

Tight lines: Kids were winners, even if I wasn't

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Article Last Updated:06/26/2008 10:23:43 AM MDT

Starvation Reservoir - The fishing was unbelievable. We had our five-fish limit of smallmouth bass in the first 25 minutes of the eighth annual Catch a Cure for Cancer charity bass and walleye tournament Saturday at Starvation.

This was going to be the time I finally ended up in the money. My partner, George Sommer, and I spent the next 7 1/2 hours working to catch larger fish to increase the weight of our five-bass limit in the team tournament format.

During the day we landed 40 to 50 smallmouth and changed the fish in our live well six times. I was pretty confident we would end up in the top three weights of the bass side of the tournament. I pictured George and myself walking up to get the money and then handing it back to the organizers.

But it was not to be. We were in first place for roughly 20 minutes, and only because we were the first team to weigh in. I watched with pride and envy as the top three teams from the walleye and bass sides walked up to get their plaques and checks. Rounds of applause came from the other anglers as all the teams promptly handed back the money in the name of charity.

This was the eighth time anglers have honored themselves and children with cancer by giving back their winnings. Money from the fishing tournament and the raffle has yet to be totaled, but organizers expect more than \$20,000. Counting the previous seven events, the Catch a Cure tournament has raised more than \$100,000 for Camp Hobe. The annual weeklong summer camp gives kids with cancer, and their siblings, a safe and fun outdoors experience.

Bass and walleye anglers deserve the bulk of the credit for the generous donations, but the couple who envisioned and launched the event, Carri and Jerry Schlieff, deserve major kudos for establishing this fun and compassionate event.

The Schlieffs did not serve as organizers this year, having decided to step back from the exhausting process. Fortunately for the children, the Utah Bass Federation took over and arranged this year's event.

The Schlieffs still played a major part: collecting items for the raffle, entering the tournament as a team (they took eighth on the walleye side, much to Carri's delight) and helping with various details.

The federation honored the Schlieffs at Saturday's event. And what an event it was. Despite the high price of gas and the long drive to Starvation, a record 52 teams participated. There were teams from Colorado and Idaho and even one angler from Connecticut.

Longtime fishing buddies make up the majority of the teams, but there is a growing number of husband/wife and parent/child squads on the water each year.

If you must know, George and I ended up in 11th place, a far cry from my best performance, fifth place, in 2006.

Schedule permitting, you can bet I'll be back for the ninth annual Catch a Cure Tournament, hoping to help start the next \$100,000 in donations.

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Top finishers

Top five finishers in the eighth annual Catch a Cure for Cancer Charity tournament, held June 21 at Starvation Reservoir:

Bass - 1st place, Bill and Kay Carlquist, 10.45 pounds; 2nd, Matt France and Cory Jones, 10.22; 3rd, Mike and

Jake Powell, 10.09; 4th, Wayne Crowder and Matt Evans, 9.80; 5th, Jack Robinson, Tom Nokes; Big fish - Robinson/Nokes, 3.03.

Walleye - 1st place, Jay Johnson and Allen Mitchell, 10.97; 2nd, Tom Davis and Brian Sorenson, 10.15; 3rd, Shane Iverson and Darren Solock, 9.61; 4th, Don and Bridgett Bakula, 9.48; 5th, Kevin and Roseanna Lund, 8.85; Big Fish - Iverson/Solock, 4.03.

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