

Spring Muskie Pitch A Shut Out... Submitted by Roy Schodtler, IMTT

The spirit of cooperation was everywhere in this year's I.M.T.T. Spring Classic Muskie Tournament, held on Lake Shelbyville, April 21 and 22. Cooperation was evident in the joining of the tourney date with the Shelbyville's "Spores and More Festival". It was evident in the tournament prize sponsorships provided by numerous members of the Lake Shelbyville community. It was evident in the efforts of the Shelbyville Moose Hall personnel and VWF Post who joined forces to fulfill the Moose Hall's commitment to host the tournament banquet, despite the tragic fire that destroyed the Moose Hall about a month ago.

It was evident in the people that volunteered their time and skills to make the tournament run so smoothly. It was evident in the participating fishermen who freely shared strategies and techniques with fellow participants. Even the weather gods brought out their finest for the weekend that was virtually perfect for any outdoor activity. However, the spirit of cooperation did not extend to Lake Shelbyville's muskie population.

Despite a roster of 16 boats of experienced, die-hard, muskie fisherman, many of whom were past tournament, and state champions, not a single muskie was caught in the two-day event. There were a number of sightings, follows, and almost-caught fish, but none that could be measured, witnessed and released. This weekend the fish won. As one participant quoted his grandfather as saying, "That's the difference between fishing and catching..."

One might think such a weekend would damage the spirits of the participants. But true muskie fishermen are much more determined and resilient than that. To a person, they talked about coming back to challenge the muskie again in the Fall Classic. The "grapevine" is suggesting that much of the Midwest may have found their muskie with a case of "lock jaw" as well. That will change, but the determination and dedication of the IMTT circuit's muskie fishermen will not. There is always "next time", and that BIG ONE, that is just around the corner...