

Fishing the RCL, Illinois River Tournament

Tom Ebi



Day 1 - I fished with Steve Delain, a real nice guy who, in pre-fishing, had a jig bite going. We jigged in slack water from 2 to 8ft deep. We never touched a fish, along the 116 other boats who didn't weigh in a fish Day 1.

Day 2 - I got to fish with Dan Plautz, a great guy to fish with, and we had a blast. We pulled 3-ways using 3oz. Weights, a 4" dropper from the 3-way and a 4 ft lead to a

Phelps floater (pink was the only color to take any fish). You had to hook the minnow down thru the "nostrils" and have the minnow swim straight. All my fish came by "tap, tap, tap" on the bottom just like jigging the Detroit River (most every other angler did a slow drag/drop back/pull forward motion...that wasn't working). Anything other than that never got bit for me. We had to be in 7.5ft of water going up stream at a slow slow pace or you'd never get a bite.

Day 3 - I fished with Aaron McQuoid and again we pulled 3-ways (but deeper by about 1ft) again, like with Dan, but we used a 4ft snell with two hooks..one pink and one orange/white with minnows on them. The minnows had to be hooked thru from under the chin thru the top of the head so they'd spin...really made a difference. Again with the "tap,tap,tap" on touching the bottom.

Day 4, I fished with Todd Riley (we went out in 9th place...that's where Todd placed Day 3, I was in 2nd place for the co-anglers) , fishing Day 4, the concentration level was extremely high. We had a good time but, like the other days, we never took a break. The fish would turn on for maybe 10 minutes out of an hour and you had to be in the right depth and right speed etc., to even get bit.

The weigh-in for the RCL is unique. They weigh the boats in reverse order from 10th place down to 1st place from Day 3. You stand up on stage till you get eliminated by a higher weight. Mark Dorn did a great job of "MC ing" and kept the crowd going. It was quite a thrill being up there, even though i wanted to see some of those big fish i saw caught get weighed.

I expected to hopefully get 3rd place after some of the fish I saw caught. It was a total surprise that I won on the Co-Angler side. It was a thrill I think I'll remember forever.

Aaron Mc Quoid finished 4th and Todd Riley finished 6th. Strangely, I never fished with the Pro who won, Tom Giachetto.

Some interesting Statistics.....

Out of 170 teams, 59 boats weighed 0 fish on Day 1 with only 2 - 5 fish limits (that's 2 angler's to a boat!)

59 boats did not catch a single fish during the entire tournament!

The heaviest daily basket was a whopping 16 lb, 14 oz (5 fish)

The heaviest 4 day total was 16 fish weighing 41 lbs, 12 oz.

A quote from the RCL web site tells the story.....

“A down-to-the-wire weigh-in ultimately separated by a mere 4 ounces, in spite of a challenger with a monster sack anchored by the extraordinary walleye exceeding 5 pounds, local Tom Giachetto of Ladd prevailed in the Wal-Mart RCL Walleye Tour event on the Illinois River not only because of a steady 11-pound, 12-ounce limit Saturday but also by dint of his banner performance a day earlier.” (“Banner catch” was 15 lbs)!!

Makes you really appreciate our Fishery!!!!!!!!!!!!!!