

MISSISSIPPI BASS TOURNAMENT PROGRAM 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



FISHERIES BUREAU



MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

1505 Eastover Drive
Jackson, MS 39211
www.mdwfp.com



Your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels supports Sport Fish Restoration and boating access facilities.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) began a program in 1998 for bass tournament anglers to help biologists monitor bass populations. These results continue to be a valuable addition to the data that MDWFP biologists use to manage bass populations. In some waters, it may be the only measure we have of what anglers are catching.

Bass clubs and tournament organizers are encouraged to provide tournament results to MDWFP on the form shown below. The form may be mailed, faxed or emailed to the address below. Forms, reports and data input can be accessed via internet at:

<http://www.mdwfp.com/fishing-boating/fishing-tournaments.aspx>

MISSISSIPPI BASS TOURNAMENT REPORT CARD

Lake: _____	Date: _____	Start: _____	Stop: _____
Tournament Type:	Individual ()	Team ()	Director: _____
Club or Organization: _____		Phone: _____	
Address: _____	City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____
Total No. of Anglers or Teams: _____		Limits Caught: _____	
Number of bass weighed-in: _____			
Total Weight (all bass):		_____ Lbs.	_____ ozs./tenths
First Place Weight:		_____ Lbs.	_____ ozs./tenths
Tournament Lunker:		_____ Lbs.	_____ ozs./tenths
No. of Bass over 5 Pounds: _____			

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2015 Bass Tournament Summary

2015 was another good year for Mississippi's bass tournament anglers based on 230 tournament reports. Average statistics for all lakes in 2015 were similar to those in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, average lunker weight, total number of bass caught, and total weight of bass caught were higher than 2013 values, but lower than 2014 values. **At least five reports** are needed from a lake to be included in the final "Lake Rankings". In addition, the five reports must include all of the information for each ranking metric. Seven lakes were included in the lake rankings. Anglers are excited about the quality of the fishing at Ross Barnett Reservoir; Pickwick Lake is still producing heavy winning bass stringers during tournaments; and the coastal rivers continue to provide the best numbers of bass per day. The following summarizes the most important points from the 2015 Tournament Report:

- 230 reports were submitted from 28 different lakes
- In 2015, **Pickwick Lake** finished as the top lake in overall quality indicator rankings followed by **Okatibbee**, **Ross Barnett**, and the **Pearl River**.
- The largest bass was 10.25 pounds from Calling Panther Lake.

Statewide Tournament Statistics

2.00 - Number of bass caught per angler - day

3.56 - Pounds of bass caught per angler - day

2.09 - Average weight of bass caught

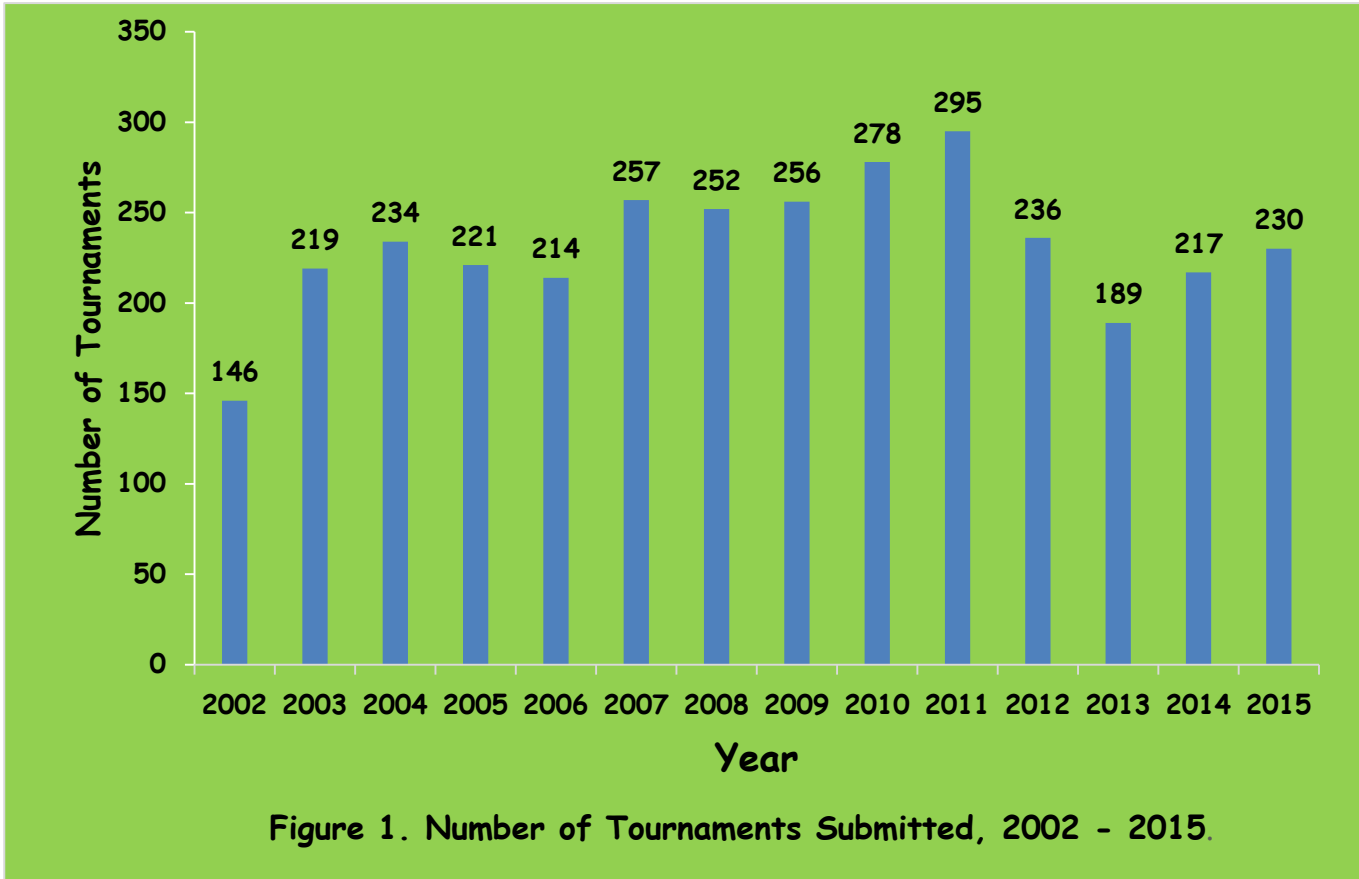
338 - Hours to catch a 5 pound bass

5.35 - Average lunker, or big bass weight

11.83 - Average 1st place weight

219 - Number of bass 5 pounds and larger

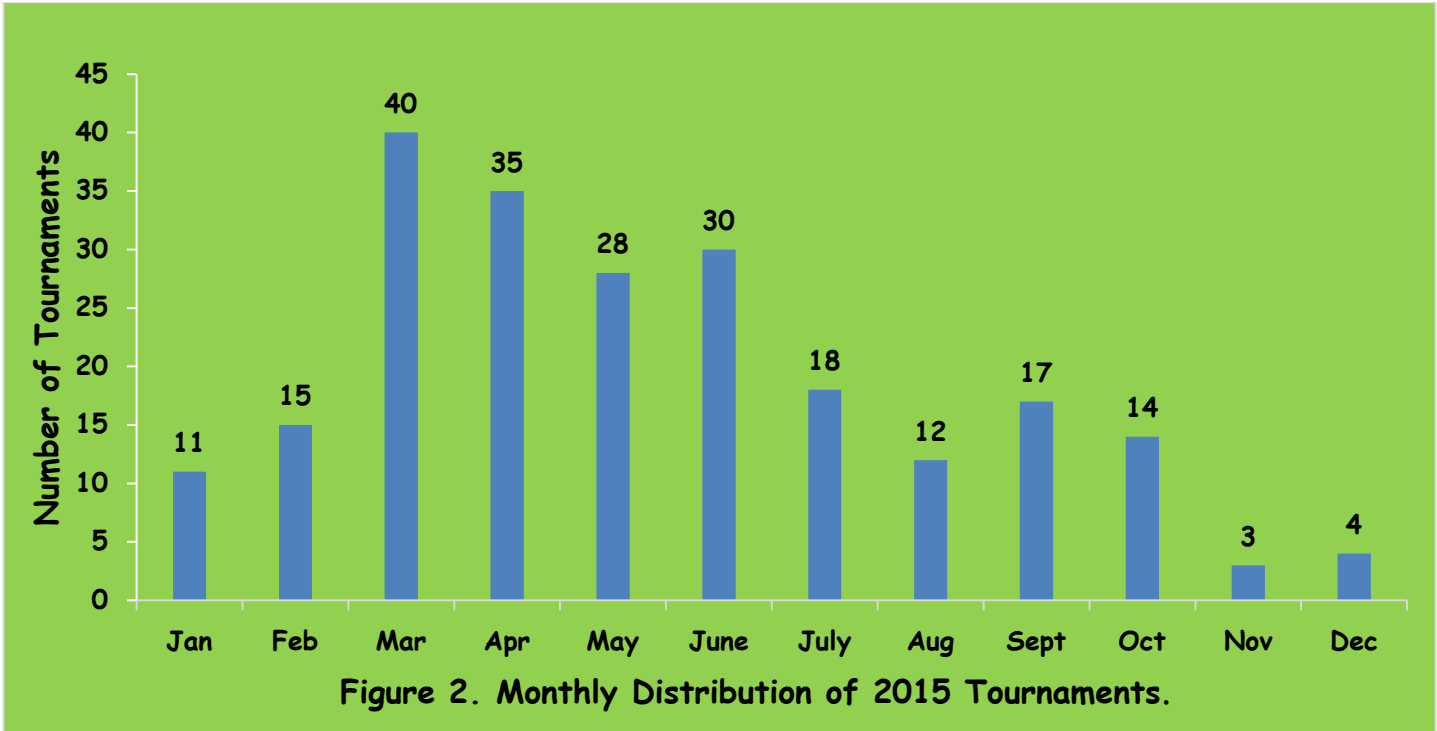
- A total of 230 tournaments reported 8,716 anglers that weighed-in 15,376 bass (Table 1). The number of tournament reports increased in 2015 (Figure 1). The most reports came from Ross Barnett Reservoir.



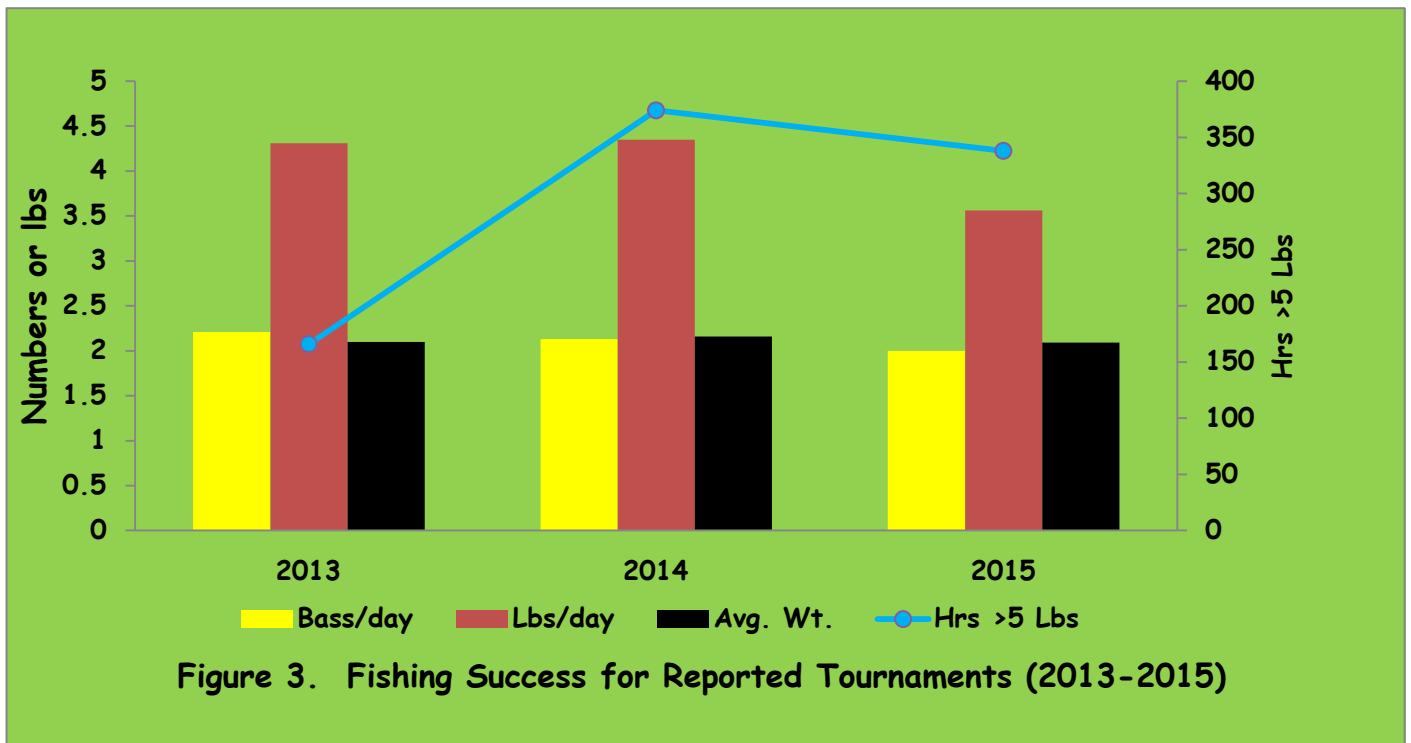
- It took an average of 11.83 pounds to win a tournament in 2015 (Table 1). Of lakes with a least five tournaments reported, Pickwick, Okatibbee, and Ross Barnett had the highest average winning weights.
- Average weight of bass ranged from 0.65 pounds at Elvis Presley Lake to 3.58 pounds at Calling Panther Lake (Table 1). The statewide average weight was 2.09 pounds. Using average length of tournaments to define an angler day, the number of bass caught per angler day was highest on the Pearl River and the pounds caught per angler day was highest at Little Eagle Lake.
- The seasonal distribution of 2015 tournaments appears in Figure 2. March through June were the most popular months to conduct tournaments with over 20 per month reported. Tournament reports were submitted from all 12 months.

Table 1. Summary of Bass Tournament results from the 2015 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program.

Waterbody	Report Cards	Entries	Bass Caught	Bass Per Day	Pounds Per Day	Percent Success	Average Weight	No. > 5 lbs.	Big Bass	Average 1 ST Place
Aliceville	3	107	259	2.65	4.20	47	1.63	0	4.15	11.55
Archusa Cr W. Park	1	37	68	1.84	3.11	53	1.69	1	6.99	14.60
Back Bay Biloxi	4	27	62	2.37	3.05	16	1.34	0	3.22	7.58
Bay Springs Lake	3	129	236	2.31	4.35	41	2.03	15	5.36	14.92
Bee Lake	1	25	5	0.20	0.42	0	2.11	0	3.82	3.82
Bogue Homa	25	1134	744	0.67	1.93	7	2.86	22	5.47	13.31
Calling Panther	2	20	20	1.00	3.43	0	3.58	1	10.25	11.28
Eagle Lake	2	101	112	1.14	3.68	25	3.28	3	6.99	19.63
Elvis Presley Lake	8	64	149	2.38	1.57	93	0.65	1	2.43	4.79
Enid Reservoir	1	26	42	1.62	3.05	4	1.89	3	6.65	12.05
Flint Creek	8	146	54	1.74	1.55	44	1.64	3	4.43	8.18
Gulport Lake	3	45	143	3.13	4.35	40	1.38	1	3.69	8.33
Jourdan River	4	40	109	3.06	4.49	37	1.42	0	2.99	8.18
Lake Chicot	1	56	57	1.02	2.40	11	2.36	1	5.97	12.86
Lake Ferguson	6	384	400	1.17	2.67	14	2.18	2	5.14	15.21
Lake Lincoln	1	37	41	1.11	2.57	11	2.32	2	9.48	11.67
Little Black Creek	1	17			1.20			1	6.74	11.94
Little Eagle	3	39	117	2.95	6.25	27	2.08	2	6.15	14.25
Okatibbee Reservoir	6	271	650	2.54	5.05	58	2.02	7	5.60	17.28
Parkers Creek	1	5	19	3.80	4.65	60	1.22	0	2.48	6.42
Pascagoula River	29	483	1231	2.94	4.31	41	1.49	4	3.36	10.12
Paul B. Johnson SP	19	443			1.12			7	3.98	9.16
Pearl River	16	213	330	3.26	6.03	62	1.51	1	3.44	10.24
Pickwick	32	1504	3137	2.23	6.11	39	2.66	61	6.04	19.23
Poverty Point	2	16	34	2.13	5.40	6	2.36	1	6.75	10.60
Ross Barnett	45	3263	7263	2.02	4.44	48	2.27	74	6.15	16.21
Tenn-Tom	1	10	15	1.50	5.22	0	3.48	4	6.55	15.93
Washington	2	74	79	1.12	3.01	36.11	2.91	2	5.41	12.05
Totals	230	8716	15376					219		
Average				2.00	3.56	31.54	2.09	0.95	5.35	11.83



- Both pounds per day (3.56) and average weight of bass weighed-in (2.09) were similar to the 2013 and 2014 values. The hours to weigh-in a five pound bass decreased from 374 in 2014 to 338 in 2015 (Figure 3).



- Five of the top 10 heaviest 5-bass limits came from Pickwick Lake in 2015 (Table 2). Ross Barnett Reservoir had four sacks in the top-10 heaviest 5-bass limits. The remaining big sack was caught at Bay Springs. The largest sack was weighed-in at Pickwick by Fishers of Men during July. The second biggest sack was also caught at Pickwick in January by PWBT. Four of the 10 big sacks were weighed-in during March.

Table 2. The top 10 heaviest limits weighed-in 2015 MDWFP Bass Tournament Report

Lake	Date	Tournament	1st Place Weight (lbs)
Pickwick	18-Jul	Fishers of Men	26.58
Pickwick	3-Jan	PWBT	26.53
Ross Barnett Reservoir	13-Mar	Bassmaster	26.06
Pickwick	26-Sep	FLW	25.88
Pickwick	3-Jan	PWBT	24.36
Pickwick	18-Apr	Fishers of Men	24.29
Bay Springs Lake	21-Mar	Jared Mann Mem. Tourn.	23.92
Ross Barnett Reservoir	12-Mar	Bassmaster	23.31
Ross Barnett Reservoir	21-Mar	FLW	23.13
Ross Barnett Reservoir	30-May	FLW	23.13

- The number of bass weighed-in over five pounds slightly decreased from 222 in 2014 to 219 in 2015. On average, it took 338 angler hours to weigh-in a bass equal to or over five pounds. There were 219 bass that weighed a minimum of five pounds. This was 1.4% of the total number weighed in 2015.
- In 2015 there were 24 lunkers that weighed at least seven pounds, and two lunkers caught were over 10 pounds (Table 3). The largest lunker was caught at Calling Panther Lake on March 21 and weighed 10.25 pounds, and the second largest lunker came from Pickwick on January 3. In 2015, 42% of the big bass came from Ross Barnett and 25% of the lunkers came from Pickwick.
- Thirty clubs or tournament organizations submitted 230 reports (Table 4). Nineteen clubs submitted five or more reports and 11 clubs submitted 10 or more. The average number of reports received per club or organization was seven.

Table 3. Summary of bass weighed-in that were seven pounds or larger from the 2015 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program Report

<u>Lunker</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>Tourney</u>
10.25	3/21/2015	Calling Panther	Believers Bassmen
10.11	1/3/2015	Pickwick	PWBT
9.48	5/23/2015	Lake Lincoln	Media Bass
8.81	3/21/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	FLW
8.80	3/7/2015	Pickwick	American Bass Angler
8.46	5/9/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	CGM Tournaments
8.02	5/14/15	Paul B. Johnson SP	Paul B. Johnson Fruit Jar
8.00	3/12/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Bassmaster
7.89	10/31/2015	Pickwick	AL DNR B.A.I.T.
7.71	5/2/2015	Eagle Lake	Media Bass
7.69	3/13/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Bassmaster
7.65	2/14/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Media Bass
7.64	3/21/2015	Bay Springs Lake	Jared Mann Memorial Tournament
7.63	5/26/2015	Bogue Homa	Bogue Homa Fruit Jar
7.50	3/21/2015	Pickwick	AL DNR B.A.I.T.
7.28	10/30/2015	Pickwick	AL DNR B.A.I.T.
7.24	7/11/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Media Bass
7.24	2/22/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Sunset Marina
7.19	3/12/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Bassmaster
7.18	4/4/15	Flint Creek	Flint Creek Fruit Jar
7.13	3/21/2015	Pickwick	AL DNR B.A.I.T.
7.07	3/8/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Sunset Marina
7.02	1/17/2015	Ross Barnett Reservoir	American Bass Angler
7.00	4/11/2015	Little Eagle	Believers Bassmen

**Table 4. Organizations that submitted reports in the 2015 MDWFP
Bass Tournament Program**

<u>Club</u>	<u>Number Of Tournaments</u>	<u>Number of Anglers</u>
AL DNR B.A.I.T.	10	553
American Bass Angler	11	117
Attala Bass Club	7	170
Bass Nation High School Bass Fishing Tourn	2	72
Bass Shamps	3	83
Bassmaster	6	812
Believers Bassmen	8	76
Belmont Bass Anglers	6	96
Bogue Homa Fruit Jar	20	928
CGM Tournaments	13	624
Collinsville Bass Club	6	343
Dockside Marine Tour Trail	2	91
Elvis Presley Fruit Jar	8	64
Fishers of Men	10	419
Flint Creek Fruit Jar	7	115
FLW	14	1518
Jared Mann Memorial Tournament	1	94
Jones County Bass Association	1	34
Kings of the River	3	159
Little Black Creek Fruit Jar	1	17
Magnolia Bassmasters	12	178
Media Bass	20	1097
MS Softball Association	1	44
Ocean Springs Bassmasters	12	67
Paul B. Johnson Fruit Jar	19	443
Pearl River Singles Circuit	8	85
Pickwick Winter Trail	2	35
Singing River Bassmasters	12	90
Sumrall Bass Club	2	54
Sunset Marina	3	238

- Team tournaments were only slightly more popular than individual tournaments with 52% of the reports submitted from team events. These tournaments averaged 21 teams per tournament. Individual tournaments accounted for 48% of the reports and averaged 35 participants per event. Limits of bass were weighed-in by 31% of all anglers or teams during 2015.
- Lakes with at least five tournament reports were ranked by averaging seven "quality indicators" (Table 5). The top five lakes in order in 2015 were Pickwick, Okatibbee, Ross Barnett, Pearl River and Bogue Homa. Pickwick Lake received the highest ranks for three of the seven quality indicators and Okatibbee Reservoir received the second highest rank for three quality indicators. Pickwick Lake received high marks for winning weight, hours to catch a bass at least five pounds, and pounds of bass weighed-in per day. Ross Barnett scored high for average lunker weight. Bogue Homa Lake received high marks for average weight. The Pearl River received high ranks for percentage of limits weighed in and number weighed-in per day. Natural fluctuations in bass abundance and size structure are normal, plus environmental conditions and angling pressure vary from year to year.
- Tournament bag limits varied from three to five bass and were more restrictive than state regulations. Most tournaments had a 12-inch minimum length limit.
- Success of this program depends on participation from clubs and tournament organizers. We thank all those who voluntarily submitted report cards. Higher numbers of reports allow better estimates of fishing conditions; not just a good or bad day's fishing by one or two clubs. Results can be used by tournament directors, anglers and biologists to better manage and enjoy our fisheries resources. Angler involvement has been and remains the key to protecting and managing Mississippi's fisheries resources.

Table 5. Final rankings of tournament lakes in Mississippi based upon 2015 reports.

Ranked by "Fishing Quality Indicators" from lakes with five or more tournament reports

Average weight/bass (lbs.)		Average Number Caught per 8-hour day		Average Pounds Caught per 8-hour day		Index hours to catch a bass \geq 5 lbs.		Average big bass weight (lbs.)		Average 1st place weight (lbs.)		Overall Rank
Bogue Homa	2.86	Pearl River	3.26	Pickwick	6.11	Pickwick	2.10	Ross Barnett	6.15	Pickwick	19.23	1 Pickwick
Pickwick	2.66	Pascagoula R.	2.94	Pearl River	6.03	Okatibbee	3.29	Pickwick	6.04	Okatibbee	17.28	2 Okatibbee
Ross Barnett	2.27	Okatibbee	2.54	Okatibbee	5.05	Ross Barnett	3.75	Okatibbee	5.60	Ross Barnett	16.21	3 Ross Barnett
Lake Ferguson	2.18	Pickwick	2.23	Ross Barnett	4.44	Bogue Homa	4.38	Bogue Homa	5.47	Lake Ferguson	15.21	4 Pearl River
Okatibbee	2.02	Ross Barnett	2.02	Pascagoula R.	4.31	Pascagoula R.	10.26	Lake Ferguson	5.14	Bogue Homa	13.31	5 Bogue Homa
Pearl River	1.51	Lake Ferguson	1.17	Lake Ferguson	2.67	Lake Ferguson	16.32	Pearl River	3.44	Pearl River	10.24	6 Pascagoula R.
Pascagoula R.	1.49	Bogue Homa	0.67	Bogue Homa	1.93	Pearl River	18.11	Pascagoula R.	3.36	Pascagoula R.	10.12	6 Lake Ferguson