Hartwell gets set to host regional bass tourney

THE JOURNAL STAFF



SENECA — The Walmart Bass Fishing League is headed to Lake Hartwell Nov. 3-5 for one of six regional championships.

This three-day tournament features the top 40 boaters and 40 co-anglers from each of the Choo Choo, Gator, North Carolina and Shenandoah divisions. They will compete for a Ranger 198VX with a 200-horsepower Evinrude or Mercury outboard and a Chevy 1500 Silverado in the Boater Division and a new Ranger 198VX with a 200-horsepower Evinrude or Mercury outboard in the Co-angler Division.

"The weather has been good, and the water temperatures are trending down," said Chevy pro Anthony Gagliardi of Prosperity "The shad have started their migration into the backs of creeks, so the key is going to be finding bass that are feeding and following the shad into the tributaries.

"I would start with a topwater bait early. I like to throw a Pop-R in the fall if the bass aren't actively schooling. Shad-related patterns are going to work best – crankbaits, spinnerbaits, buzzbaits.

"Schooling is definitely going to play a role in this tournament," Gagliardi went on to say: "The bass are going to be grouping in like sizes, so the key is going to be finding the right size school of fish, one that has 3- to 4-pounders in it. It is going to take about 15 pounds per day to win, maybe 45 pounds total. There should be a lot of fish caught, but I don't think you'll see any huge stringers."

Takeoffs will be at Clemson Beach and Recreation Area located at 275 YMCA Circle in Seneca at 7:45 a.m. daily. Thursday and Friday's weigh-ins will be at the marina beginning at 4 p.m. Saturday's final weigh-in is scheduled for 5 p.m. at Shaver Center located at 698 W. South 4th St. in Seneca. Takeoffs and weigh-ins are free and open to the public.

The BFL is a 24-division circuit devoted to weekend anglers, with 120 tournaments throughout the season, five in each division. The top 40 boaters and 40 co-anglers from each division have now qualified for regional tournaments and are competing to finish in the top six, which will then qualify them for one of the longest-running championships in all of competitive bass fishing — the Walmart BFL All-American presented by Chevy. Top winners in the BFL can move up to the Ever-Start Series or even the Walmart FLW Tour.

The BFL Regional Championship tournament is being hosted by the Mountain Lake Convention & Visitors Bureau.