

# Miner/Perez Mixed Bag Takes NHBF Spring Open

Story: Dave Andrews

The New Hampshire Bass Federation held its annual Spring Open on Lake Winnepesaukee on Sunday, April 25, 2010. As in recent years, this inaugural event to kick off another fishing season in New Hampshire was held out of beautiful Center Harbor. A record setting early ice-out this year set the stage for a memorable Spring Open. With over a month for the lake water to warm, there was talk of monster largemouth bags in practice. The tournament weather forecast also fueled speculation of a major slob fest as sunny, stable weather with daytime highs to reach the mid sixties was predicted.

Forty boats made up the field for this event as anglers renewed acquaintances and dusted off their tackle prior to the 7 a.m. launch. Main lake water temperatures were in the 50-52 degree range with backwaters heating up to 57 to 59 degrees. Largemouth bass were on the minds of many of the contestants, but mixed bags would dominate the afternoon weigh-in.

The team of Mark Miner and Joe Perez had the perfect equation of two smallmouth and two largemouth bass that dropped the scales to 15.92 lbs. They targeted smallies in the morning and after securing a decent limit, proceeded to focus on pre-spawn largemouth that were still holding in deep water. Their strategy worked to perfection as they boated two quality bass, including the lunker of the event, a 6.08 lb. beauty. Their smallmouth were mostly caught on jerkbaits coming out of 20-25 feet of water, while the largemouth fell victim to Steve Graham Perfect Jigs that were also fished in deep water. The victory netted them a \$1400 payday, plus \$400 in lunker money, and a case of Yamaha oil.

Second place went to the team of Dave Andrews and Scott Leppanen who checked in with 3 smallmouths and 1 largemouth for a total weight of 15.72 lbs. Anchoring their catch was a solid 4.46 lb. smallie which fell just shy of tournament lunker. They targeted smallmouth over sand/gravel flats in 8 to 14 feet of water and fished mostly with jerkbaits and crankbaits. Once a solid limit of smallies was in the box, they switched over to chasing green fish in the backwaters. They managed a good cull with a shallow largemouth bass that grabbed a black/blue jig and pig under a dock. Second place paid \$1080 to Andrews/Leppanen.

Longtime Federation anglers Alan Denise and Scott Canelas placed third with a total weight of 13.96 lbs. The Skeeter duo targeted largemouth bass exclusively and were able to coax a couple of big bass out of hiding by flipping black/blue jigs under docks and slow-rolling Rocky Ledge Vibra Bugs around wood cover. Their creel was anchored by a 4.67 lb. beauty, caught late in the day. They earned \$720.

The team of Phil Mathewson and Jason Smith grabbed the fourth spot with a straight smallmouth limit that weighed 13.95 lbs. They targeted smallies all day by dragging tubes and cranking break lines in 14-20 feet of water. Their catch was anchored by the lunker smallmouth of the event, a beautiful Lake Winnepesaukee specimen that weighed 4.48 lbs. Fourth place was worth \$440 and the lunker smallmouth earned them another \$400 bonus.

Rounding out the top 5 was none other than the Back Bay, father and son duo of Jim and Tyler Hanatow. Jim and Tyler stayed on smallmouth bass all day and finished with a 13.28 lb. limit. They worked tubes and crankbaits along flats and break lines in 12-20 feet of water. They earned \$240 for their fifth place finish.

The final paying spot went to Jon Rogers and Dave Debellis who checked in with a mixed bag that weighed 13.09 lbs.

There were 85 smallmouth and 29 largemouth bass weighed in. Every single bass that hit the scales was released alive and well into the deep, cool water outside the beach at Center Harbor. Great job, as usual, to all the anglers for taking such good care of the fish.

There were 40 boats that participated in the event, and 29 of the boats had Minn Kota trolling motors!

The NHBF wishes to also thank its National and Local sponsors: Ranger Boats, Chevy, Yamaha, Evinrude, Solar Bat, Lowrance, Berkley, Castrol, National Guard, Minn Kota, Northern Bass Supply. Very special thanks to Keepsake Quilting, Center Harbor Inn and the town of Center Harbor.

Next up is the Summer Open on Squam Lake which is set for July 25, 2010.