

HUTCHINSON PREVAILS

Submitted by: Nick Angiulo

Tidal water bass fishing is undoubtedly one of the most difficult challenges facing a tournament angler. A multitude of factors can affect how an angler has to unlock the puzzle, including the time of year, the tidal swing, the various types of vegetation and cover, the wind and even such things as boat traffic. Add other factors such as a 15 inch size minimum, and the Hudson River in the month of August ranks as one of the most vexing fisheries in the Northeast. While its waters hold multitudes of two to five pound largemouth and smallmouth bass, finding and catching them in the dog days of summer is nearly an insurmountable task. At the New Jersey Bass Federation's second to last point event of the 2015 season, held on August 23, 2015, all of the above factors conspired to frustrate most of the field. However, one angler in the Boater Division unlocked the secrets and in the Co-Angler Division, the winner proved his victory at this body of water in last season's event was no fluke occurrence as he lapped the field by over three pounds.

Boater Division

Historically strong on tidal water and especially so on the Hudson River is the Boater Division winner, George Hutchinson. Hutchinson, a member of the Mega Bass 6 from Mullica Hill, New Jersey has been victorious on or a high finisher at numerous tidal locations, including the Hudson River. At this event, he once again proved his prowess on the River by posting the only five fish limit of the tournament, weighing 10.15 pounds. While that weight would normally considered low in an event where there is a 15 inch size minimum, in this difficult event, it proved to be more than enough to easily take the Boater Division first prize by nearly 1.50 pounds. For his Boater Division victory, Hutchinson received the \$510 first prize check.

Finishing in second place was Kevin Collins. While the conditions were difficult, Collins had a successful day weighing in four fish for a total weight of 8.67 pounds. Collins, from Morristown, New Jersey and a member of the Castaway Bassmasters, received \$374 for his second place Boater Division finish. Third place was captured by 2014 Angler of the Year, Darren Pincus. Pincus, from Flemington, New Jersey and a member of the Blazin Bass chapter, brought three fish to the scales weighing 7.35 pounds. Pincus received \$255. His finish also positioned him near the top of the overall yearly standings and has him poised to attempt to repeat as Angler of the Year with only one event left on the schedule.

The Boater Division lunger was won by Brian Calloway. Calloway, from Cherry Hill, New Jersey and a member of the Big D Valley Bassmasters weighed in a 3.85 pound largemouth to capture the \$85 Boater Division lunger prize. This was Calloway's second lunger of the year.

Co-Angler Division

When conditions are tough for participants in the Boater Division, they are even more difficult for the Co-Anglers. Form held true in this case as, in most

cases, the participating Co-Anglers had less than successful days. However, last year's Co-Angler winner of the event posted a repeat performance and won the event in fine fashion. Taking the Co-Angler Division in impressive fashion 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 two fish to the scales, weighing in four on the day. His overall total weight of 8.83 pounds easily took the first prize of \$390. His top finish also gave him a stranglehold on the top spot in the overall Co-Angler standings and a leg up on a coveted spot on the 2016 New Jersey State Team.

While only having two fish, both of second place finisher Joe Sodora's fish were quite hefty. Sodora, from Garfield, New Jersey and a member of the Limiters posted 5.70 pounds to take the second place Co-Angler Division prize of \$286. Third place in this division went to Mike Lee. Lee, from Oakland, New Jersey and a member of the Essex County Bassmasters had two fish that originally weighed 4.90 pounds. However, he had a 1.00 pound short fish penalty that, fortunately for him, did not cost him a spot in the money. Lee received \$195.

The Co-Angler Division lunker, a 3.15 pound smallmouth, was caught by Akira Okuyama. Okuyama, from Woodside, New York and a member of the Blazin Bass crew, received \$65.

Miscellaneous Notes

1. Only one angler (3%) brought a five-fish limit to the scales and only 41 fish totaling 94 pounds were weighed in. All fish were released alive.
2. Hutchinson Cabinets has once again graciously sponsored this season's points tournaments where in each event, the Boater and Co-Angler not in the money 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 Mike Keller in the Boater Division and Armando Lugo in the Co-Angler Division.
3. 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, Kevin Collins, will receive \$100 in Ranger Cup bonus money.