 total points for the season were 7 points clear of his nearest competitor.

Also worthy of congratulations, as mentioned previously, is this year's top Co-Angler, Ken Bertles.

### Rookie of the Year

In the Boater Division, no angler qualified for Rookie of the Year. In the Co-Angler Division, several anglers had an opportunity to capture the award with a strong finish on the Hudson River. Seizing the opportunity was Kevin Szczech, who was the Co-Angler Rookie of the Year. Szczech finished the year in style cashing in his last two events and finishing in second place in the overall Co-Angler Division standings.

### 2015 State Team

At the end of the season, the top five point-getters as well as the top Co-Angler receive a spot on the 2015 New Jersey State Team. The top three finishers receive Boater spots and the next two along with the top Co-Angler receive Co-Angler spots. The State Team qualifiers from the point circuit are: Darren Pincus (973 points); John Carpenter (953 points); Mike Keller (953 points); Sean Loll (950 points); Doug Peabody (947 points); and Ken Bertles (806 points).

### Miscellaneous Notes

1. There were only 34 fish totaling just over 96 pounds weighed in. All fish were 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 Dave Frost in the Boater Division and Steve Brinster in the Co-Angler Division.
3. Dave Frost received \$500 in bonus money as the third highest placing finisher in the Boater Division in the event who fished all five events.

4. As mentioned above, by virtue of being the highest placing eligible Ranger Boat owner in the event, George Hutchinson will receive \$120 in Ranger Cup bonus money. The second highest placing eligible Ranger Boat owner, Derick Olson will receive \$100 in Ranger Cup bonus money.
  
3. The Federation anglers and Tournament Staff are to be commended on their care of the fish brought to the weigh-ins during the 2014 point events. Of the 334 fish weighed, only two were brought to the scales dead and an amazing **99.40%** were released alive.