



Saint Viator Anglers Earn Bid to State Bass Fishing Finals

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Juniors Daniel Cleary, left, and Patrick Hulsebosch, both of Palatine, hold their prized catch that earned them a trip to the state bass fishing tournament. They caught the bass in the Chain O'Lakes sectional on April 21. (Photo by Vicky Cleary)

champion Jacobs High School in Algonquin and the second place team Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire.

At the Busse Lake sectional, only Streamwood High School from the Northwest suburbs advanced. They finished behind Wheaton Warrenville South and just ahead of Wheaton North high schools.

Cleary and Hulsebosch were surprised to learn they were among the only two Northwest suburban schools advancing, but they say it was more than a lucky catch.

"We've been practicing," Hulsebosch says. "During the winter, we practiced casting and bait retrieval in the pool. Then last week we went out to the lake to practice fishing there."

They didn't catch anything on their practice run and combined with their poor showing last year when they came back empty handed, they were only cautiously optimistic about this year's chances.

"Our coach (Kirk Cahill) noticed that all the other boats were heading toward the channels, where they thought the water would be warmer," Hulsebosch says. "We headed to the deeper water, especially when we saw that the north wind was pushing all the warmer water over our way."

Their strategy worked. Within one hour of casting their lines and trolling with a soft, plastic lure, they caught a 1-pound 6-ounce bass. Later in the day, they caught a 32-inch pike, but that didn't count toward their bass fishing totals.

Next, they start preparing for the state finals, taking place May 6 and 7 at Carlyle Lake in downstate Illinois, which is the largest inland lake in the state.

One year after they formed a bass fishing team at Saint Viator High School, a pair of juniors now find themselves heading to the state tournament.

Daniel Cleary and Patrick Hulsebosch, both of Palatine, took third place in the Chain O'Lakes sectional, hosted by the Illinois High School Association. They were one of only five boats --- out of nearly two dozen in the sectional --- to catch any fish.

"We were really working the points of the lake where there was a deep drop off and concentrating on a slow presentation of the lure," Cleary says. "The water was cold and the fish were pretty lethargic, so we knew we had to put it in front of them slowly."

Only the top three teams, determined by the size of their catch, advanced to state. Saint Viator placed behind sectional

“We’re going to look up the topography of the lake,” Cleary says, “and talk to people who fish there a lot to see how it fishes.”

Both students like to fish in the nearby Hamilton Reservoir in Palatine and also at the lake at Harper College. But they really got hooked, they said, once they caught their first bass.

“I just like to figure out new baits to use and seeing what works,” Cleary says. “Every time you catch a fish, you learn something new.”