

# Man From LaManche

## Earns 2008 NYBCF Angler of the Year Title

By Tom Presnell - Executive Editor



Randy LaManche takes 1st place at Oneida

There are so many unique and interesting circumstances surrounding Randy LaManche's journey to the 2008 NYBCF Angler of the Year title, that it's a fun story to tell. Not only did he wrap up top gun in the boater division in just his *first* season fishing the Federation, but his link for this year and fellow Salt City Bassmasters member, Lenny Potts, coincidentally earned the top spot in the non-boater division as well.

Winning AOY after just his first season in the Federation is a goal that not even Randy could have anticipated. The Marcellus, New York native claims, "It was the last thing on my mind. I didn't even think it was possible. The only goal I had when I joined the Fed, was to not to look like a fool. If I could make the team, that would be awesome."

Randy's jump to state level competition didn't come without some hesitation, however. In just a few short years in his club, he was able to go from complete tournament novice, to an imposing competitor, so he finally felt like he was ready to jump to the next level of competition. Besides lack of experience at a higher level, he also was concerned he wouldn't find the same kind of camaraderie he cherished at his club events. But he now relates, "I've met some terrific guys this year. I've even become good friends with some. It's awesome."

When asked what approach he took to achieve such great success this year, he humbly admits, "I felt like a deer in the headlights. But after seeing the participation numbers climb, I was pumped up, just excited overall."

LaManche's first obstacle was Lake George, a body of water he had no experience on. A couple weeks prior to the

tournament, he decided to take a little "Man-cation" with his dad at Lake George in order to get a good feel for the lake. That strategy, and taking advantage of the full practice time helped. "Typically, I try to spend the whole practice period locating fish," he says. "I don't spend a lot of time trying to break down and understand a particular location or area. I like to check a spot out, mark it if I catch a couple fish and move on. Hopefully I can accumulate four or five different locations, with different presentations. I always like to have a few options." Those options brought him 11.98 pounds to weigh in and a 10th place finish.

For the Henderson Harbor event, Randy didn't practice very much, having had much more past experience on that water. He spent tournament day in Chaumont Bay and finished a respectable 21st place with 14.49 pounds. "I was just trying to keep my weight up in order to make the team," Randy admits.

Unknowingly going into the final points event at Oneida, Randy got some good advice from fellow club member and NYBCF President, Mike Cusano. "Mike told me to go out there and catch *my* fish. I knew I had to catch a good limit and let the other guys make it or break it."

Although Randy considers Oneida Lake his home turf, he wasn't overconfident going there. "People don't realize it, but that lake can be very tough, regardless of how well you know it," he says. Under certifiably tough conditions, Randy out-fished the entire field and brought in a 15.70 pound limit to take the win. "I didn't believe at all I was coming in with a winning bag," he admits.

At the weigh-in he had time to watch the competition's numbers come in, but it wasn't until he got home that day, that LaManche began to do the rough numbers in his head and realize he might have a chance at Angler of the Year. His reaction after finding out he had the title wrapped up? "I'm certainly humbled by it and it's a title that I'll always be able to take with me wherever I go," Randy says.

With a season ending average weight of 14.06 pounds, Randy's key to consistency was surprisingly simple. "Fishing my strengths is what I always try to do. Locating fish, good decision-making and having backup plans is huge," he suggests. "Given all the variables, it's just coming up with a good plan for tournament day. It's important to know when to shift gears."

What the easy-going, food service director is most proud of however, is making the state team. Randy acknowledges, "It's unbelievable. The average person I go to work with doesn't understand it, but the people in the Federation – the fishermen, the long time veterans, everybody who's connected with it, understands the magnitude of the accomplishment." **FL**

**"Bottom line, I'm just a laid back guy. I want to go out, have fun and catch some fish."**