

HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER...

A NEWSLETTER BY ESPN WOMENS TOUR ANGLER, COLLEEN MCKAY

WOMEN'S BASSMASTER TOUR—LAKE AMISTAD

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After spending the winter in Massachusetts, I was really looking forward to getting on the warm water in west Texas. I figured the weather had to be better and I had heard a lot of things about Lake Amistad and how great a fishery it was. The drive from the airport in San Antonio to Del Rio was a long one and I was eager to get to my destination so I could get focused on fishing.

I was able to get a couple of days of practice prior to the tournament thanks to Carolyn Poole from Florida. Carolyn was one of the first female anglers I met fishing the WBT Preview Event in 2005.

I was amazed at Lake Amistad. I had heard how the water was "clear". Well, it is clear compared to many lakes in the south but still not as clear as some of the deep lakes that I fish in the northeast. Well, I was fine with that "clear" water but all the submerged mesquite trees took some time getting adjusted to.

We had a decent practice and managed to locate some nice bass that had begun to move up into the shallows although they were pre-spawn. At one point I saw a bass cruising that was so big I did not believe my eyes! I

said to Carolyn "Is that what I think it is? She laughed and said "Yes", how would you like to catch that during the tournament:. Hmm, a bass that must have weighed at least 12 pounds. I'm sure that every angler dreams of catching one of those!



Day1: My boater was confident that we would get some nice keepers as she had caught several nice bass during practice. My first keeper was a two pound fish and I was pretty excited to start the tournament that way. However, the next fish was a four pound bass which I lost close to the boat. Arrgh! Well, I knew there had to be other keepers around so I

kept on fishing. I managed to boat two four pound bass and another one around two pounds before the end of the first day.

I checked the board and was delighted to see that I was paired with Pam Martin-Wells on Day 2. Pam is a well-known angler with a great deal of experience.

After a brief discussion with Pam about strategy I headed back to my hotel to prep for the next day.

Day 2: I met Pam bright and early. I was a bit nervous fishing with someone who had been so successful but eager to fish with her because I knew I would learn a lot from her. Pam started her day catching three keepers in three casts and I started my day demonstrating to Pam how skilled I was in netting fish. As it turns out, she became appreciative of those netting skills later in the day when she hooked into one that was almost 8 pounds. Whew! I'm glad we got that one in the boat.

After Day 2, I was in tenth place overall and had made the cut so I would be fishing one more day. Now, I was really excited. Not only would I be getting some good points for the yearly standings but the top 25 also finish in the money. Wow, what a start to the year and the tournament wasn't even over yet.

Day 3: I was fishing with Emily Shaffer, another one of the top 12 female pro's from 2006. Emily also said that she had found some good fish in practice and she was right. My first fish of the day appeared to be a good one. Little did I know how good it would be. As I set the hook the fish started to jump. I managed to turn it to keep it from jumping only to have it swim into one of those submerged mesquite trees. We could see the fish but could not tell how big it was and we could not reach it—and it was still attached to my line.

After going completely around the tree and running back and forth from the front and the boat I decided that I would need to drag the fish out of the tree. I had caught the fish on one of my favorite baits—Buckeye Lure's Spot Remover but it also meant that I was using my medium action St. Croix Shakin' Rod. Well, I had that rod bent in half trying to drag that fish out of the tree. Emily kept saying "that rod is going to break" and I kept saying "no it won't"! After giving the St. Croix Rod, the McCoy fishing line, my biceps, and my blood pressure a good workout I managed to get the fish out of the tree and Emily quickly netted it. I was shaking when we got it in the boat. It wasn't 12 pounds but it weighed in at 7 pounds, 1 ounce, making it the biggest bass of my fishing career to date. Well, it's hard to top that and I left Lake Amistad with a tenth place finish and memories I will never forget!

A couple of nice Amistad Bass



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As I head the next WBT event I want to take the opportunity to thank my sponsors and supporters:

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The Green Water Wizards

I'm on the web:

<http://mysite.verizon.net/cmckaybassfish>

UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

Women's Bassmaster Tour— 2006 Championships
Lake Mitchell
Birmingham, AL
February 22-23, 2007

Women's Bassmaster Tour— 2006 Championships
Lake Dardanelle
Russellville, AR
March 29-31, 2007

Green Water Wizards—Club Tournament
Lake Wequaquet
Barnstable, MA
April 21, 2007

I am employed as a faculty member and researcher at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. I began fishing bass tournaments in 1999. I compete on the Women's Bassmaster Tour and fish both club (individual) and team tournaments in the Massachusetts Bass Federation. I'm fishing the Women's Bassmaster Tour (WBT), initially as a non-boater but with a goal of obtaining a boat and fishing as a boater. I would like to establish relationships with sponsoring companies for myself and for my club. I strive for advancement opportunities in pursuit of a professional fishing career.