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Champlain Elite Comeback

The start of the "Northern Swing" for the Bassmasters Elite Series headed to Lake Champlain on the New York and Vermont border in mid-July. This year I made the 50 mile run south to catch big largemouth. On day 1 the big ones eluded me and I weighed 11-1 to land in 94th place. On day 2 I improved with a 16-2 limit to comeback to 59th place, only a pound out of the top 50. A **SPRO** Bronzeye frog on 65 pound **Spiderwire** Ultracast braid caught my largemouth and a **Berkley** Wacky Crawler on a drop shot caught some nice smallmouth on day 2. What a great fishery!



Elite Erie Debacle

The week after the Champlain event, the Elite Series moved across New York to fish Lake Erie out of Buffalo. Erie has to be one of the best and worst fisheries. Smallmouth grow big but you will get sea-sick on the open water. On day 1 we fished in 6 to 8 foot waves and I bagged 13-11 to find myself all the way down in 72nd place. A good day could have moved me up. Day 2 was cancelled due to predicted high winds. On the next day my wheels came off, figuratively. I came in with 7 pounds and finished in 100th. The only thing I learned is that **Gulp** is the best smallmouth bait!



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- **Myah Jane was born 8/14/07 !!!!!**
- **Qualified for my 4th straight Classic !!!!!**
- **"Little John" crankbait from SPRO arrives in mid-October!!!**

Northern Highlight from Oneida



After the Erie Elite debacle, I wanted to redeem myself. The following week we went to Lake Oneida near Syracuse, NY for the second BASS Major. My plan was to mainly target largemouth with a **Berkley** Beast and **SPRO** Bronzeye frog. On day 1 my plan worked to the tune of 7th place from a 15-1 limit. Day 2 was tougher but I caught a few largemouth and went to my back up drop shot pattern for the small-

mouth. The **Gulp** once again did the trick for my 13-13 bag help. Day 3 was the top 12 cut to Lake Onondaga in the shadows of Syracuse. I thought topwater would be the trick but it was not. I scraped and clawed for a 9-4 limit but that was less than half the weight I needed to make the top 6 to fish the last day. Flipping matted grass and finding the hard cover was the deal even though I did some of those patterns. Much of the hard cover was on my **Lowrance LCX-111c** hard drive unit, which I figured out after the event. It was just not my event to win. I did manage to redeem myself and make some money before leaving New York.



Elite Slip at the Potomac

After the Northern Swing and a much needed week off, the Elite Series fired up again on the Potomac River near Washington DC. Early August is always relatively tough on the tidal waters but fishing has been improving in recent years from the loads of aquatic grass. Day 1 was nice for me and my 16-2 bag. Day 2 was much tougher since I struggled for 3 keepers and 4-6. It dropped me from 7th to 61st. My deeper area away from grass



changed on day 2 and I could not figure out where they went. A **Berkley** 5" Shakey worm caught the big stringer on day 1 but I could not get the **Power-bait** in front of the fish on day 2. My experience from the Potomac did not help me figure out where the fish moved to. My day 2 slip also slipped me to 36th in the points and dangerously close to the cut to qualify for the Bassmasters Classic.



Major Tough in Arkansas

Between the Potomac Elite and the Major in Arkansas, my wife and I had our baby (see Notes). Meanwhile the Major moved from the Arkansas River, due to high water, to Lake Dardanelle. I did not have a great practice and that translated into a slow tournament. Only a few keepers per day meant I finished near the bottom. Thank goodness that this event was not for points. I could not afford to slip again and still make the Classic.



Finale at the Toho Finale

The Sunshine Showdown was appropriately named since my season and Classic birth came down to this last event. Lake Toho near Orlando, FL hosted the final Elite Series event in mid September. Fishing was tough for Toho and catching limits of fish close to 2 pounds went a long way. Day 1 stunk for me and my 3-7. 75th place would drop me out of the Classic. I adjusted on day 2 and sacked a 13-14 limit which catapulted me into 22nd place. A drop shot and Texas rig with a **Berkley** Shakey worm on 8 pound **Trilene** Fluorocarbon bailed out my season. Day 3 was maintenance with a 6-3 limit. I finished 31st in the event and finished 33rd in the Angler of the Year points. I am headed to the Classic again!



Notes

On August 14, 2007, my wife gave birth to our precious little baby girl, Myah Jane. She is very healthy and growing everyday. We are so blessed. In mid October, the **Little John** crankbait that I helped **SPRO** design will be in tackle shops and selling. It is very durable, casts great from a silent weight transfer system, has 13 awesome colors, and comes with sticky sharp **Gamakatsu** treble hooks. **Bass Cat** is tweaking their Cougar FTD and that is going to be the boat I will run in 2008. It is even faster than the Puma and rides even better. I can't wait to blaze past the field at the **Mercury** Pro XS pushing it.

Upcoming Quarter

- September 30 Filming a TV show with Charlie Ingram
- October Pre-practice Lake Hartwell for the Classic
- November 9-10 working the Bass Cat Owners Tournament, AL
- Lots of preparation for 2008
- Lots of new ideas and promotional activities to watch for in the media and next Crewsletter!!



Myah Jane