

The Bass Federation Northwest Division Championship was held April 24th to April 29th on the Columbia River at Hood River, Oregon. The 12-man team representing Idaho began arriving on Friday April 22nd with the last member, Bret Felter flying in to Portland and driving to Hood River on the 24th. The team lodged in a beautiful 6,000 square foot home overlooking many acres of pear orchards with a view of Mt Adams from the back window and Mt Hood from the front. Those two vistas were only visible during two days of the stay due to poor weather conditions.

On the first day of practice Bill Golightly returned in the evening and reported some motor difficulties while Brandon Craner could not trim his motor and Don Boeger was operating without a trolling motor.

On day 2 Brandon took his boat to a repair shop in Portland where they were unable to properly repair the trim. Don switched the power button on the trolling motor pedal later determining that was not the real problem. Bill Golightly continued to struggle with his motor.

Day three had Don and Bill trying to use their boats even in their crippled conditions while Brandon's boat was taken to Nixon's Marine in Walla Walla, Washington where the trim pump was replaced. By day three all team members were reporting decent fishing although weather conditions were bordering on miserable with high winds and frequent rain.

To start day 1 competition Don drove Matt Roth's boat, Brandon was good to go but Bill was still struggling with his motor. A short time after blast off I received a phone call from the tournament director reporting that Bill was broken down upriver and I needed to bring our spare boat (mine) to get him. After stripping my rods and tackle from the boat (I didn't want anybody to laugh at the puny collection) I left for the ramp. Along with the president from Oregon we launched and motored out of the marina. When it was time to come on plane the motor died.

Twenty minutes later we were still unable to keep the motor running and had to return to the launch area. Bill drifted and used his trolling motor to come down stream until just prior to weigh-in and was towed the remaining distance by team member Chad Kaiser. Bill's catch for the day was still a respectable 10-lbs. 11 oz. All other Idaho team members made it safely to weigh-in and the day ended with Idaho trailing Oregon by 27 pounds.

That evening team member Josh Polfer called his wife in Nampa to bring his boat so that he could become a boater for the remainder of the event and Bill would become a non-boater. Sabrina arrived about midnight and the team left the house with 6 operating boats to start day two. At the end of that day team Idaho surpassed Oregon taking the lead in the event by 2 ½ pounds.

The team left the house on day 3 set to win the competition. Weather conditions were terrible with snow forecast in the foothills above Hood River and continuing blustery winds. Launch occurred despite high winds blowing up the river. Approximately 12:30 PM I received another ill-fated call from the tournament director reporting that Chad Kaiser was broke down up stream. With no rescue boat of our own an Oregon Federation member launched a deep V type boat to bring Chad in. On arrival at his location they determined that conditions were too severe to allow them to attempt the tow so Chad was left on the riverbank. Chad's non-boater on that day was a team member of the Oregon Federation who had no fish while Chad reported about 12 pounds in his live well. While I was enroute to the launch area I received a call from Bret Felter who reported that his boater a Wyoming team member had run out of gas and they were about ten miles upstream. The boater's wife arrived at a nearby launch facility and the walked a can of gas to the boat. I requested permission to allow the boat to be transported to weigh-in and was originally given permission that it be done. On their arrival a complaint was filed and the weight of those two anglers was dis-allowed. Bret reported having about 14 pounds in the live well. Unaware to me team member Stewart Kuespert had also been transported back to weigh-in from a location near Cascade Locks because his boater did not want to make the run back on rough water. His weight was also dis-allowed and in his case he was with an Oregon team member and their weights would have offset one another. In spite of some amazingly difficult obstacles **TEAM IDAHO** finished the event in second place 2 pounds and 3 ounces behind the winner. Had we been able to weigh all of our contestants on the final day we would have won the event by approximately 21 pounds. Wait till next year.

Congratulations to all of the team members, Don Boeger who will represent Idaho as a boater at the Federation National Championship in 2012 for his second opportunity their and first time team member Chris Horton who will represent us as the co-angler at that event. Congratulations and a job well done to our other team members Bill Golightly, Bret Felter, Brandon Craner, Josh Polfer, Tony Shuyler, Matt Roth, Josh Carver, Neil Russell, Stewart Kuespert, and Chad Kaiser. To each of you thanks for a memorable week that Cindy and I will remember forever. Thanks also to the Shuyler, Boeger and Roth families who showed up on day three to root for the team and spend a very memorable evening with all of us in the big house.

SPECIAL THANKS TO BRAD PERKINS OF DRY CREEK OUTFITTERS WHOSE SUPPORT WITH BAITS AND TEAM APPAREL BLEW THE SOCKS OFF THE ENTIRE TEAM AND CERTAINLY HELPED US ESTABLISH IDAHO AS A TEAM FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH.