

BASS

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Thompson said prefishing was good, but then the (dam) gates opened and things changed. Budde said the fish were spread out on the river more than usual. Budde said the team was happy with their finish and accomplished a goal — to come through the tent in their boat.

Spending some time in Borderland has become a part of the IFBC.

Team 4, past IFBC champs and brothers Duane and John Peterson, Bemidji, also members of the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame, said they'd spent the week in the area with 19 family and friends and reiterated their enjoyment of the IFBC and the warmth of the community.

The Petersons finished sixth and said high lake water played a role in their finish. "The lake is different out there this year, the high water early on got it messed up and then the water dropped so quickly and they never really got fed up like they normally do," said Duane Peterson.

"We come for the great fishing, the great people that live up here and this whole great body of water," said John Peterson of the 10 year's they've fished the tournament.

Jeff Hamilton, who with partner Shawn Sirotiak took the first turn in the "hot seat" on stage, finished eighth, with 26.06 pounds of bass. Team No. 59 started Saturday out in 12th place on Rainy River.

"It was a grind, but we had a lot of fun," said Hamilton as he waited in line to weigh in. All the fish they would weigh in were about 2.5 pounds, he said. "It was a tough day of fishing — toughest we've ever seen."

Team 2, three-time IFBC champs Scott Dingwall and Jeff Gustafson finished ninth with 24.42 pounds and struggled both days.

"We probably had one of our worst days we've ever had on the lake; we caught a limit, but barely," he said prior to weigh in. "We will be back next year to try again. It's a lot of fun a little different lake with the water levels and stuff. We pretty much relied on a lot of our spots and areas that have been good in the past and probably made a mistake in that we should tried to find some new stuff. Memories, they call that in fishing, sometimes it works out, but



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

The crowd Saturday was on its feet in anticipation of catching goodies and finding out which team would be the 2014 IFBC champs.

sometimes it bites you in the butt more often than not."

Gustafson said the team loves fishing Rainy Lake and the river offers a unique challenge for the more lake-oriented tournament team. "We've made a lot of friends over the years, fished the tournament every year and we will always be here as long as they have it."

2013 champions Nathan Brigham and Brett Meyers, Emo, Ont., also fished the river Saturday. They finished 12th with 24.10 pounds. Meyers, too, referred to the river as a grind. He said none of their go-to lures worked well to get the fish.

After the team weighed their catch, including a "toadzilla," as coined by IFBC President Gary Potter, hooked by Brigham, Potter joked about how all anglers seem to downplay their catch.

Brigham said Meyers told him to cast in front of a particular rock, as bass are always behind it, "and sure enough, I caught the big one" caught on "a lure.. of a dark color."

"You lie to it, he swears by it," joked Potter.

Team 8, Tony Holenko and Larry Foss took 25th, and said they had a tough day Saturday when they weighed just 6.11 pounds. "The fish left and forgot to tell us," Holenko said. Foss said the tournament is so

fun he'll never miss another if he can help it.

Team 42 Freshwater Fishing Hall of Famer Mark Fisher, Nowthen, Minn., and partner and fellow long-time tournament angler Dave Skallat came in 34th with 16.66 pounds. They, too, said the high levels of the waters this summer impacted fishing.

"We had another great time on the lake," said Fisher. "Today we got five bites. That's all you need. Some were OK, but five bites for five bites. Everybody's been struggling this week. It's been a hard tournament."

Skallat said the high water may have affected their bite. "We had a good practice, but with the long winter and deep ice in some of the bays, maybe cut off some of the forage for smallmouth and kind of hurt the fish population a little bit. We catch what we can and do our best."

"You got to come back, you know that," said Fisher of returning to the IFBC. "It's fun to come to a small-town event. Rainy Lake is a phenomenal fisheries, the people are fun here. If you're going to go hang out for a week hang out here. Why go anyplace else?"

Past IFBC champs and Team 34 John Cann and Ted Olson said they struggled, but had a better day Saturday. "We had a lot of fun and caught some nice fish — you

can't beat that," said Olson. The team finished 39th with 14.31 pounds.

Cann thanked the crowd and community for supporting 10 years of the IFBC. "Without you, it isn't the same," he told the crowd.

Jennifer French, Team No. 47, has fished beside her teammate Joel Pagnac and watched him weigh in tournament fish for years, but has never been beside him on stage as a fellow angler until this year. The team finished 37th among 59 teams.

"The first day we caught lots of fish, not the right size, but the right kind, but we ended up weighing five in, so it wasn't a big waste, but I had fun," she said.

Fishing the tournament was fun, but a little stressful, she said. "It's definitely different than being in the tent and waiting for the excitement to happen," French said. "Being a part of it, the day goes by quicker, you're just watching the whole event. I do like watching, but I do like the fishing part of it."

Pagnac said fishing was tough Saturday, but his added fun to the experience. "We fish together on an every day basis and always have a good time," he said. "We usually slow down and eat a little more, maybe drink a little, but it was a pleasure. She's great in the boat, and yeah, we

get on each others' nerves a little, but that gets over quick. We've learned how to do that. When the fishing is good, everybody's happy."

In July, Pagnac took 18th in Division 1 of the Fort Frances Canadian Bass Championship with long-time partner Hamilton and took second in the Lake Despair, Ont., tournament with partner Larry Foss.

Had two not died prior to weigh-in at Lake Despair, Pagnac said he's likely experience a first place. "That's just the way it goes," he said of tournament fishing.

Team No. 29, Rhonda and husband Dale Johnson, finished 40th. Rhonda, who caught a lunker, joked on stage that she calls lures "jingly things," but Dale said only dragging the bottom worked Saturday. The team lost three at the boat while fishing the river.

"We caught a ton of fish today — walleye, sauger, tullibee, norther, little bass," said Kristi Taylor, Team 31. Taylor had a last minute change of partners when longtime teammate Bonita Ysen gave birth to a baby girl just three days prior to Friday's start of the tournament. As a result, she fished with longtime fishing pal Amy Carew. The team finished 45th with 11.52 pounds.

"It went really well," said Taylor. "I couldn't ask for a better replacement."

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"I am not much of a bass fisherman, but me and Kristi used to fish all the time together, so I am glad she asked and I was able to step up," said Carew. "I told Kristi that Bonita can have a baby any time and I will fill in."

Taylor said adding a new baby to the team won't likely deter she and Ysen from not only returning in 2015, but for as long as the tournaments are offered.

Likely the youngest angler, Cadyn Zahn, who fished as Team 43 with his father Chris Zahn, gave to-the-point answers on stage, weighing in with a two-day total of 5.52 for 54th place.

"Bad," was his answer of how they did river fishing Saturday. "Better," was prefishing, he said. "Yes," he netted the fish, "no," he didn't lose any fish and "yes," he liked to fish next year's tournament with his dad. And "maybe" dad would take him next year.

"Sure, I'll take him," replied Chris Zahn of the question posed by Potter, who fished with with a confidant Cadyn two years ago.

EDA

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Also from the Aug. 19 advisory board meeting, Mason said new advisory board member Dale Johnson recommended struc-

turing the meetings so the board spends more time discussing economic development opportunities, and less time on consent agenda items that don't require much discussion.

"I think the format was more empowering, and re-

ally gave time for us to get our juices flowing and think about opportunities and share some things we're working on," Mason said. "I think that format's going to work out great."

Rognerud said the EDA Advisory Board often runs

out of time at its meetings, as people have to leave the morning meetings to get to work.

"This will give us more time for getting to the meat of economic development, instead of taking so much time on reports," Rognerud said.

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