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MATT MARTIN WINS 2010 NY BASS CHAPTER FEDERATION ANGLER OF THE YEAR

October 13, 2010 Calcium NY... The NY BASS Chapter Federation tournament season ended on Oneida Lake with Matt Martin capturing the 2010 Angler of the Year title with a score of 284 out of a possible 300 points. The trail took competitors from world famous Lake Champlain in the north east to northern boundary waters with Canada on the mighty St. Lawrence River and closed out in central NY on Oneida Lake. We got chance to sit down with Martin and ask him about his season and here's what he had to say.

NYBCF: Winning AOY honors on the NY Federation trail is a pretty big accomplishment. Where do you rate this title against your other angling achievements?

Martin: I am very proud and happy to have fished well enough this season to win the AOY title. I do consider it a great accomplishment. Of course it ranks up there with my other accomplishments, but I have to say my first AOY title in 99 is one that will always hold a special place. Not only was it my first, but it was at a time where I was relatively new to tournament fishing. The trail also had many anglers I admired, like Tom Dolin, Brian Caverts, Ricky Doyle and Tony DiMiano. I had a real dream season with two wins, a second, and a top five finish. It was very satisfying and something I will always remember.

NYBCF: Can you tell us a little about your game plan and how you practiced for each tournament this year

Martin: My game plan for each tournament is to find as many fish as possible. I like to give myself 2 days to pre-fish a tournament. The first day is dedicated to fishing past areas that I like on the given body of water. This will usually cover a variety of different structure, cover and water depths. Using the seasonal pattern for that given time this will usually give me a good indication as to what the fish are or are not doing. I then spend day 2 expanding on what I found that worked and trying to find additional areas that may hold fish.

Lake Champlain: I was pretty sure from watching the weather and previous tournaments on lower Champlain that this would be a post spawn tourney. How much I wasn't sure. I didn't know if there would be fish guarding fry or a few stragglers still on beds, or perhaps they'd be just post spawn enough for the fish to have lockjaw. I also had to consider smallmouth because just the week prior to this tournament Tom Lavictore and won a tournament on smallmouth from the middle part of the lake with 20 lbs. which I believed would be the mark to shoot for in order to win or have a high finish. I actually did try to find smallies north, but the previous week's rain had muddied up most of the shallows and finding a bed was very hard so I ruled it out.

I started fishing shallow looking for signs for which stage the fish were in and I quickly determined the fish were well off the beds and in strong post spawn. I moved outside of the spawning areas to look for cover and structure the fish would stage on to feed up and recoup. I found a couple areas, but one held a strong concentration of all sizes of fish. It was textbook spot with an underwater weed point, close to deeper water, just outside of a spawning area. My partner and I caught fish after fish that were out there recouping and feeding. We'd activate the school with reaction baits and then following up with Senkos.

St Lawrence River: This being a summer tourney it was important to take everything into consideration because anything could be working. I quickly figured that the largemouths were not yet out on the river ledges, which is more of a late summer pattern. I had to think about the smallmouth that everyone had done so well on the previous year out of Ogdensburg. When I didn't find anything that impressive I decided to concentrate on shallow water emergent grass and weeds. I was able to find enough areas between Clayton and Chippewa Bay to put together a flippin pattern that had good potential to produce between 12-17lbs. I hit it right in the middle with

15lbs. This was fishing my strength and I was very comfortable fishing this way which is very important when you don't have a single area or technique that is real strong. That's when I feel it's best to just go out and do what you like to do best and for me that's flippin & pitchin for largemouth.

Oneida Lake: This Lake has given me fits all summer. It's my home lake and I've struggled to piece together any largemouth bite and the smallmouth bass have been spotty to say the least. Tried and true areas and techniques haven't worked and I knew it would be a difficult tournament even before you added 20 mph winds out of the east. I had pretty much decided on a smallmouth limit of 10-12 lbs. hopefully by mid-morning and then concentrating the rest of the day fishing largemouth on a few areas I had some success in practice. I figured 15 lbs. would put you right up at the top. At this time of the year the smallmouth are starting to gang up, but they've still not made the transition to full fall so it was a crap shoot as to whether you'd get the cookie cutter 2.5 pounders or perhaps bump into a school of 3's.

With the wind tournament morning most of my game plan went out the window. I went with my gut to a place I had found fish before, but was fully exposed to the wind. I knew I'd have to drift the area. Having the drift sock out we fan casted the area catching one fish, but a quality fish with each drift. In about an hour I scored three fish off the drifts and decided to hit some other areas to give us a break from the waves. While running I spotted birds diving on a school of fish and I ended up scoring three more fish off of that. We hit the largemouth areas with nothing to show and found a few more smallmouth on other spots before the day ended.

NYBCF: Was there one tournament or one angling moment this season that you felt put you in position for the title?

Martin: I'd say it was right after the Champlain tournament. I knew that was going to be a high weight tournament. Coming out of that with a 5th place for points and 17(+) in weight I knew I was on track as much anyone in the top ten to contend for AOY. I believed I could do well at both the 1,000 Islands and Oneida in order to contend and knew I just had to keep from having a bad day in those tournaments. I didn't go into either just trying not to have bad day, instead I went into them as I usually do, trying to win. The Federation trail isn't long enough with three events to just try and do well, make enough weight or points to win the AOY. You really have to try and win each one and hope for the best and not get disappointed if it doesn't work out.

NYBCF: How important is it to fish to your strengths when fishing a new lake for the first time or a familiar lake at a different time of the year from what you're used to?

Martin: To me I will look to fish my strengths whenever I can because I have the most confidence that I will be able to place well. It doesn't always work, but for the most part I can usually keep myself in contention doing this. I believe I am a pretty well rounded fisherman, but I am more comfortable power fishing than finesse fishing. That is especially true on new waters. Fishing your strengths on unfamiliar waters will do a couple things for you; first it will let you know whether your strengths are going to work and you will be able to catch fish that way. Second if you can't catch fish using your strengths it will tell you that the fish are most likely doing something else and you need to adjust accordingly. That is pretty valuable information to have.

NYBCF: What is your favorite style of fishing and why?

Martin: I would have to say power fishing, in particular flippin and pitchin. I love to be in there close to the fish, pitching holes in a heavy weed bed, flipping reeds and wood or fishing docks. I just love having a big bait, big stick and short line. There is something about feeling that tick and seeing your line race away or not falling all the way to the bottom and knowing when you set the hook it will bow your rod and then its "game on". I love that as much or more than anything. Just good ole "Bubba Fishin"

NYBCF: What do you use most spinning tackle or casting tackle and what lures do you use on each type of rod?

Martin: I definitely have more heavy equipment than light. I like to fish what I can see and that usually means a 7' medium heavy to 7'6" heavy action rod with anywhere from 17 - 25 lb. mono up to 65 lb. braid. I'll typically be flipping some sort of creature lure. It could be a chigger craw, sweet beaver, brush hog or jig; whatever I think suits the fish. I know I can use light line, I catch a lot of fish on drop shot, tubes and grubs, but if I think there is another bite more suitable to the way I want to fish I'll look for it.

NYBCF: Do you have a go-to bait or series of baits and if so did they play a role in your success this year?

Martin: My go to equipment will usually be a jig -n- pig or creature bait because they have accounted for most of my high finishes or wins. They will always be on my deck or rigged and ready in the rod locker. This year they

didn't contribute as much as most years except for the St. Lawrence River event. The other two tournaments I tried to make them work, but realized that I needed to do something different in order to get more bites and finish well which is always a little disappointing, but necessary if you expect to be competitive.

NYBCF: When we ask you for two tournament tips you can share with other NY Federation anglers what comes to mind?

Martin: My first tip or words of wisdom work for both boater and non boater and are usually already practiced. Those are to ALWAYS work with your fishing partner for that day. I consider my co-angler to be an asset when I fish. I always treat them as I want to be treated. In a pro/am format you really don't have to do so, but I find it's always best to have fun first and doing well comes secondarily. I can tell you many times what I was doing wasn't working and I asked my co-angler about his practice or past experience on the body of water and found something that we did together that salvaged the day or added to our catch. I can also tell you I had great days with each and every co-angler I fished with this year and that made this AOY title that much better.

My second tip is to try and become a more rounded fisherman. What I mean by that is to think of your least favorite way to fish and then go out and try and make it one of your favorite or at least one you can be confident in. For me, one of my least favorite ways to fish is with a tube. I really just don't like it. Over the years I would always use something else to try and catch the fish other than the tube. I then started fishing with a guy that's addicted to tubes and I have learned so much. I've learned things as far as colors, sizes, line choice, weights etc and fished with tubes enough that I am now comfortable with the technique. I know that if it takes a tube to catch fish that I can do that. You too can do this by partnering with someone who knows the technique you want to learn or just go out with nothing in the boat except a couple of rods rigged with that particular technique you want to learn. Mix and match things up, learn from what doesn't work and keep it up till you get something figured out. Believe me when I tell you it will help you out at some point, somewhere, in some tournament.

NYBCF: Is there any advice you can pass on to non-boaters / co-anglers?

Martin: For the most part all the co-anglers I have fished with have been very competent anglers. There have been a few times when I told my co-anglers that we will be mostly flippin and pitching all day and they got on the boat with only spinning tackle. I knew it would be a long day for them. So as far as advice I would say to get the most information possible from your boater. Know what to expect for the next day, then pack and rig appropriately. Unless the boater tells you "we'll be punching mats all day" I would try to bring three rods that will cover the entire water column, topwater, to a horizontal reaction bait... i.e., spinnerbait, traps, to a bottom bait or Senko style bait. Another two rods for the dedication of the technique you will use the majority of the day and one rod you can use as a "go to" rod. Any more than six rods is overkill and you'll likely spend more time changing baits and getting them untangled than fishing. Don't try and match what the boater is doing. The guys that have done the best in my boat are the ones who were casting out the other side of the boat when I was fishing shore. They always did some thing a little different than I was, but it fit the conditions they faced on that given day.

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