

Sakovich claims top trout

By Scott Keepfer
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There's no money attached to the Jimmie Orr Championship trophy, but that doesn't diminish the enthusiasm for its pursuit.

Just ask Lee Sakovich.

"It's all about the trophy and bragging rights – and everybody up there likes to brag," Sakovich said.

Those rights belong to Sakovich for the next year after the 45-year-old from Belton capped the Lake Jocassee Trout Tournament season by claiming the Orr championship on April 16.

The victory was hard-earned. Sakovich finished second in the season's first tournament last November, then won the December event. But then he didn't weigh in a single fish for three consecutive tournaments, which left him in a dead heat with fellow angler and good friend Matt McCreery for the top spot.

On the day of the final tournament, both Sakovich and McCreery had boated trout in the two-



JOCASSEE OUTDOOR CENTER PHOTO

Lee Sakovich displays the brown trout that clinched his first Jimmy Orr Championship at Lake Jocassee.

pound range before a fateful late-afternoon hook-up for both anglers.

Sakovich, who caught his fish while slow trolling a live minnow, hooked and caught a 3.19-pound trout around 3:30 and went straight to the weigh-in; McCreery hooked up with a large trout estimated in the five-pound range at around 3:15, but lost it.

That's all it took for Sakovich to secure his first Orr trophy.

McCreery, of Easley, finished second with his 1.97-pound catch and Leon Baker took third with a 1.88-pound trout. The same anglers also took second and third in the Orr points standings behind Sakovich.

"My wife and kids are telling me it's about time to

give it up," said Sakovich, who has been fishing consistently at Jocassee since 1998. "I've been doing this a long time and it's one of those things that gets in your blood. Hey, I don't deer hunt – this is all I do."

OUTDOORS CALENDAR BASS

American Bass Anglers Couples Tournament Trail, Lake Hartwell (Broyles), May 21, Clarks Hill (Dorn), June 18, Lake Hartwell (Broyles). Contact: Steven or Heather (828) 586-1670.

B&T Open Tournament, Sat., May 14, Lake Russell (Harpers Ferry Landing), safe light-3 p.m. Entry \$50, including big fish pot. Tommy (864) 221-2081 or Bobby (864) 338-9305.

Cap Hill Landing Tuesday Night Tournaments, 6-10 p.m. Entry \$40 boat. 868-2823.

SALTWATER FISHING

Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament, May 12-14, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; John's Island; first leg of Governor's Cup Billfishing Series. Bryan (843) 768-1280.

TROUT

Chattooga River Chapter of Trout Unlimited, monthly meeting, Tues., 7 p.m. Clemson (Dept. of Natural Resources office); Charlie Breithaupt of Rabun, Ga., chapter on Argentina Fly Fishing. Brian 843-3492.