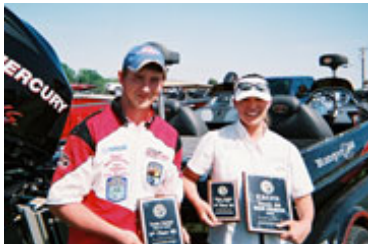
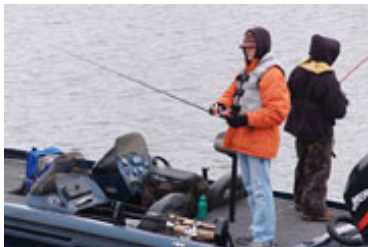


## High school anglers compete on local fishing team

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Newton senior Cale Renollet and Campus senior Brande Branine pose with their trophies after finishing second and third at the Yates Center Tournament. (Photo provided by Tom Spencer)



Heights senior Joe Orsi fishes off a boat at Bud Cain Lake on Feb. 24. Temperatures that day ranged in the low 30s. (Photo provided by Tom Spencer)

By **MAX MARTIN**  
**CatchItKansas.com**

Last January, Tom Spencer was approached with an interesting question.

Brad Burns, Kansas BASS youth tournament director, informed Spencer that no local fishing clubs existed in the area. The last one, the Wichita Area Junior Bass Club, folded in 2006 when the director became too busy with other activities. According to the Kansas Bass Chapter Federation Nation, in order for local junior anglers to compete at the state and regional levels, they must be a member of a club.

Spencer, the event director for the C.A.S.T. for Kids organization and a professional angler on the FLW Central Stren Series, had always been interested in helping kids grow through fishing.

"It doesn't matter what you do, but you should do something to make a positive impact on the children of Kansas," said Spencer. "I chose fishing mainly because it's what I know."

After a couple of meetings and the addition of a second adult advisor, David Branine, the club was formed. Seven youth anglers, including three in high school, hopped on board to be part of the Kansas Highway Patrol Reel Deal fishing team.

Despite being one of the smallest youth clubs in Kansas, members of the Reel Deal team have consistently finished high in area tournaments. At the Yates Center sectional May 17, Newton senior



Branine holds a largemouth bass caught on Lonestar Lake in southeast Kansas. (Photo provided by Tom Spencer)

Cale Renollet finished second, Campus senior Brande Branine placed third and Heights senior Joe Orsi was fifth. At the end of the three qualifiers, Branine and Renollet finished first and second for the state championship.

The team has had great success on the water, but according to Spencer, the group does more than just fish.

"They are also learning some lifelong skills," said Spencer. "There are plenty of guys that can go out and catch fish, but they're not giving anything back, helping the community or promoting something good. That's what you will see becoming more important in the fishing world."

Outside of competing in tournaments, Spencer organizes his team members to participate in various community events. On June 21, they helped at the C.A.S.T. for Kids event at El Dorado Lake. There, Branine and Renollet helped disabled and disadvantaged kids learn to fish. The team also has given seatbelt demonstrations with the Kansas Highway Patrol and put on fishing clinics at local grade schools.

## MEET THE TEAM

### Brande Branine

Although she is the only girl on the KHP Reel Deal team, Brande Branine, a senior at Campus High School, does not let that hold her back. Rather, when she wants something, she goes and gets it.

"I've nicknamed Brande a little bulldog because when she gets out there on that water, she won't let up until she catches fish," said Jr. Pickett, vice president of the Chisholm Trail Bass Club, the adult sponsoring club for the Reel Deal team.

Branine's list of fishing accomplishments is long. Her first tournament win came at age 5. Since then, she has won four tournaments and was on the Kansas State Team in 2002 and 2003. Her biggest accomplishment came in May when she won the 2008 Youth Kansas State Fishing Championship.

"What works for Brande is that she's a hard worker," said Spencer. "Brande will go out and prefish, research, use the Internet, put her homework into where she is going. That is why she's riding that championship right now."

Following her win at the Kansas State Championship, Branine went on to compete in the BASS Central Divisional on July 1 at Lake Yankton in Yankton, S.D. She placed fifth in the 15-18 age group by catching a 2-pound, 7-ounce bass.



Branine, Renollet and Tom Spencer hand out awards at the C.A.S.T. for Kids event June 21. (Photo provided by Tom Spencer)

Despite failing to qualify for the Junior World Championships, Branine said she would continue to fish. She plans to attend Kansas State University to be a member of the fishing team there. Ultimately, she would like to fish in the Women's Bassmaster Tour.

"I'm going to be doing it 'til the doctors won't let me no more," said Branine.

## **OFF THE WATER WITH BRANINE**

**Favorite food:** Pepperoni pizza

**Favorite movie:** "Pride and Prejudice:"

**Favorite book:** "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen

**Favorite lure:** Gary Yamoto Sinko

**Favorite thing about fishing:** "Winning," she said.

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## **Joe Orsi**

After splitting his time between fishing and wrestling throughout high school, Wichita Heights senior Joe Orsi has had success in both.

Orsi started fishing at age 5 and won his first tournament when he was 10 at Flint Oaks Lake. In 2008, he fished well in the state-qualifying events, highlighted by a fifth-place finish at Yates Center. On the wrestling mat, Orsi qualified for the Class 6A state championship in 2007.

According to Spencer, Orsi's strength as an angler is his use of a spinning reel.

"If you watch Joe with a spinning reel, he's just amazing with that thing," said Spencer. "In a clear water lake and the right conditions, he would be awesome. He can skip under a dock a lot farther than even most pros can."

Much to the pleasure of Spencer, not only does Orsi excel on the water, he is good in the community events the Reel Deal team participates in.

"Joe here is a pretty quiet guy, but if you put him working with some kids, he's amazing," said Spencer.

## **OFF THE WATER WITH JOE ORSI**

**Favorite food:** Fish

**Favorite movie:** "Super Troopers"

**Favorite book:** "A Good Life Wasted" by David Ames

**Favorite lure:** Spook

**Favorite thing about fishing:** "A lot of little things that come together," he said.

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## **Cale Renollet**

Although he finished second to Branine at the 2008 state championship, Newton senior Cale Renollet remains the most decorated angler on the KHP Reel Deal team.

Renollet starting fishing at age 3 and joined his first fishing club when he was 6. After winning numerous club tournaments, Renollet achieved his greatest accomplishments in 2004 and 2005 when he was the Youth Kansas State Fishing Champion in back-to-back years.

At that time, Kansas Bass Federation Nation was under a different format, so Renollet advanced straight to the Junior World Championships in Pittsburgh, Pa., in 2004 and Kissimmee, Fla., in 2005.

Spencer attributed much of Renollet's success to his knack for knowing when something has to be fixed.

"Cale is a very fast fisher," said Spencer. "That's just his style, but he always knows when to change. It's recognizing that this is not working, and being willing to leave one spot to adjust."

Although his competitive fishing season ended earlier than he would have liked, Renollet remains optimistic about his future as an angler.

"I hope to go to K-State and fish on the team there," said Renollet. "Then probably join an adult club and see how far I can get after that."

## **OFF THE WATER WITH CALE RENOLLET**

**Favorite food:** Pizza

**Favorite movie:** "Black Hawk Down"

**Favorite book:** "Brian's Winter" by Gary Paulsen

**Favorite lure:** Brush Hog

**Favorite thing about fishing:** "Just catching fish and figuring stuff out," he said.