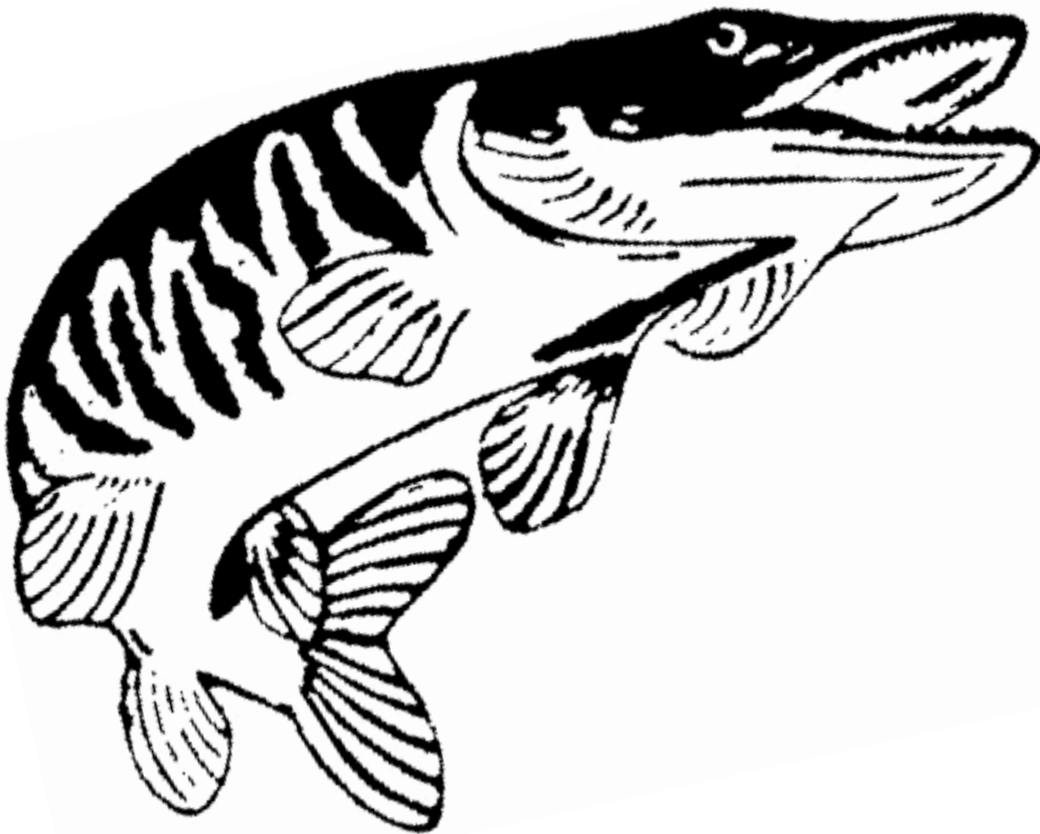


National Championship Musky Open Remembered



**30th Anniversary
August 21th - 23th, 2015**

30th National Musky Open draws record 1,266 anglers

Klaver wins Ranger boat

BY GARY RIDDERBUSCH
NEWS-REVIEW EDITOR

The National Championship Musky Open was once again a record-setting event, as what is likely the most popular fishing tournament in the Midwest attracted 1,266 anglers to 72 Eagle River area lakes last Friday through Sunday.

Andrew Martin of Williams Bay was the top angler in the tournament, while Tim Klaver of Eagle River was the luckiest ticket holder in the 30th annual tournament, headquartered at the Vilas County Fairgrounds.

A total of 195 tournament-size (34 inches and over) muskies were registered in the three-day event, short of the record 219 set in 2013. While most anglers fished just Saturday and Sunday, fishing on Friday was optional.

The tournament is sponsored by the Eagle River Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center and the Musky Clubs Alliance of Wisconsin. The record number of anglers from 15 states topped the old mark of 1,251 anglers last year.

Top anglers

Martin won the tournament by catching five muskies. He had fish measuring 34", 37", 40", 41" and 46" inches, for a total of 200 inches. He won a first-place trophy for his effort and was proclaimed the national champion by tournament master of ceremonies Steve Heiting of St. Germain, editor of Musky Hunter Magazine.

Fishing on lake family four, the St. Germain area lakes, Martin said it was the best



The top fishermen in the Musky Open were, front row from left, Troy Pokorny, fourth; Hunter Mathison, fifth; Jared Adamovich, sixth; and back row,

Andrew Martin, first; Garrett Gelbach, second; and Tim Hayes, third.

—Staff Photo By GARY RIDDERBUSCH

fishing weekend of his life.

"I didn't change lures all weekend and stuck to the shallow weed areas," said Martin, who indicated it was his sixth time fishing in the Musky Open.

The largest fish of the tournament was boated by Brian Sonier of Colgate. He caught a 49-inch muskie on Kentucky Lake using a spinner bait Saturday morning.

For the largest fish of the tournament, a replica will be created by Fittante Taxidermy of Antigo and the replica will

be presented to Sonier at next year's tournament.

Boat winners

Klaver won the grand door prize of a Ranger boat and Mercury outboard motor valued at \$40,000.

"I couldn't believe it," said Klaver. "I thought that was my ticket number and then they said my name. It was unbelievable."

Klaver, 54, said he caught one fish in the tournament, but it was only 33 inches.

"I've been fishing in the

tournament for about six years," said Klaver, who works at Custom Landscaping in Eagle River. "I plan on replacing my old boat with this one."

While only anglers who entered the tournament for \$65 had a chance at the top door prize, a second identical fishing boat package was given away by the Musky Clubs Alliance following a summer-long fundraising raffle.

The winner of that boat

To MUSKY, Pg. 10A

Article from the:

Vilas County News Review - August 26, 2015



Trevor Hakes, left, of Jefferson caught the largest fish in the 2014 Musky Open. He was presented a reproduction during the awards program Sunday. Ben Fittante, center, of Fittante

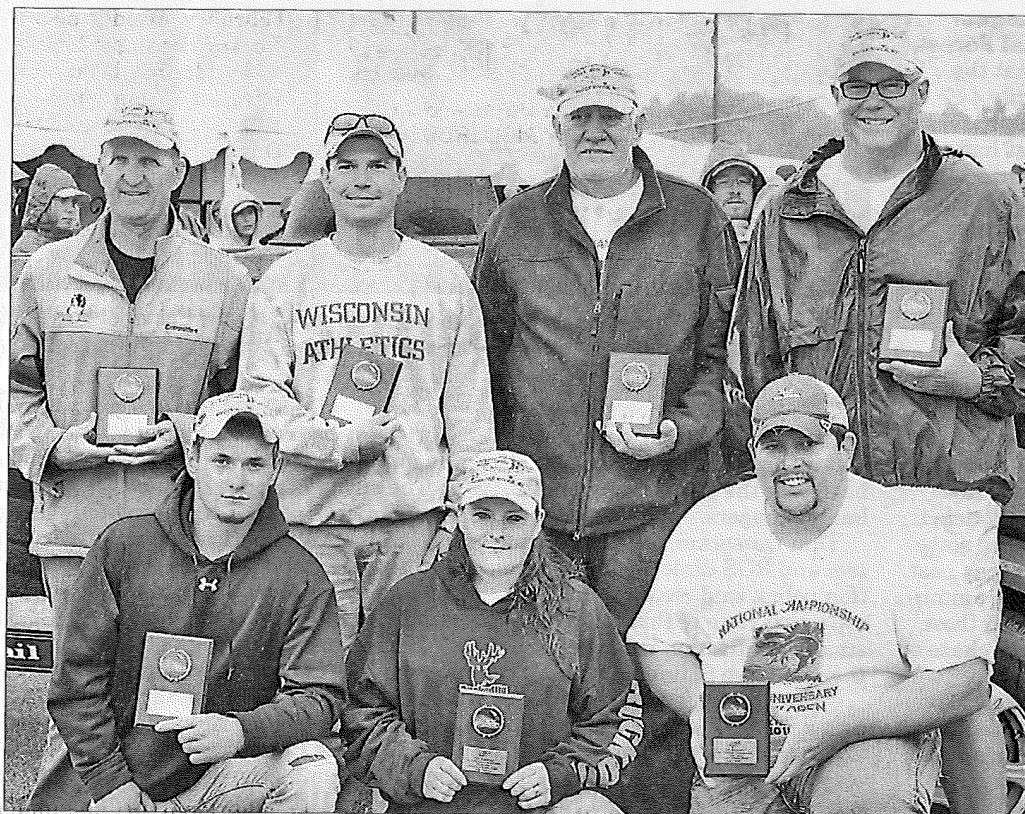
Taxidermy in Antigo, and Larry Slagoski, president of the Musky Clubs Alliance of Wisconsin, presented the 48¼-inch trophy to Hakes.
—Staff Photos By GARY RIDDERBUSCH

Musky: two Eagle River anglers place

FROM PAGE 9A

was Chuck Kaiser of Howards Grove. He was not a tournament participant and did not have to be present to win the boat.

Besides a boat as a top door prize, anglers had a chance to win more than 200 other door prizes Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon — ranging from muskie baits to rods and reels to huge landing nets. All anglers received a free hat and T-shirt.



Anglers catching the largest fish by lake family were, front row from left, lake family five, Hunter Mathison; six, Katie Bremer; seven, Jesse Hen-

ricks; and back row, one, Brian Sonier; two, Garrett Gelbach; three, Jerry Driessen; and four, Dan Martin

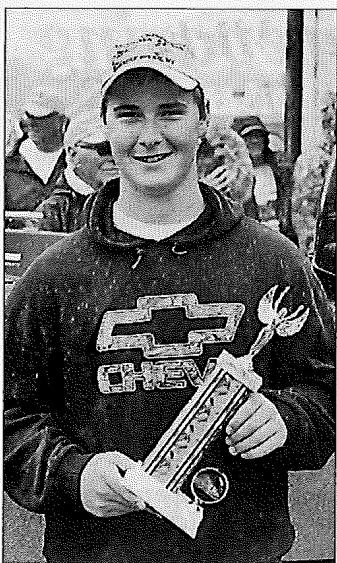
More winners

The 195 muskies registered in the tournament were caught Friday, Saturday and Sunday on seven lake groups comprised of 72 bodies of water. The fish were registered by other tournament anglers right on the water to improve the muskies' chance of survival.

Trophies, courtesy of Miller Beer of the Northwoods, went to the top fishermen and -women.

Placing second in overall points behind Martin was Garrett Gelbach of Madison, who caught three fish measuring 34½, 37½ and 46½ inches, good for 118½ points. Third place, also with three fish, went to Tim Hayes of Monroe. He caught fish measuring 36½, 38 and 40½ inches. Fourth place went to Troy Rosendale, who registered three fish measuring 34, 35 and 39 inches.

Fifth and sixth places went to two Eagle River anglers.



The youth trophy in the Musky Open went to Austin White of Muskego. He caught muskies of 37 and 41 inches.



The husband-and-wife trophy went to Jenn and Nathan Thomson of Green Bay. They had two fish of 41 and 40 inches.



The guardian/youth trophy went to Breckin Faber, left, and Tom Johnson of Madison with three fish.

Hunter Mathison boated two fish measuring 44½ and 45 inches for fifth place and Jared Adamovich caught two fish both measuring 42½ inches for sixth place.

Trophies also went to the anglers catching the largest fish on each lake family as follows: family one, Brian Sonier of Colgate, 49 inches, Kentuck Lake; family two, Garrett Gelbach of Madison, 46½ inches, Round Lake; family three, Jerry Driessen of Kaukauna, 46 inches, Lac Vieux Desert; family four, Dan Martin of Williams Bay, 48 inches, Laura Lake; family five, Hunter Mathison of Eagle River, 45 inches, Gilmore Lake; family six, Katie Bremer of Wausau, 47 inches, Muskellunge Lake; and family seven, Jesse Hendricks of Green Bay, 45 inches, Palmer Lake.

Trevor Hake of Jefferson was presented a reproduction Sunday afternoon of last year's largest fish registered in the tournament. Ben Fittante presented the replica, measuring 48¼ inches.

The husband-and-wife team trophy went to Nathan and Jenn Thomson of Green Bay with two fish measuring 41 and 40 inches. There were

a record 74 teams in the husband-and-wife category.

Austin White of Muskego took home the youth trophy with two muskies measuring 37 and 41 inches. There were 73 youths age 15 and younger entered in the tournament.

The guardian/youth trophy went to guardian Tom Johnson and youth Breckin Faber, of Madison, for registering three muskies measuring 36½, 35½ and 35½ inches. There were 73 guardian/youth teams.

Other awards

The Bob James Sportsmanship Award, presented in honor of the late Bob James of Ranger Boats who helped start the tournament, was given to Kim Emerson and ValLynda Summers, both employees at the Eagle River Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center who help coordinate the tournament each year.

Heiting told the big crowd

at the fairgrounds Sunday afternoon that the tournament, the major fundraiser for the Musky Clubs Alliance of Wisconsin, has raised \$1.25 million for muskie fishing research and stocking in the state.

All the anglers also were congratulated for the 11th annual Help Fight Hunger program in support of the Vilas Food Pantry. Each angler was asked for a nonperishable food item and in return, each angler would receive one chance at winning many muskie fishing items for their donation.

Participants donated more than 3,800 pounds of nonperishable food items to the Vilas Food Pantry and gave \$2,365 in cash donations.

Before sending more than 1,200 fishermen and -women on their way home Sunday, Heiting reminded the muskie hunters that next year's tournament is set for Aug. 19-21, 2016.



HAPPY BOAT WINNER — Steve Heiting, right, emcee for the National Championship Musky Open, interviews a happy Tim Klaver of Eagle River after it was announced Klaver won the \$40,000

Ranger boat and Mercury motor given away at the tournament Sunday afternoon at the Vilas County Fairgrounds. See story on Page 9A.
—Staff Photo By GARY RIDDERBUSCH



BOAT WINNER — Tim Klaver (front) of Eagle River won the \$40,000 Ranger boat at the Musky Open in Eagle River Sunday. Celebrating with Klaver were, back row from left, Musky Clubs Alliance of Wisconsin President Larry Slagoski, Shoeder's RV & Ma-

rine representative Jon Koch, Eagle River Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kim Emerson, Ranger boats representative Steve Lindahl and Mercury representative Debbie Priepke.
—Staff Photo By GARY RIDDERBUSCH

Our View

Musky Open's format still extremely popular

About the time people were thinking it couldn't possibly get bigger, the 30th annual National Championship Musky Open drew a record 1,266 anglers last weekend.

How fitting it was that two of the key officials who helped this event last for three decades, Eagle River Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center Executive Director Kim Emerson and co-coordinator VaLynda Summers, were honored as recipients of the Bob James Sportsmanship Award.

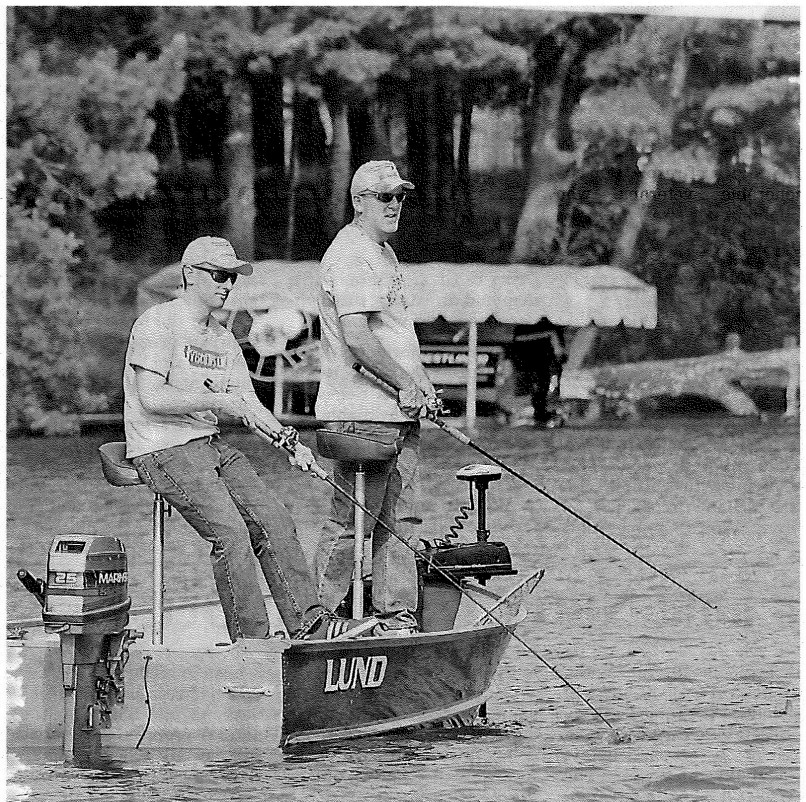
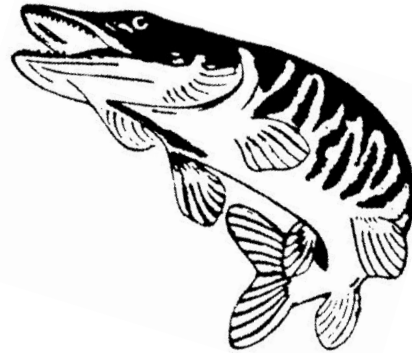
Congratulations to top angler Andrew Martin of Williams Bay for catching five muskies that measured a total of 200 inches. Catching the largest fish was Brian Sonier of Colgate, whose 49-inch muskie on Kentucky Lake will win him a free replica trophy.

The fact that these "muskie hunters" caught 195 muskies in just three days of angling, under not so great conditions, shows the general health of the muskie fishery and the quality of the lakes in Vilas and Oneida counties.

The credit goes to a conservation-minded state that protects its water resources and muskie anglers who not only practice catch and release, but also support stocking efforts. This event has raised \$1.25 million for research and stocking over 30 years.

The luckiest contestant was Tim Klaver of Eagle River, who won the drawing for a 2015 Ranger tournament boat. The success of the event over all these years shows once again the popularity of a format where anglers fish muskies for the sport of it and win prizes based on a drawing.

Article from the:
Vilas County News Review -
August 26, 2015



Muskie anglers converge on North

With some of the top muskie waters in the Midwest, the North Woods is a destination for muskie anglers. That was proven last weekend, when a record 1,266 anglers fished on 72 area lakes in the National Championship Musky Open.

—Staff Photo By GARY RIDDERBUSCH