

# Coratti hooks a berth on Team Ontario

When Marc Coratti qualified for his first Northern Federation's Bass Anglers Sportsman's Society Divisional Tournament in 1997 and represented Team Ontario in that event the following year in Minnesota, he didn't fare too well.

To be blunt, the 38-year-old Unionville resident said he "bombed out."

However, Coratti has an opportunity to make amends.

At the recent, two-day Hank Gibson Memorial Ontario B.A.S.S. Federation Qualifier Tournament near Rideau Ferry on the Upper and Lower Rideau Lakes, Coratti angled his way to a fourth-place overall finish among 150 of the best federation anglers from Ontario and Quebec.

Weighing in almost 24 pounds of bass, Coratti was one of 12 competitors earning a berth on the Team Ontario contingent going to Peoria, Illinois next fall to compete in the northern divisionals.

For Coratti, going to Peoria ranks among his angling highlights since he first took to the tournament scene in 1989.

Last year he won a Northeast Ontario Bass Association event on Lake Muskoka and has been Angler of the Year two times for the Aurora Bassmasters and winner of three amBASSadors Cup Tournaments.

This latest achievement ranks him as one of only a handful of anglers from Ontario to have qualified twice for the Northern Federation's B.A.S.S. Tournament.

"It ranks right up there," he said of his result at the qualifier. "I'm looking forward (to going to Peoria next fall). I'd like to show the American boys how it's done."

Entering the qualifier, Coratti's expectations weren't that high.

After having good success in pre-fishing for the event, he recalled a major cold front swept through the area which in turn, gave fish a case of lockjaw.

"I was into some big fish in my pre-fishing and I thought I'd get somewhere from 35 to 40 pounds. But when the front came through the day before, the fishing was brutal," he recalled.

Recording 12.80 lbs. during the first day of the weigh-in, which included a hefty four-lb. smallmouth bass, Coratti was concerned with his result. However, his optimism grew when other entrants were bringing in small weights ranging from six to eight lbs.

Occupying fourth place through the first day, Coratti wasn't resting easy as he



Mike Hayakawa

knew anything could happen in the second day.

"My biggest fear was that I would bomb the next day. With 100 guys competing, everyone would go back to their favorite spot for sure and Rideau is known to have fish with big weights."

Coratti, however, didn't have to worry as he recorded 12 lbs. on the second day. Making Coratti's accomplishment even more satisfying was that he did it largely on his own.

Unlike other tournament series conducted in the province which are based on two-member team events, the B.A.S.S. tournaments are conducted on draw formats where anglers are pitted with a different boater on the second day of an event.

Draw formats, he says, have enabled him to be a more confident angler.

"One of the great things about our competitions is that you draw different partners each time out. We learn a lot about bass fishing from one another."

Should Coratti be fortunate to be the top angler among the 12-member Team

Ontario contingent in Peoria, he would then go to the Citgo B.A.S.S. National Federation Championships in the spring of 2003.

"I just have to go out and hope to do my best," he said.

## A Classic finish for Miller

Ballantrae angler Gary Miller came up with his best-ever effort in fishing the Chevy Mercury Classic as he finished third overall at last weekend's annual event in Belleville on the Bay of Quinte.

Making his third appearance in this event over the last four years, Miller recorded a three-day live catch of 45.65

pounds and pocketed \$1,800 for his efforts.

"I had a good time and I'm happy with finishing third," said Miller. That said, he thought there was a chance to win the event as he lost two fish on Saturday and one on Sunday.

Miller estimated he motored close to 75 miles a day to find active largemouth bass.

Rocky Crawford of Whitby won the title with a three-day total of 48.35 lbs. while Jamie Janzen of St. Catharines was second at 46.80 lbs.

Thornhill angler Dave Chong, who finished second in last year's Classic on Rice Lake, was 39th with a three-day weight of 23.45 lbs.

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