

Wistrom tops field of 'die-hards'

Greer fisherman wins tournament with big brown

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Perhaps last Saturday's third Lake Jocassee Trout Tournament of the season should've been renamed the "Die-Hard Trout Tournament."

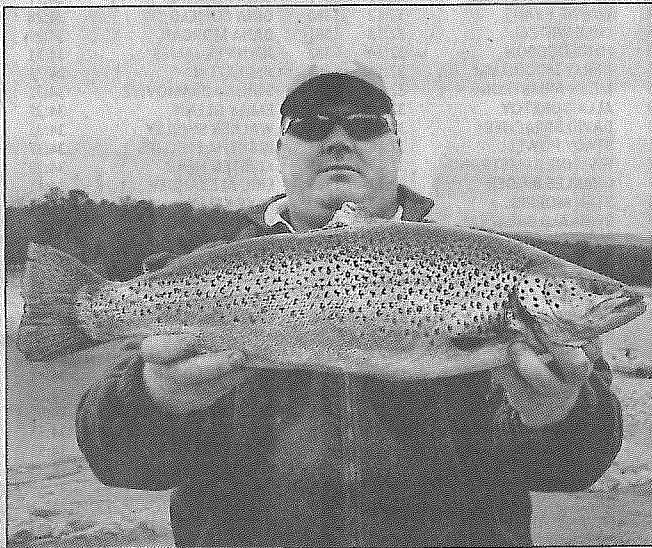
It was definitely was a day for die-hard trout fishermen, who braved temperatures in the teens at the morning blast-off.

"I think it was 11 degrees when we started," said Shay Wistrom, one of 23 anglers in the field. "Our throttle cable was frozen, so we could only go at trolling speed. Needless to say it took us a while to reach our fishing spot."

Once there, however, the action heated things up.

"We caught a lot of fish — maybe five or six keepers and a bunch of stockers," Wistrom said.

The best of the keepers came around 10 a.m. while Wistrom and his fishing partner, Matt McCreery of Easley, were trolling spoons about 30 feet



JOCASSEE OUTDOOR CENTER PHOTO

Greer's Shay Wistrom displays his 5.6-pound tournament-winning brown trout last Saturday.

deep. Wistrom, 33, of Greer, was doing all the catching, as McCreery was limited to operating the boat thanks to recent elbow surgery.

"When the big fish hit, it was really peeling some drag," Wistrom said.

A 10-minute battle, including a brief chase, ensued, with Wistrom frequently sticking his rod into the water.

"I had to keep doing that because the eyelets (on the rod) were freezing up, and I didn't want to break the

line," Wistrom said.

The six-pound-test line held and Wistrom eventually guided the big brown trout to the side of the boat, where McCreery netted the fish with his one "good" arm.

"It weighed around five pounds on our scales and we started to feel pretty confident that we could win," Wistrom said. "We weren't hearing a whole lot of chatter on the radio (about other anglers catching big fish)."

Wistrom and McCreery,

Lake Jocassee Trout Tournament Jan. 17

1. Shay Wistrom (Greer), 5.6 pounds; 2. Bryan Lee (Mauldin), 3.25 lbs.; 3. Lee Sakovich (Belton), 3.2 lbs.; 4. Kurt Andrews (Easley), 3.05 lbs.; 5. Jimmy Constance (Spartanburg), 3.0 lbs.

who have been competing faithfully in Jocassee trout tournaments for about eight years, continued to catch fish until around 1 p.m. before the bite came to a halt. At the weigh-in, Wistrom's 5.6-pound brown trout took top honors, giving him is second tournament victory and first since March of 2005.

"I got a little time off around Christmas and I've been able to scout a bit up there and found some pretty good fish," Wistrom said. "I've been up there several times in recent weeks and probably averaged four or five keepers a day, so we felt good about our chances."

Even on a bone-chilling day.

"Pretty much everybody was having boat problems that morning," Wistrom said. "It was cold, but at least the wind wasn't blowing. And it got up into the low 30s later on. I guess that's why only the die-hards showed up for this one."