

MIZZOU

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Around the Columns

A Tiger fish story

Flipping, pitching or drop-shotting might conjure images of gymnastics, baseball and tennis for most sports fans, but for a dedicated group of Mizzou anglers, those NCAA events don't have reel appeal. The MU Bass Fishing Club is catching on — using the aforementioned techniques — primarily because its members have been catching fish.

In early June, a pair of participants — parks, recreation and tourism major Scott Dooley of Columbia and fisheries and wildlife major Shelby Lovelace of Palmyra, Mo. — won the College Bass North Super Regional title. That tournament took place on the Mississippi River near Fort Madison, Iowa, and taped coverage appeared July 29 on ESPNU. The Mizzou club also competed in its second-straight national championship tournament this season in Lake Lewisville, Texas, where its luck wasn't as good — two Tiger teams placed 64th and 104th out of 165 boats.

But for much of the school year, club fishermen frequent the nearby lakes and reservoirs of mid-Missouri.

“Most people who fish just go out and fish,” says club President Andrew Bornholdt of Pacific, Mo. “But when you start getting into these tournaments, you get into everything — different tackles, lures, which test lines work best for certain applications. It's a lot more involved than people think.”

In bass-fishing tournaments, competitors shove off at sunrise two to a boat and fish for eight hours. At the end of the day, each duo combines its five biggest bass for the weigh-in. Mizzou's record for a single fish is 8 pounds, 3 ounces, caught by Adam Gorham from Oak Grove, Mo.



Senior Shelby Lovelace, left, of Palmyra, Mo., and junior Justin Wenk of St. Louis are hooked on the MU Bass Fishing Club. Photo by Rob Hill

The 25-member club hosts its own tournaments to determine who will represent Mizzou at regional and national events. Lest you think the recreational activity is a waste of time, Bethel University in Tennessee recently awarded two athletic scholarships for competitive bass fishing.

“We’ve got a wide variety of majors in our club. We have a history guy and a bunch of engineers,” Bornholdt says. “We actually had some girls show up for orientation, too, but they didn’t last long.”

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