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► KANSAS GIRL IS STATE'S BEST

HAYSVILLE, Kan. — A Junior Bassmaster competitor has become a top prospect for the Women's Bassmaster Tour.

Brande Branine, 17, won the title of Kansas' Junior Bassmaster champion in the 15- to 18-year-olds division by earning the most

Photos by myeyeonphotography.com

points in the state's three-tournament youth circuit. The Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) Reel Deal team member finished third in the tournament at Yates City and won the event at Eureka city lake to earn the state title. She has made the state junior team twice previously (2003 and 2004) and earned an alternate spot on the team in 2002.

Bass fishing has always been a passion for Branine, who started fishing with her dad, Chisholm Trail Bass Club member David Branine. She joined the Wichita Junior Bass Club when she was 5 years old and won the first tournament she ever fished.

"Brande comes from a fishing family, and there is no doubt that she works hard when it comes to fishing," said Tom Spencer, adult advisor for the KHP Reel Deal club. "She is always willing to help with what we do in the club. Brande really takes the time to do those extra things."

Branine, the club president, volunteers to work at car and boat shows and C.A.S.T. For Kids events. She attributes her success to spending more time on the front deck while fishing with her dad. "I got better at running the trolling motor by myself, so I was able to slow down or speed up when I needed."

A career in fishing is a strong possibility for Branine, who is considering attending Kansas State University to get a degree in business and join the college's bass fishing team.

"I am going to work my way through the Federation Nation and if that goes well, after I finish with the youth program, I am going to fish the WBT," she said.

