

# PWT + Lake Erie = Big 'Eyes

by  
Rick Kubb

I don't consider myself a mathematics wiz. In fact, very average might be an appropriate label for me when it comes to math skills. But there is one simple equation that seems to 'add up' and make sense to me; PWT + Lake Erie = Big 'Eyes!!

It seems that when these boys from the In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Tour (PWT) come to the shores of Lake Erie, they don't have any trouble calculating where the hogs lie.

At this year's \$225,000 In-Fisherman PWT Bass Pro Shops Eastern Pro-Am tournament held in Port Clinton on April 19-21, a PWT tournament record was broken when amateur John Solek of Indianapolis, IN and PWT Pro Dave Kidd boated the largest walleye ever caught in PWT competition. The fish (see cover photo) was a pre-spawn female and weighed in at 14.64 pounds.

The big fish hit a Reef Runner Deep-diver in the Purple Demon pattern. Trolling at 20-22 feet at a slow speed (.8 - 1.0 mph) was the key.

"The big fish wouldn't chase down a bait," said Kidd in a post weigh-in interview. "Everytime we tried speeding up, all we would catch is 6-7 pounders."

During the first day of the tournament more big fish records were broken than at any other PWT tournament previously held. Each Pro-Am team had to bring in a walleye over twelve pounds just to make the Bass Pro Shops Big Walleye board.

Tom Brunz of Madison Lake, WI broke the pro record with a 12.91 pounder. Mark Brumbaugh of Arcanum, OH took the final day big fish honors with a 12.53 pounder. Three other walleyes greater than 12 pounds, six 'eyes greater than 11 pounds and A total of 35 fish greater than 10 pounds were take overall by the skilled competitors during the weather shortened event. Possibly even more records could have been broken had Mother Nature not stepped in and caused cancellation of the Thursday fishing.

A total of 135 professional anglers competed in this years event. Dan Plautz, of Muskego, WI won took first place honors in the tournament and took home \$50,000 in prize money. Dan weighed in 10 fish for a total of 82.91 pounds. That's an average of 8.29 pounds per fish. This was his second PWT win

Second place honors went to pro Jay Janny, of Eagle, Wis., who weighed just nine walleyes, one short of a two-day tourney limit, at 80.45 pounds, to take home a \$15,000 package.

Other tournament records included a five-fish, one-day PWT record, 48.48 pounds, was set by pro Norb Wallock, of Conover, Wis., first-day leader who finished fourth.

The 902 fish weighed in two days averaged 6.58 pounds. In all, 5,908 pounds of walleye were donated to Victory Temple Soup Kitchen and the Ohio Veterans' Home, both in Sandusky.



**Dan Plautz (top), first place finisher, took home \$50,000. Tom Brunz (bottom) broke the pro single big fish record with this 12.91 pounder.**

# Ohio's New Record Lake Trout

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On April 20<sup>th</sup>, captain Tom Harbison (Harbison Charters) and a friend were perch fishing about a mile outside the Conneaut Ohio lighthouse. They had been fishing for about an hour and a half (with about 15 perch in the cooler) when suddenly something big took hold of Tom's line and bent the rod straight down. Tom couldn't begin to stop the fish from stripping line. He didn't know it then, but soon would find out that

he caught a new Ohio state record Lake Trout, weighing in at 20.49 pounds, shattering the old record by over 4 pounds.

His first thought was that it was a big sheephead but after a couple of minutes Tom told his friend, Wally, that the fish seemed like a huge walleye. Wally quickly gathered up the other lines as Tom's fish was running everywhere around the boat. After about 10 minutes had passed they could finally see that it

was a lake trout. They couldn't believe how big it was and fortunately, they happened to have a large enough net on board.

After they landed the fish, Tom said to Wally (kiddingly) "This is probably a state record." Wally had mentioned that two years earlier he had taken a 14 pound lake trout and had learned at that time that the state record was in the 16 pound range.

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