

## **Picatinny Junior Bassmasters Enjoy a Day on the Lake Walter Chang and Kyri LePree Victorious in Bassin' Kids Tourney**

A record field of 29 competitors between the ages of 4 and 15 showed up bright and early for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Bassin' Kids Tournament on Picatinny Lake on Saturday July 14th. It was a fantastic morning for fishing – cloudy skies, light breeze and comfortable temperatures in the 70s. And the fish cooperated better this year thanks to the cooler conditions. The event was sponsored by the Picatinny Rod and Gun Association (PR&GA), the Civilian Welfare Council and Keitech USA Baits. At the start of the tourney each family was provided with a tackle pack generously donated by Keitech USA Bait's resident Picatinny angler Dan Murphy, which included some plastics worms, Senko-type baits, hooks, and weights. Special thanks goes out to LTC John Thane, PR&GA President, who helped out at the launch and weigh-in to assure everyone had boats, life preservers and fishing gear.

12 contestants competed in the Junior Division of 10 and Unders. 10 year old Walter Chang found success in his first Bassin Kid's tourney by landing a 1.60 pound largemouth on a green pumpkin colored Texas rigged worm with a small bullet weight on the line above the hook. Walter's bass earned him a first place trophy. He also weighed in a nice chain pickerel. Rupali Sinha, age 8, was also competing for the first time. She managed to bring in a 1.59 pound bass on a Baby 1-minus crankbait in the north end of the lake that was good for second place, just 1 one-hundredth of a pound out of first. Shawn Von Hollen also made good in his first tourney by landing a 1.54 pound bass while trolling a live worm. Shawn rounded out the Junior Division trophies in third place, with a 1.54 pound bass that sucked in a live worm he was trolling behind the boat. Trent Grau (4), Adelise Longo (4), and Dominic Timpani (8), also landed bass in this age group. Almost all the anglers in the Junior Division also landed Yellow Chain Pickerel, Black Crappies or Bluegills, including Alana Bugan (7), Dalia Escobar (7), Josephine Chang (8), Daniel DeLima (9), Jason Cakerri (10), and his twin brother Ryan (10). In fact, Alana Bugan's 1.36 pound slab Crappie earned her a trophy for the largest Panfish, thanks to some last minute persistence. She hooked her crappie in the final minutes of competition as she, her Grandfather and host Tom Witter were trolling back to the weigh-in just before 10am.

In the Senior Division of 11-15 year olds, there were 3 bass landed among the 17 competitors. 11 year old Kyri LePree made the most of her first Bassin Kids tourney with a big bass weighing 2 pounds which earned her two trophies. Kyri's bass which, took a red rubber worm hooked wacky style (hooked perpendicular in the middle of the worm), held up for first place in the Senior Division and overall lunker bass for the tourney. 11 year old Sonali Sinha joined her younger sister and Dad as guests in Tom Hartigan's Alumacraft Bass Boat. Sonali did not take long to land the second largest bass of the tourney – a 1.73 pounder which enhaled her purple 5" Slim Senko rigged weedless on a widegap hook in the north end of the lake. Sonali also used the same Senko to land a huge Chain Pickerel over 3 pounds to earn her a trophy for largest Toothfish. Rounding out the 11-15 age group in third place was Josh Loomis. 15 year old Josh was competing in his last Bassin Kid's tourney, and made sure he didn't come home empty handed as his .7 pound bass earned him a third place trophy. Next year when Josh turns 16 he will have to purchase an NJ fishing license, then he can compete with the big boys. Other Senior competitors who brought in chain pickerel or panfish were Anthony Thompson (11), twin brother Michael (11), Nicole Timpani (11), Cassidy Bugan (12), Gwen Cakerri (12), Thomas LePree (12), Aidan Murray (12), Dayne Cakerri (13), Christopher DeLima (13), Sade Grau (13), Christina Timpani (13), CJ Brannon (14), CJ Barella (15) and Brittany DeLima (15).

As you can see, Picatinny Lake offers a healthy and plentiful variety of fish for all anglers. The fishery has never been healthier, thanks to the catch-and-release practices of so many of the Picatinny anglers young and old. And it's available to all military and civilians employees working at Picatinny Arsenal, as well as their parents, spouses and children. See the PGR 215-1 for the exact eligibility rules. All it takes is a NJ fishing license and a Picatinny fishing permit. You can even use the MWR boats on the arsenal lakes and ponds for free by signing up for the PR&GA. The next opportunity for the children to win some prizes while taking advantage of the arsenal waters is Saturday, 22 September when the PR&GA will sponsor its annual National Hunting and Fishing Day Trout Contest. The contest will begin at 10:00 am in the stream below Bucky's. This is one your child will not want to miss. Watch for more details of all the day's festivities.