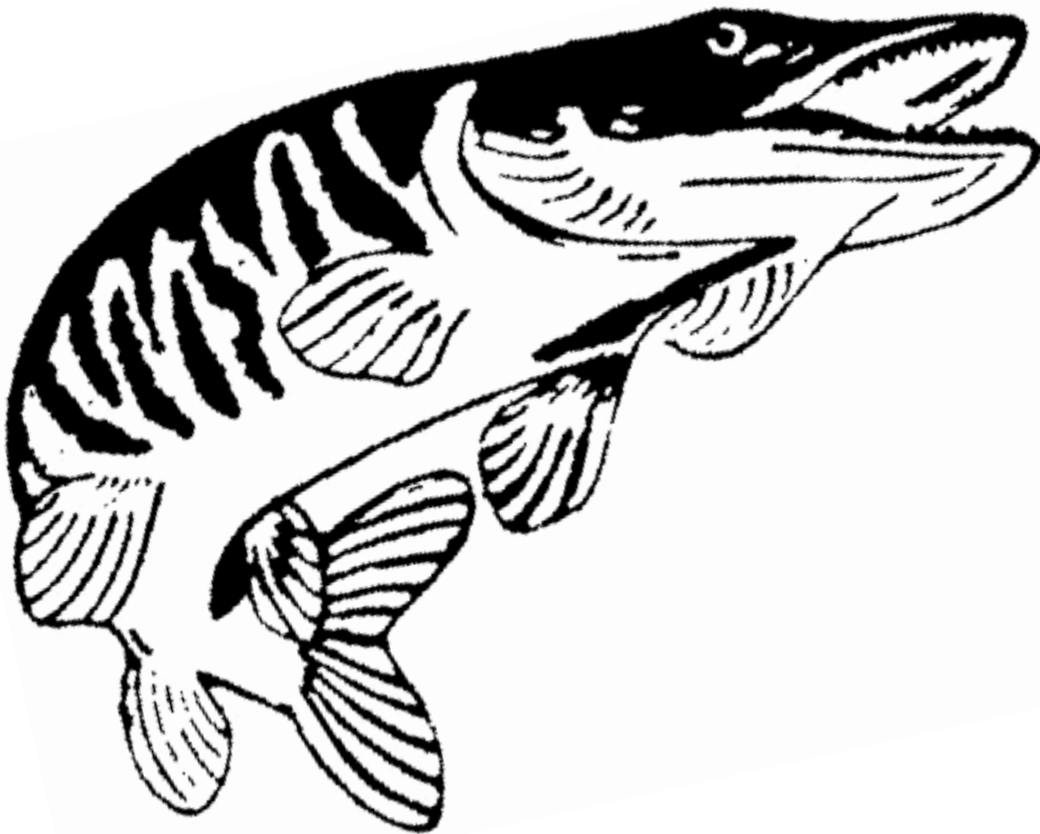


# **National Championship Musky Open Remembered**



**32nd Anniversary  
August 17th - 20th, 2017**

# OUTDOORS



The top fishermen in the 2017 Musky Open National Championship included, front row from left, Chad Rosinski of Conover, first; Aaron Berken of Milwaukee, second; and Darrell Fritz of Rothschild, third;

and back row, Josh Freidel of Wausau, fourth; Hunter Mathison of Eagle River, fifth; and Al May of Kewaskum, sixth.

—Staff Photo By GARY RIDDERBUSCH

## Rosinski wins Musky Open with 5 muskies over 34 inches

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 1,330 anglers to 72 North Woods lakes last Friday through Sunday.

Chad Rosinski of Conover was the top angler in the tournament, while Paul Dim-

mer of Green Bay was the luckiest ticket holder in the 32nd annual tournament, headquartered at the Vilas County Fairgrounds.

A total of 194 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. Anglers fished through a few rain showers Friday, but skies were mostly sunny Sat-

urday and Sunday.

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 17 states topped the old mark of 1,296 anglers last year.

### Top anglers

Rosinski won the tournament by catching five muskies. He had fish measuring 34, 36½, 36½, 39 and 41

inches, for a total of 187¼ 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.

Rosinski told the audience on Sunday afternoon that he caught most of his fish in shallow water.

"Four of the five fish were in a foot of water or less. The

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# OUTDOORS

## Musky: FROM PAGE 10A

last one was in about 12 feet," said Rosinski. "I made a new bucktail and had success with it earlier this month, so I used the same lure all weekend."

Rosinski also had some advice for the other anglers.

"I fished from June of last year to August of this year and never boated a fish. I have caught 11 since then, including getting five fish in the boat in this tournament. Just don't give up and keep working it," said Rosinski.

Last year's national champion, Hunter Mathison of Eagle River, finished fifth this year with three muskies measuring 34 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 35 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 40 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Last year, he caught five muskies. He was also fifth in 2015 with two fish.

The largest fish of the tournament was boated by Al White of New Berlin. He caught a 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muskie on Kentucky Lake about 2:50 p.m. Friday using a Super Slayer Slippery Sam. Kyle Spitz of Marshall also caught a 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muskie, but his was caught at 6:21 a.m. Sunday on Pickerel Lake on a top water bait.

For the largest fish of the tournament, a replica will be created by Fittante Taxidermy of Antigo and the replica will be presented to White at next year's tournament because White caught his fish before Spitz.

The third-largest fish went to Bob Cleaton of Janesville. He caught a 48-inch "tiger" muskie on Lac Vieux Desert

at 12:40 p.m. Saturday on a Suick.

### Boat winners

Dimmer won the grand door prize of a Ranger boat and Mercury outboard motor valued at \$47,000.

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 was Amber Smeila of Milwaukee. She was not a tournament participant and did not have to be present to win the boat. Both boats will be rigged by Shoeder's RV and Marine in Rhinelander.

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

### More winners

The 194 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 went to the top fishermen and -women. Anglers placing in second



Taxidermists Joe Fittante, center, and Ben Fittante, right, presented a replica of last year's top fish to Cliff Van Zeeland, whose brother,

Dan Van Zeeland, of Kaukauna, caught the 48-inch muskie on Lac Vieux Desert.

—Staff Photos By GARY RIDDERBUSCH

through fifth places all caught three fish each.

Placing second in overall points behind Rosinski was Aaron Berken of Milwaukee, who caught three fish measuring 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 40 and 43 inches. Third place went to Darrell Fritz of Rothschild. He caught fish measuring 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 40 and 44 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Fourth place went to Josh Freidel of Wausau, who had fish measuring 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 37 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 41 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Mathison placed fifth with his three muskies and sixth went to Al May of Kewaskum. He caught two fish measuring 43 and 44 inches.

Trophies also went to the anglers catching the largest fish on each lake family as follows: family one, Al White of New Berlin, 48 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, Kentucky Lake; family two, Jake Bielak of Algonquin, Ill., 46 inches, Long Lake; family three, Bob Cleaton of Janesville, 48 inches, Lac Vieux Desert; family four, Jared Adamovich of Eagle River, 46 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, Star Lake; family five, Ed Myshak of Lafayette, Ind., 47 inches, Stone Lake; family six, Kyle Spitz of Marshall, 48 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, Pickerel Lake; and family seven, Al May of Kewaskum, 44 inches, Tenderfoot Lake.

Joe Fittante and his son Ben Fittante of Fittante Taxidermy presented a replica muskie for the largest fish caught in last year's tournament. Dan Van Zeeland of Kaukauna caught the 48-inch fish on Lac Vieux Desert. He was not at the this year's tournament, but the replica was accepted by his brother Cliff Van Zeeland.

The husband-and-wife team trophy went to Eric and Angelica Wachdorf of Random Lake with two fish measuring 39 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 35 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. They each caught one fish, with the larger one going to Angelica. There were 67 husband-and-wife teams in the tourney.

Jack Schnaubelt of Green Bay took home the youth trophy with two muskies measuring 36 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 39 inches. There were 92 youths age 15 and younger entered in the



Musky Open emcee Steve Heiting of St. Germain interviewed youth winner Jack Schnaubelt

of Green Bay, who caught two fish measuring 36 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 39 inches.

tournament. All youths who caught a muskie in the tournament received a certificate.

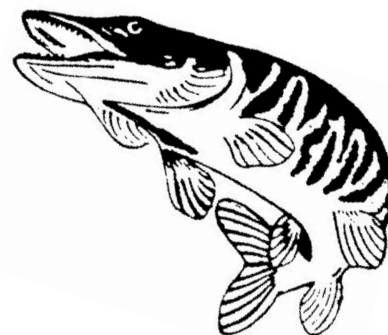
The guardian/youth trophy went to guardian Jared Adamovich and Schnaubelt for registering three muskies. Adamovich added a 46 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch fish to Schnaubelt's catch. There were 92 guardian/youth teams.

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 more than \$1.25 million for muskie fishing research and stocking in the state.

Before sending more than 1,300 fishermen and -women on their way home Sunday, Heiting reminded the muskie hunters that next year's tournament is set for Aug. 17-19, 2018.



Chad Rosinski of Conover displays his trophy after he was named the top angler in the Musky Open with five fish.





Receiving plaques for catching the largest fish in each lake family were, front row from left, Al White of New Berlin, family one; Jake Bielak of Algonquin, Ill., family two; and Bob Cleaton of Janesville,

family three; and back row, Jared Adamovich of Eagle River, family four; Ed Myshak of Lafayette, Ind., family five; Kyle Spitz of Marshall, family six; and Al May of Kewaskum, family seven.



The husband-and-wife winning team of Angelica and Eric Wachdorf of Random Lake caught two fish.



The guardian/youth trophy went to Jack Schnaubelt and Jared Adamovich of Eagle River with three fish.

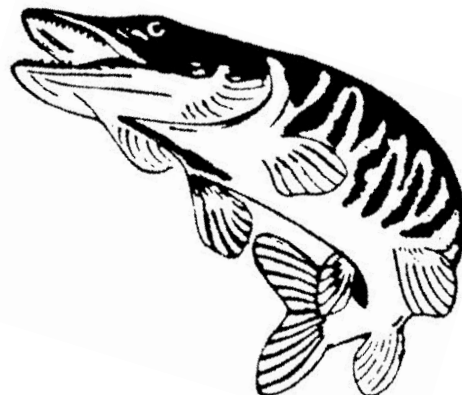


# NEWS



**RECORD TURNOUT** — A record 1,330 anglers participated in the 2017 National Championship Musky Open on 72 North Woods lakes. This was the scene Sunday afternoon as the anglers gath-

ered at the Vilas County Fairgrounds for the awards ceremony. The anglers caught 194 fish in the three-day event. See story in Outdoors.  
—Staff Photo By GARY RIDDERBUSCH





**BOAT WINNER** — National Championship Musky Open tournament officials and sponsors joined Ranger Boat winner Paul Dimmer of Green Bay (in driver's seat) after it was announced that

Dimmer was the lucky raffle ticket holder in the 32nd annual event. Chad Rosinski of Conover was the top angler. See story and more photos in *Outdoors*. —Staff Photo By GARY RIDDERBUSCH

## Our View

### *Musky Open's format nets record participation*

About the time people were thinking it couldn't possibly get bigger, the 32nd annual National Championship Musky Open drew a record 1,330 anglers from 17 different states last weekend.

Congratulations to top angler Chad Rosinski of Conover for catching five muskies that measured a total of 187 1/4 inches. Catching the largest fish was Al White of New Berlin, whose 48 1/2-inch muskie from Kentucky will win him a free replica trophy.

The fact that these "muskie hunters" caught 194 muskies in just three days of angling, under not so great conditions with too much sunshine, 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 more than \$1.25 million for research and stocking over 31 years.

And one small raffle opportunity involving donated food items showed the power of a major fishing event, as donations to the Vilas Food Pantry produced 3,900 pounds of food and \$1,332 cash.

The luckiest contestant was Paul Dimmer of Green Bay, who won the drawing for a 2017 Ranger tournament boat, which was valued at \$47,000. 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.

### Behind the editorial 'we'

*Members of the Vilas County News-Review editorial board include Publisher Kurt Krueger, Editor Gary Ridderbusch and Assistant Editor Doug Etten.*