

Shaw Wins Wal-Mart FLW Tour Chevy Open on Detroit River

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DETROIT, July 13, 2008 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- High winds meant rough waters for the anglers competing in the \$1.5 million Wal-Mart FLW Tour Chevy Open on the Detroit River, but in the end Team Kellogg's pro Alvin Shaw of State Road, N.C., caught a final-round total of 10 bass weighing 39 pounds, 11 ounces to win \$200,000. Shaw topped his closest rival, Team Pringles pro Vic Vatalaro of Kent, Ohio, by only three ounces to earn the win and 200 points toward qualifying for the \$2 million Forrest Wood Cup in Columbia, S.C., where the winner will earn as much as \$1 million -- the biggest award in bass fishing -- Aug. 14-17.

"This feels so great I can't even explain it," said Shaw, who now has won more than \$716,000 in FLW Outdoors events. "It feels good to put in a good practice and come out on top. That's just what it boils down to.

"I had to stick with what I was doing, wind or no wind," Shaw added. "If I could get there, I felt like I could catch fish. The wind actually made me stay on areas longer because it was impossible to run."

Throughout the competition, Shaw targeted small isolated clumps of grass, rocks and sand in 12 to 16 feet of water on Lake St. Clair. He said instead of employing the time-tested method of dragging a tube that is so popular on the area waters, he elected to cast it with baitcasting equipment and 8-pound-test line. Shaw pulled a green-pumpkin gold flake tube to the top of the grass, held it there and then popped the tube out of the grass. Most of the strikes occurred when he popped the tube free. Shaw said he culled only twice Sunday.

"I knew I had a chance to win after the first day of the tournament," Shaw said. "I didn't know how good these spots were in practice. You don't go out there and hammer them in practice. You just try to go around and get a feel for what's going on. I thought I could make a top 100 and maybe even a top 50 for a \$10,000 check.

"But after the first day I said, 'These fish are talking to me,'" Shaw added. "They're coming to me."

Shaw opened the tournament Thursday in 10th place with five bass weighing 20-04. He jumped to second place Friday with a five-bass catch weighing 20 pounds, 15 ounces to advance into the final round of 10 pros with a two-day total of 10 bass weighing 41 pounds, 3 ounces. On Saturday, weights were cleared, and Shaw caught five bass weighing 20-14 to advance to the final day of competition in first place. Shaw added another five bass weighing 18-13 to his final-round total Sunday. Vatalaro caught a final-round total of 10 bass weighing 39-08 to claim second place and \$50,000.

"I couldn't do much more than I did, no doubt about it," Vatalaro said. "I just worked my hardest and didn't lose any fish and I played the cards the only way I could play them."

Vatalaro was targeting underwater bushes near sandy spots in 18 to 20 feet of water and caught 25 keepers from his spot on Lake St. Clair on a green tube Saturday.

"Yesterday I lost one fish," Vatalaro said. "What can you do? Out of all of those fish I caught, I lost one good one."

The \$150,000 difference in first and second place meant Vatalaro's shortcoming cost \$50,000 an ounce.

"I mean ... three ounces," Vatalaro said. "\$150,000 for three ounces. That's amazing."

Rounding out the top 10 pros were Mark Modrak of China Township, Mich. (10 bass, 31-04, \$40,000); Team Chevy pro Kim Stricker of Howell, Mich. (10 bass, 26-04, \$35,000); Team BP pro J.T. Kenney of Port Charlotte, Fla. (nine bass, 25-01, \$30,000); David Reault of Livonia, Mich. (eight bass, 21-14, \$28,000); Team Duracell pro Michael Bennett of Lincoln, Calif. (eight bass, 21-08, \$26,000); Keith Monson of Burgin, Ky. (eight bass, 18-11, \$24,000); Keith Combs of Del Rio, Texas (six bass, 16-13, \$22,000) and David McCrone of Minnetonka, Minn. (two bass, 6-15, \$20,000).

Overall there were 40 bass weighing 121 pounds, 1 ounce caught in the Pro Division Sunday. The catch included six five-bass limits.

Tournament pros aren't the only ones winning big this season. With the introduction of FLW Fantasy Fishing(TM), which offers \$7.3 million in cash and prizes, FLW Outdoors(R) presents anyone with the opportunity to land the catch of a lifetime. Players in the lucrative new fantasy sports league can become virtual pros by signing up for Player's Advantage, which provides exclusive insider information that could guide them to a \$100,000 victory at every Wal-Mart FLW Tour stop and the Forrest Wood Cup. Player's Advantage will give them an edge over the competition and increase their shot for a \$1 million cash grand prize that will be awarded to the FLW Fantasy Fishing cumulative points winner. Those who visit FantasyFishing.com today can sign up for Player's Advantage and receive a complimentary \$15 Wal-Mart gift card.

On Saturday, Mark Frickman of Grand Ledge, Mich., won the Co-angler Division and \$30,000 Saturday with a five-bass limit weighing 19 pounds, 4 ounces followed by Mike Weidman of Burton, Mich., in second place with five bass weighing 17-9 worth \$10,000.

Frickman opened the tournament in 53rd place Thursday with five bass weighing 15-01 while fishing with Team Duracell pro Brennan Bosley of Benton, Ark. On Friday he jumped into fifth place on the strength of a five-bass catch weighing 17-10 while fishing with Team Castrol pro Carl Svebek of Siloam Springs, Ark. He wrapped up his win while fishing with Team Pringles pro Vic Vatalaro of Kent, Ohio.

"This is unbelievable," said Frickman, who won the first FLW Tour event he fished Saturday. "This was my treat for the year -- to fish my first FLW Tour event.

"I just can't describe it," Frickman added. "To start out 53rd on Day 1 and making it to the finals and then winning ... don't ever, ever give up. Be positive. Do the right thing."

Frickman credits the Berkley Gulp! Goby as the key to his championship title. Frickman said he caught between 20 and 25 fish during the course of the day, including about 20 keepers.

"I was throwing 3-pounders back at 8:30 this morning," Frickman said. "It was just phenomenal."

Rounding out the top 10 co-anglers are J.B. Young of Deer Park, Texas (five bass, 16-03, \$9,000); Jerry Weisinger of Wyandotte, Okla. (three bass, 11-08, \$8,000); Andrew Lemle of Perrysburg, Ohio (five bass, 11-07, \$7,000); Team National Guard co-angler Diane Delagarza of Garland, Texas (four bass, 10-04, \$6,000); Scott Gibson of Biloxi, Miss. (three bass, 6-11, \$5,000); Ron Fabiszak of South Bend, Ind. (one bass, 4-02, \$4,000); Team Wal-Mart co-angler Hector Delagarza of Garland, Texas (one bass, 2-09, \$3,000) and Todd Robbins of Romulus, Mich. (one bass, 1-13, \$2,000).

Hector and Diane Delagarza shared the weigh-in stage Saturday as the first husband and wife in FLW Outdoors history to make a top 10 together.

Overall there were 33 bass weighing 101 pounds, 6 ounces caught in the Co-angler Division Saturday. The catch included four five-bass limits.

Coverage of the Chevy Open will be broadcast to 81 million FSN (Fox Sports Net) subscribers in the United States on Aug. 31 and Sept. 7 as part of the "FLW Outdoors" television program. "FLW Outdoors" is also broadcast in Canada on WFN (World Fishing Network) and to more than 429 million households in the United Kingdom, Europe, Russia, Australia, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East through a distribution agreement with Matchroom Sport, making it the most widely distributed fishing program in the world. The program airs Sunday mornings at 11 Eastern time in most markets. Check local listings for times in your area.

FLW Outdoors, named after Forrest L. Wood, the legendary founder of Ranger Boats, is the largest fishing tournament organization in the world. In 2008 alone the organization is offering more than 90,000 anglers the chance to win over \$40 million through 230 tournaments in 10 circuits targeting bass, walleye, redfish, kingfish and striped bass. FLW Outdoors is also taking fishing mainstream with the largest cash awards in the history of fantasy sports, \$7.3 million.

For more information about FLW Outdoors and its tournaments, visit FLWOutdoors.com or call (270) 252-1000. For more information about FLW Fantasy Fishing and Player's Advantage, visit FantasyFishing.com.