FLW event on Hartwell shaping up to be shootout

BY ERIC SPROTT
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ANDERSON — The last time FLW Tour anglers visited Lake Hartwell, there were more than a few fishermen who found fish spawning.

Oklahoma angler Jason Christie found what he called "Oklahoma" water in that 2011 event — shallow, dirty water that suits his style of fishing — and targeted staging and spawning fish for a total of 70 pounds, 11 ounces.

But fishing fans looking for a repeat performance from Lake Hartwell next month may find different circumstances resulting in an exciting shootout of the world's best pros.

The Walmart FLW Tour on Lake Hartwell presented by Folgers will visit the region March 8-11 for the first major of its 17th season.

Hosted by the Anderson Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau, the tournament will feature a full field of the world's best bass pros and co-anglers casting for top awards up to $125,000 cash in the Pro Division and up to $25,000 cash in the Co-angler Division.

"I think (fishing is) going to be a lot different this year," Folgers pro Scott Suggs said. "Last year, (the fish) had moved up and got on beds, but I don't think they're going to be up that far this go-round. It's going to be more of a pre-spawn type deal."

The 2007 Forrest Wood Cup winner said anglers will have a wide variety of techniques to employ at the Hartwell event, and anglers will be able to play to their strengths.

"They're going to catch them cranking, on (Sworming Hornet) Fish Head Spins and jerkbaits," Suggs said. "And then the (anglers) who are going to stay in the creeks are going to be throwing jigs, chatterbaits and spinnerbaits."

And according to Suggs, the pro anglers should be able to put those techniques to good use.

"Luckily the lake's big enough that we'll be able to get away from each other quite a bit."

Anglers will take off from Portman Shoals in Anderson at 7 a.m. from March 8-10, then at 7:30 a.m. on March 11.

Weigh-ins on the first two days of competition will be held at Portman Shoals Marina beginning at 3 p.m. On the final two days, weigh-ins will be held at the TD Convention Center in Greenville beginning at 4 p.m.

For complete details and updated information, visit FLWOutdoors.com.

eric@dailyjm.com | (864) 882-2385



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Eventual overall winner Jason Christie smiles as hauls in a bass during the 2011 Walmart FLW Tour event on Lake Hartwell in Anderson.