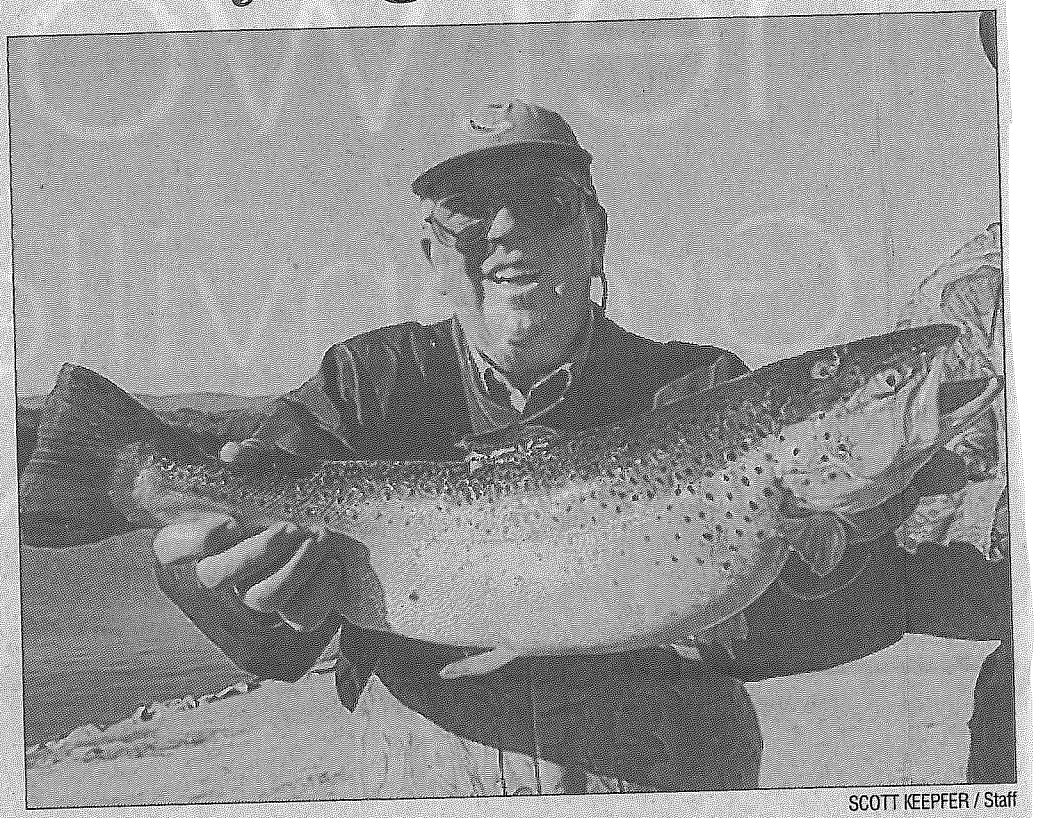
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Timing finally right for Reeves

Angler reels in top trout of tourney season

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SCOTT KEEPFER / Staff

Ed Reeves of Spartanburg displays the winning catch in last Saturday's Lake Jocassee Trout Tournament.

When Ed Reeves caught a seven-pound brown trout on the eve of last Saturday's fourth Lake Jocassee Trout Tournament of the season, his heart sank.

"I've done that a bunch of times, then zeroed out or caught a small fish the next day in the tournament," Reeves said. "So as soon as I caught that big fish I packed it up and went home."

But Reeves returned the next morning and put an end to his pre-tournament jinx, catching a 5.53-pound brown – when it counted – to win his first tournament at the mountain reservoir since 2006.

Fishing was quite productive for most of the 31 competing anglers, who weighed in a total of 14 fish.

Bryan Lee of Mauldin took second place with a 4.62-pound catch and Seneca's Art Jordan, who was fishing with Reeves, finished third with a 4.26-pound trout.

"We had a pretty good day," said Reeves, a 66-year-old from Spartanburg.

Reeves and Jordan caught three keeper trout while drifting minnows between 25 and 55 feet deep that morning.

But Reeves' big bite didn't come until around 2 p.m. – just a couple of hours before weigh-in.

The ensuing battle on wispy four-pound test line required an additional 25 minutes. When the big brown was finally boated, Reeves began to feel cautiously optimistic about his chances.

"But you never know about Jocassee," Reeves said. "I've been surprised up there before."

The tournament was the first that Reeves had fished this season. He said he won't be able to enter the March tournament, either, but plans on fishing the series finale in April now that he's taken the lead in the big fish contest.

Reeves won the Jimmie Orr Championship as the series' top points winner during the 2005-06 season – the same year he caught a personal-best 12-pound, 4-ounce brown trout.

That catch, of course, did not come during a tournament.

"It was about time I caught a good one during a tournament," Reeves said.

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