

# The River News

The Official Newsletter of the Delaware River Fishermen's Association

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## 2023 Tournament Season Kicks Off After Slight Delay

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The 2023 tournament season kicked off on Sunday, March 26 with the early-season bass tournament. The tournament was postponed from Saturday March 25 due to a forecast for wet, cold, and windy conditions. As the front moved through the area overnight, the morning of the tournament saw bluebird skies and westerly winds that challenged the 13 competing anglers. In all, eight of them brought a legal fish to the scales. Complete results are covered on Page 6 of this newsletter.

### Upcoming Guest Speakers Can Help Elevate Your Game, So Mark Your Calendar

The scheduled speakers for upcoming DRFA monthly meetings will offer insights for improving the fun in your recreational angling as well as sharpening your competitive edge for tournament fishing.

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At the March 29 meeting, veteran shad fisherman Kevin Ingram is due to give a presentation on fishing the lower non-tidal river for this Spring's run of American Shad. Yes, timing the run is important and positioning your boat in the proper location can make all the difference in creating opportunities to hook into one of these silver missiles, but having the right gear and techniques to capitalize on every opportunity can make the difference between landing one and growling in frustration if your lure comes unbuttoned from their notoriously soft mouths. Kevin will cover it all with a wealth of experience.

So, whether you are just getting started with shad fishing or are looking to improve your rate of success, mark the date on your calendar to gain a bit of knowledge and confidence as we head into the heart of the season. And if you can't make it to the meeting, consider reading up on the subject at this webpage from the [Delaware River Shad Fishermen's Association](#).

Overlapping the shad season and perhaps holding on a bit longer in local waters is the Springtime striper spawning run. And for that, in May we'll be hearing from Tim Keebler of [Fin Seeker River Guide Service](#). In addition to talking about recreational striper fishing in the river, Tim

will also address smallmouth bass fishing in the non-tidal river. That can be a good way to up your game for the DRFA bass tournaments to be held on the non-tidal river later this year.

### Important Dates

**Wednesday, March 29, 7 pm.** Monthly Meeting at Silver Lake Nature Center. Guest speaker Kevin Ingram will discuss shad fishing on the Delaware River.

**Saturday, April 15:** The weigh-in for the Club Shad Tournament will be held at the Yardley Park and Ride lot at 2 pm.

**Wednesday, April 22, 7 pm.** Monthly Meeting at Silver Lake Nature Center. Our guest speaker Tim Keebler from Fin Seeker Guide Service will discuss Delaware River fishing for stripers and smallmouth bass.

**Sunday May 7, 9 am.** Help is needed at the Silver Lake Nature Center Family Fishing Day. (See the February meeting minutes for details.)

**Saturday, May 15, 6 am.** The first Club Catfish Tournament of the season will be held at the Gloucester City ramp.

## Minutes Of The January Meeting

In the absence of President Bob Jack, Secretary Pete Antoniewicz opened the meeting at 7:00 with 18 members in attendance. The minutes from the November meeting were read and approved.

**Treasury Report:** Eileen Kicinski provided a financial report read by Rick Mawson. It showed a balance of \$7,865.03 as of January 25. By comparison, the end-of-January balance in 2022 was \$8,785.97, a difference of \$920.97.

**Membership:** Membership Secretary Rick Mawson reported a total of 22 paid memberships as of the day before the meeting. Members were reminded that the January newsletter would be the last one they would receive without renewing their membership dues.

**Youth Activities:** Rick Mawson presented a range of options for having the DRFA support the Silver Lake Nature Center Family Fishing Day as we have done for the past few years. Working at that event helps us defray the cost of the meeting space for our monthly meetings. The selected date was Sunday May 7.

Volunteers should be prepared to come a bit early to rig up the poles for the 11 am to 2 pm event.

**Old Business:** Pete Marcolina announced \$130 in sales of Tackle-Bag Raffle Tickets from the December Holiday Party and \$192 from the Surf Anglers Flea Market at the VE Club.

Additional tickets will be sold at the Oaks Outdoor Show before the drawing is performed there at 4 pm on Sunday February 19.

Representatives from the Coast Guard Auxiliary, as well as local PFBC Waterways Officers, will

be the guest speakers at the February meeting. Kevin Ingram will speak about shad fishing at the March meeting.

**New Business:** Tim Lang, a fishing-rod-building hobbyist, gave a presentation on rod building and repair. (*See separate article on Page 4.*)

PFBC Waterways Officer Mike Blair spoke at the January meeting because he will be busy during the scheduled presentation by the PFBC officers at the February meeting. He noted that other local officers would be available to update members and answer questions at that meeting. He asked that any topics we would like to see covered at that meeting be communicated to him in advance and he will make sure the officers in attendance are prepared to address them.

Rick Mawson announced an opportunity for the Club to get a table at the Palmyra Fishing Flea Market for just \$30. The Members voted to take advantage of the opportunity. Members also volunteered to work at both the Palmyra Flea Market and Oaks Outdoor Show. Rick Mawson would post the volunteer time slots on the website and to make an email appeal to fill the unfilled slots.

The Club needs a new individual to take charge of the hat and shirt sales moving forward. Any interested volunteers should contact Bob Jack.

Scott McDonough asked the new members at the meeting why they were interested enough to join the Club. One was interested in educational resources we could provide for youth activities he is involved in. Two other visitors said that they were interested in learning more about fishing the Delaware River which they don't

really know even though it is right in their back yard.

**Tournaments:** Scott submitted a ramp-permit application at the Neshaminy Marina for the March 25 Bass Tournament and recommended changing the location from the Curtin's Marina ramp to the Neshaminy Marina Ramp to make things easier to launch regardless of tides and currents. If the gates will not be unlocked until 7:00 am, the tournament will be delayed until all members have launched. Members agreed to make that change and the tournament will run from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm.

**Environmental:** John revisited the issue of 'forever-chemical' (PFAS) contamination in fish, as covered in the January-February newsletter. Scott McDonough also reported no sign of dredging in the Falls Township area.

**Fishing Reports:** Frank Beck provided an addendum to his early-January hot fishing report outlined in the January newsletter, by noting he was out with Rick Mawson at Byram a week later on a cold and windy day with no success.

Scott McDonough reported that he and Casey were out two weeks before the meeting and fished Tullytown Cover for a couple of bass and a couple of perch before running up to the lake in Biles Island near Trenton where they caught a dozen more bass up to 2.5 lbs.

The winner of \$43 in the 50/50 drawing was Tex Schroeder. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

*Check the Tourney Hotline  
267-934-2148 for potential  
changes the day before  
each DRFA Tournament.*

## Minutes Of The February Meeting

President Bob Jack opened the meeting by asking Rick Mawson to read the minutes from the January meeting. Those minutes were read and approved.

**Treasury Report:** Eileen Kicinski provided a financial report read by Rick Mawson. It showed a balance of \$7,429.36 as of February 22. By comparison, the end-of-February balance in 2022 was \$9,361.96, a difference of \$1,932.60. But Rick noted that the difference would be whittled down significantly once funds from February raffle ticket sales and new memberships were deposited into the bank account.

**Membership:** Membership Secretary Rick Mawson reported a total of 31 paid memberships as of the day of the meeting. That includes at least seven new members, some of which were enrolled at the outdoor shows. Rick expects more membership renewals as the tournament season starts.

**Youth Activities:** Rick Mawson noted that the DRFA is scheduled to support the Silver Lake Nature Center Family Fishing Day on Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup>. Working at that event helps us defray the cost of the meeting space for our monthly meetings. Volunteers should be prepared to come around 9 am to rig up the poles before the 11 am to 2 pm event.

**Tournaments:** Rick Mawson noted that the first tournament of the year on March 25 was switched to Neshaminy Marina instead of Curtin’s Marina.

**Old Business:** The Tackle Bag Raffle drawing on the last day of the Philadelphia Fishing Show at Oaks was won by Ron Connors (Bryan Malkiewicz’s nephew).



Ron Connors displays some of the fishing gear included in his tackle bag prize from this year’s DRFA fundraiser.

**New Business:** Bob Jack noted that the Club needs a new volunteer to assume the duties for DRFA hat and shirt sales. Interested parties can [contact Bob](#) for more details.

Potential speakers for future meetings include a fishing guide, a PFBC fisheries biologist, and a representative from FITT Lures.

A boating safety course will be held at D&S Marina on April 29. If you cannot register through D&S Marina due to capacity limitation issues, contact the presenter for that event – Mike Blair – through the Southeast PA Law Enforcement Office (717) 626-0228.

### 2023 Tournament Schedule

*All DRFA Club tournaments are free and open to dues-paying DRFA members, with club-funded payouts of \$50, \$30, and \$20 awarded to the top three places. Participants also accrue points for the Angler of the Year competition based on their top six finishes among the nine regular Club events. (There are no tournament entry fees, however, ramp, launch, and/or parking fees may apply.)*

*Except for the Shad Tournament, there is also a voluntary \$10.00 lunger pool with a 100% payout to pool participants for the three heaviest pool fish – 60%, 30%, and 10% – at tournament’s end.*

*New members may register on the morning of an event before check-in time (except for the Shad Tournament). Weigh-in is at the time specified. Late entries will not count.*

*Always check the DRFA website or the Tournament Hotline (267-934-2148) the night before the event to learn about potential rescheduling or relocation due to weather or water conditions.*

Date	Event	Time	Location
Sat.....4/15	.....Shad.....	2 pm weigh-in ...	Yardley Park & Ride Lot
Sat.....5/13	.....Catfish ....	6 am - 12 pm	Gloucester City Ramp
Sat.....6/17	.....Bass .....	6 am - 12 pm	Neshaminy Marina
Sat.....7/15	.....Catfish ....	6 am - 12pm	Neshaminy Marina
Sat.....8/12	.....Bass .....	6 am - 12 pm	Gloucester City Ramp
Sat.....9/9	.....Catfish ....	6 am - 12 pm	Neshaminy Marina
Sat.....9/30	.....Bass .....	7 am - 1 pm	Bulls Island, NJ Ramp
Sat.....10/28	.....Bass .....	7 am - 1 pm	Byram, NJ Ramp



PFBC Waterways Conservation Officer Matt Scott from Delaware County fishing and law enforcement topics. Coast Guard Auxiliary representative Sheldon Slusser provided insights on boating safety. (See article on Page 5.) The winner of the 50/50 drawing was John Pedrick.

## Did You Know?

As a way to help you recruit new members to the Club, welcome first-time members, and a reminder for returning members, here are some well-know and lesser-known DRFA facts:

- For one low membership dues payment (*individual or family membership*) every member has free access to all DRFA fishing events, the prize money paid out after each tournament (\$50, \$30, and \$20) and the three Angler of the Year prizes (\$150, \$100, and \$75).
- You don't need to catch a fish in every tournament to win the Angler of the Year title. Only the top six scores for each angler throughout the season are counted in the final standings for the year.
- If you want a bigger payoff for your hours of practice fishing or just feel lucky, you can reap an added reward through our \$10 voluntary lunger pool that delivers 100% payout (*split 60-30-10*) to the top three places.
- You do not need a boat to fish in DRFA events. You can fish from shore (*yes, members have placed in tournaments while fishing from shore*). Or you can ask around for anglers who might have an empty seat in their boat. It pays to ask about such availability at a monthly meeting or on the [DRFA Forum page](#).  
If you do find a willing boating partner, remember that

it is common courtesy to share in ramp fees and gas costs for a day on the water. And you don't have to wait for a tournament to look for a potential ride. You can also offer to share costs for a day of recreational or practice fishing before a tournament.

- Supporting business members can participate in our regular Club tournaments.
- Qualifying family members include any member of the immediate family residing at that home and any immediate children, up to the age of 16. Grandchildren up to the age of 16 also qualify no matter where they live.
- Except for the Shad Tournament where membership applications must be completed the day before the tournament, anglers can join on the morning of any other event, so feel free to a friend to join you for access to club-funded tournament prizes and the voluntary lunger pool.
- Safety is important. IN all tournaments, DRFA Tournament anglers must wear PFDs while their engine is running. Of course, it is a good idea to wear that PFD all the time during cold-water periods.

## DRFA Members Gain Insights From Guest Speakers

At the February meeting, PFBC Waterways Conservation Matt Scott stationed in Delaware County gave a presentation and fielded questions on law enforcement topics. He noted that the fishing season in trout-stocked waters was closed as of Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup> (*except for special-regulation, fly-fishing-only waters, which are open year*

*round*). Mentored Youth Day for trout fishing will take place on March 25<sup>th</sup> and the general opening day of trout season will be on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Statewide, the PFBC will be stocking about 3.2 million rainbow, brown, and brook trout in 697 streams and 126 lakes. The average size will be around 11" long and just over half a pound. Approximately 14,000 golden rainbow trout weighing an average of 1.5 lbs. will also be included. In addition, they will be stocking some of their breeder fish ranging from 14" to 20" in length – with 70% of those being released in the preseason and 30% during the season.

Officer Scott did call attention to some changes in fishing license and boating registration fees and regulations, advising [boaters](#) and [anglers](#) to check the appropriate regulation resources – the [2023 Fishing Summary](#) or [2023 Boating Handbook](#). He also recapped shad fishing in the Delaware River and noted the new bag limit of only two shad, down from three fish last year.

Sheldon Slusser from the Coast Guard Auxiliary provided some insights for safer boating. He noted that fire extinguisher life is 12 years, regardless of whether the indicator dial is in the green or not. He also noted that some Kidde extinguishers have been recalled, and owners can get a new replacement unit at no cost. And speaking of recalls, he related that the Coast Guard maintains an [online listing and search capability](#) for a variety of boat and motor manufacturer recalls. The Coast Guard also provides access to a variety of [safety alerts](#) and [boating safety publications](#).

At the January meeting, rod-builder Tim Lang talked to

members about rod building, rod care, and rod repair. Tim was the person who generously donated two fishing rods for the DRFA to award at its youth fishing events.

He gets his components and some technical insights from the rod-building and tackle-craft website [MudHole.com](http://MudHole.com). Blanks, guides, and grips vary widely according to the blank, fishing style, and angler preference.

He can build a rod in about four hours but does so in stages over a few days to allow for epoxies and thread-finish coats to dry. But with the right parts he can repair worn rods or broken guides in an hour or two. He says he can replace up to 5 or 6 inches of a lost rod tip without having to redistribute the remaining guides. Interested anglers can reach him through Scott McDonough or Pete Antoniewicz.

Tim provided some guidance on rod care and repair. For example, dirty cork handles can be rejuvenated with a light touch of 150 grit sandpaper, wood filler if needed, and a coat of cork sealant. Scuffs or flaking on the rod surface can be recoated with rod varnish.

### **It Might Be Fishing Season, But It's Not Summer Yet**

While water temperatures are starting to warm up and fish are becoming more active, it can pay to hold on to a cold-water mentality when fishing over the next month or more.

Consider these [cold-water myths](#), and the flaws in some popularly touted rules of thumb covered by this [cold-water safety website](#).

Here are a few more informative resources available from a quick web search:

[https://www.gobair.org/Resources/Documents/Cold\\_Water.pdf](https://www.gobair.org/Resources/Documents/Cold_Water.pdf)

<https://www.waterwayguide.com/latest-news/news/7385/the-cold-facts-on-the-120-degree-rule>

<https://boatus.org/cold-water-boating/>

Wherever possible, try to fish with a partner during the cold-water season and at the very minimum wear a well-fitted non-inflatable PFD that both insulates and provides flotation.

### **From A to Z:**

### **Will We Thrive, Just Barely Survive, Or Go Under?**

Now that I'm retired and not exposed to a host of younger co-workers every day, I've noticed that the makeup of the crowds around me. – at my church or my fishing club – have taken on a 'grayish' hue these days.

I don't let it bother me too much because I remain reasonably active and feel relatively healthy. But my mind does project what my fishing experience will be like in 10 years. Where is all the 'young blood' that will have to do the heavy lifting when my body wants to take it easier?

When I first joined the DRFA 25 years ago, I didn't give age a second thought. But lately it has been on my mind more and more as I contemplate how many raft trips, kayak trips, and fishing tournaments I have left in me.

That's why I think we all need to consider the long-term health of our organization. Until now, we have done well despite having to depend on our retired members for most of the day-to-day support activities that keep our Club vibrant. But by the time I'm 80 – which is now less than a decade

away -- I'm going to need some help shouldering the load. Where will we find the next generation of DRFA members?

I was working on acclimating my young grandson to the role, but he's moving to South Korea for at least the next few years if not longer. My nephew, a former Club member, is living in NYC. And my only fishing-active son is 10 hours away in South Carolina.

Twenty years ago, we had multiple family memberships with youngsters as regular participants in our tournaments. Maybe some of them will come back as their toddlers grow up to an age where they can be self-sufficient in a boat.

Maybe we can attract some new younger families who are recent boat owners and are looking for guidance on how to enjoy the fishing success that the Delaware River has to offer.

Maybe we can tap into some more hardcore bass anglers that want to hone their knowledge and experience of river fishing.

Maybe we can tap into the COVID-related bump in outdoor activity spending by appealing to new kayak anglers through our guest speakers or by tailoring some of our Club membership benefits to their needs.

Or perhaps we can seek out partnerships with NJ and PA fisheries management, boating suppliers, or other outdoor-related organizations or vendors.

We'll also need to be better educated on the social media front so we can tap into outdoors enthusiasts whose focus includes cellphones as well as crankbaits.

At any rate, we at least need to try some new things. And, if not, will the last one out the door please turn off the lights.

## Antoniewicz, Seliga, And Southrey Take Early Lead In 2023 AOTY Competition

With only one event in the books, the results from the March tournament and standings for the 2023 Angler of the Year competition are one and the same. The table below shows the current standings for all eight anglers who weighed in a legal-size fish.



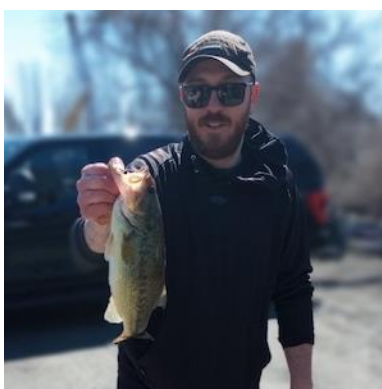
3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Gregg Southrey



6<sup>th</sup> Place, Devin Seliga



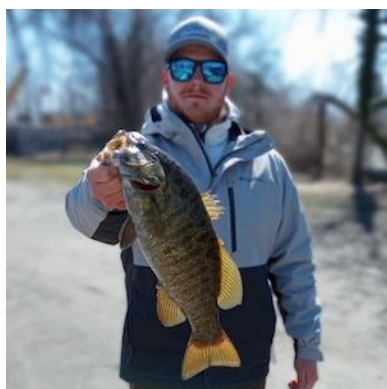
1<sup>st</sup> Place, Pete Antoniewicz



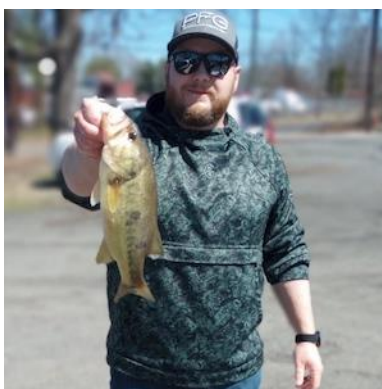
4<sup>th</sup> Place, Casey McDonough



7<sup>th</sup> Place, Chick Bay



2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Shane Seliga



5<sup>th</sup> Place, Patrick Baranowski



8<sup>th</sup> Place, Bryan Malkiewicz

Position	Angler	Weight	Length	Points
1	Pete Antoniewicz	3.19	17.25	100
2	Shane Seliga	2.79	18.00	99
3	Gregg Southrey	2.07	15.00	98
4	Casey McDonough	1.91	16.00	97
5	Patrick Baranowski	1.84	15.00	96
6	Devin Seliga	1.64	14.00	95
7	Charles Bay	1.54	14.25	94
8	Bryan Malkiewicz	1.12	13.00	93





**The Delaware River Fishermen's Association**  
**PO Box 21145, Philadelphia, PA 19154**

**THE RIVER NEWS** is the bimonthly newsletter of the Delaware River Fishermen's Association. The DRFA typically meets the last Wednesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Silver Lake Nature Center, 1306 Bath Road, Bristol, PA. All interested sportsmen and women are invited to attend our meetings and join the organization.

### **Don't Forget These Supporting Members Who Help To Keep Our Club Afloat**

Remember our supporting business members who provide added financial support, share their fishing knowledge with our Club members, or support our Club and youth fishing efforts with their facilities or products.

When we return that financial support by patronizing their businesses, be sure to make specific mention of our appreciation for them helping to fund our guest speakers and our tournament cash prizes. Without their support we would not be able to provide the same opportunities to our current members or to attract potential new members.

• **Welcome to our newest Supporting Business Member!** • **Ed Scannapieco And Sons Plumbing, Inc.** • Complete plumbing services • Feasterville, PA, • [espinc2428@gmail.com](mailto:espinc2428@gmail.com) • 215-333-3006

**McKeown's Automotive Services** • 2525 Street Road, Bensalem, PA 19020 • State Inspection, Emissions • 215-639-4887

**The Fegley Law Firm** • 301 Oxford Valley Rd, Suite 402A, Yardley, PA • Business, Employment & Personal Injury Law • 215-493-8287

**Gasper Contracting** • *Where your home ideas become reality* • Philadelphia, Montgomery & Bucks Counties • 215-805-7360

**White Oak Ice Co.** • 350 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020 • Self-Service Crushed Ice, Blocks of Ice • 215-639-1080.

**Tow Boat US** • 32 Kirkwood Circle, Brigantine, NJ 08203 • Delaware River Service Package Available • 609-517-2822

**Rusty Balls Tackle & Guide Service** • 2440 W Columbia St, Allentown, PA 18104 • [@rustyballsguideservice](#) • 484-239-4723

**Pennsylvania Yacht Club** • 2189 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020, 215-245-9883

**Silver Lake Nature Center** • 1306 Bath Road, Bristol, PA • 235 acres of woods, lakes, marshes & meadows, 4.5 miles of trails

We also recognize our Associate members – the [South Jersey Bass Club Association](#) and [Delaware Riverkeeper Network](#) – who both provide relevant information and additional fishing experiences for DRFA members.

Access additional timely info at [www.drfishermen.com](http://www.drfishermen.com)