

# MISSISSIPPI BASS TOURNAMENT PROGRAM 2012 ANNUAL REPORT



FISHERIES BUREAU



MISSISSIPPI WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

1505 Eastover Drive  
Jackson, MS 39211  
*[www.mdwfp.com](http://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**

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

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## *2012 Bass Tournament Summary*

2012 was another good year for Mississippi's bass tournament anglers, and included 236 tournament reports! Averages for all lakes in 2012 were very similar to those in 2011 and still above the previous eight years of reporting. At least five reports were received from 15 lakes that are included in the "Final Rankings." Quality indicators continue to improve, with average number and weight of bass weighed-in the highest ever reported. Average lunker weight is still above 5 pounds. Anglers are raving about the quality of the fishing at Lake Ferguson; and Pickwick Lake and Ross Barnett Reservoir are still cranking out more bass over 7 pounds than any other lake in the State. The following summarizes the most important points from the 2012 Tournament Report:

- 236 reports were submitted from 35 different lakes
- **Lake Fergusson** finished as the top lake in overall quality indicator rankings followed by **Pickwick**, **Bay Springs**, and **Ross Barnett Reservoir**.
- 27 bass over 7 lbs were weighed-in

### *Statewide Tournament Statistics*

2.52 - Number of bass caught per angler-day

4.76 - Pounds of bass caught per angler-day

2.02 - Average weight of bass caught

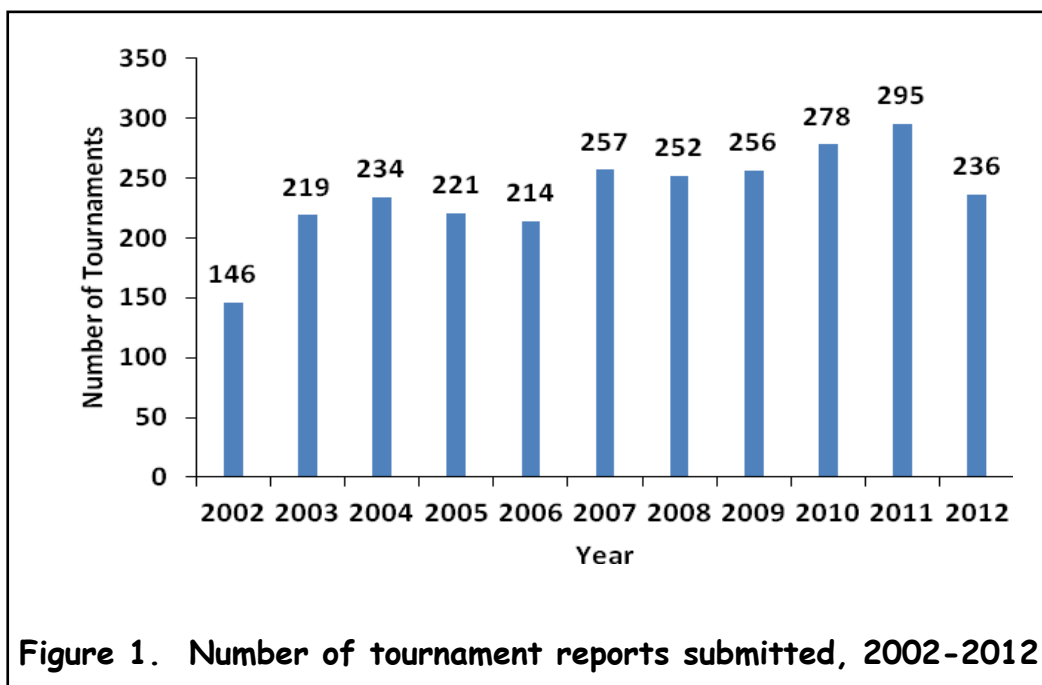
258 - Hours to catch a 5 pound bass

5.06 - Average lunker, or big bass weight

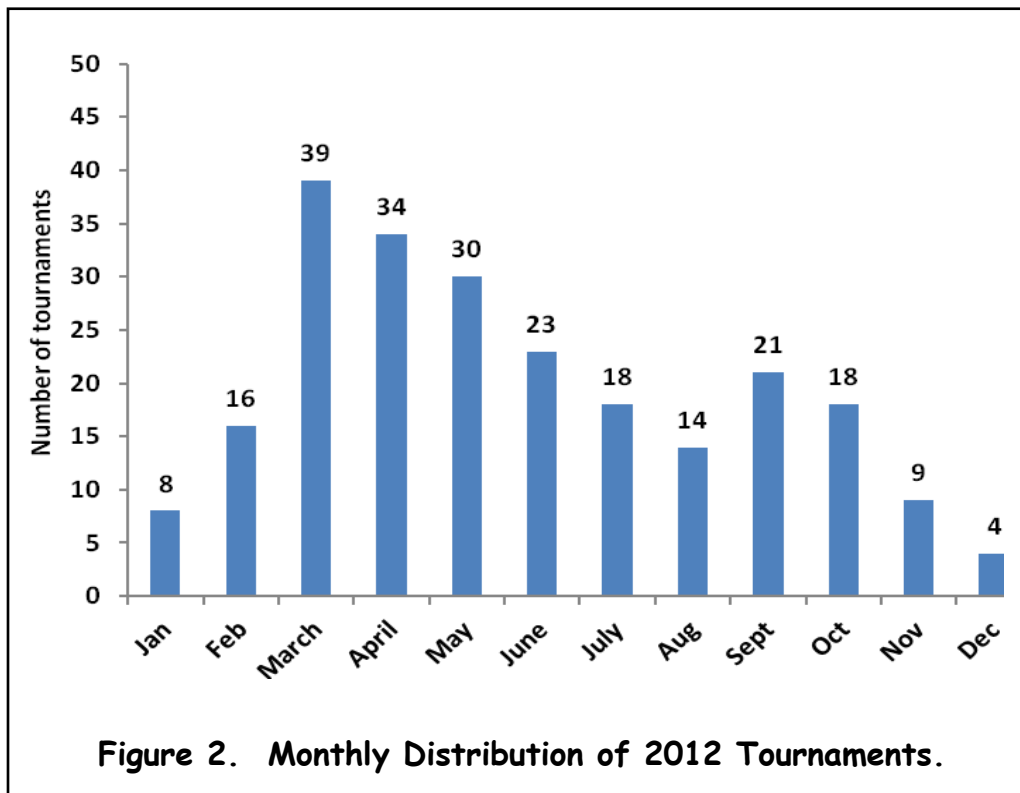
13.91 - Average 1<sup>st</sup> place weight

259 - Number of bass 5 pounds and larger

- A total of 236 tournaments reported 8,006 anglers that weighed-in 18,098 bass (Table 1). Report cards were received for 35 lakes. The number of tournament reports declined in 2012, and was the lowest since 2006 (Figure 1). The most reports again came from Ross Barnett Reservoir and Pickwick Lake.



- It took an average of 13.91 pounds to win a tournament in 2012 (Table 1). Of lakes with a least five tournaments reported, Lakes Ferguson and Pickwick had the highest average winning weights.
- Average weight of bass ranged from 0.68 pounds at Elvis Presley Lake to 3.70 pounds at Lake Washington (Table 1). The statewide average weight was 2.02 pounds. Using average length of tournaments to define an angler day, the number of bass caught/angler day was highest at Elvis Presley Lake and pounds caught/angler day was highest at Eagle Lake.
- The seasonal distribution of 2012 tournaments appears in Figure 2. Tournament reports were submitted from all 12 months. Tournaments held from March through June accounted for 53% of the total.



- Tournament catch for numbers and pounds per day were similar to 2011 and continue to be some of the highest values recorded since the start of reporting (Figure 3). The hours to catch a bass 5 pounds or larger (258 hours) has declined each year since 2007.
- Lakes with at least five tournament reports were ranked by averaging six "quality indicators" (Table 2). The top 5 lakes in 2012 were Ferguson, Pickwick, Bay Springs, Ross Barnett and Gulfport Lake. Lake Ferguson received the highest ranks for four of the six quality indicators. Pickwick received high marks for winning weight and pounds of bass weighed-in. Bay Springs had high scores for average lunker and hours to catch a bass over 5 pounds. Ross Barnett scored high for average lunker and average weight of bass weighed-in, and Gulfport Lake received high scores for numbers and pounds of bass weighed-in per day. Ferguson replaced Lake Washington as the top lake in 2012. Pickwick continued to hold down the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot, with Bay Springs moving up from 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ross Barnett moved up two spots to 4<sup>th</sup>, and Gulfport Lake made its first appearance in the top-5 tournament lakes in the state. Natural fluctuations in bass abundance and size structure are normal, plus environmental conditions and angling pressure vary from year to year.

- Six of the top-10 heaviest 5-bass limits came from Pickwick Lake in 2012, with two of the limits over 30 pounds (Table 3). The 31.20 lb sack was weighed-in at Pickwick on February 25 in Clay's Bait & Tackle tournament. Ross Barnett Reservoir and Lake Ferguson produced the remaining four sacks. Seven of the 10 big sacks were weighed-in from January through March.

**Table 3. The top 10 heaviest limits weighed-in from the 2012 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program Report.**

Lake	Date	Tournament	1st Place Weight
Pickwick Lake	25-Feb-12	Clays Bait and Tackle	31.20
Pickwick Lake	10-Mar-12	FLW BFL	30.13
Lake Ferguson	31-Mar-12	Fishers of Men	27.27
Ross Barnett Reservoir	26-Feb-12	Media Bass	27.21
Lake Ferguson	25-Feb-12	Peanut Craft Lures	26.98
Pickwick Lake	12-May-12	American Bass Anglers	25.66
Pickwick Lake	25-Feb-12	Peanut Craft Lures	25.56
Pickwick Lake	27-Oct-12	Clays Bait and Tackle	25.02
Lake Ferguson	26-May-12	Media Bass	24.86
Pickwick Lake	28-Jan-12	Team Trails of MS	24.48

- The number of bass weighed-in over 5 pounds increased in 2012. On average, it took 258 angler hours, or 30 angler days, to weigh-in a bass over five pounds during 2012. There were 259 bass five pounds or larger, 1.4% of the total number, weighed-in in 2012.
- Of these, 27 bass were at least seven pounds, and three were over 10 pounds (Table 4). Sixty-seven percent of the big bass came from either Pickwick or Ross Barnett. The largest bass caught was at Pickwick Lake and weighed 12.56 pounds.
- Forty-one clubs or tournament organizations submitted 236 tournament reports (Table 5). Twenty clubs (54%) submitted five or more reports and seven clubs submitted 10 or more. Six tournament organizations accounted for 38% of the total number of tournaments. The average number of reports received per club or organization was six.

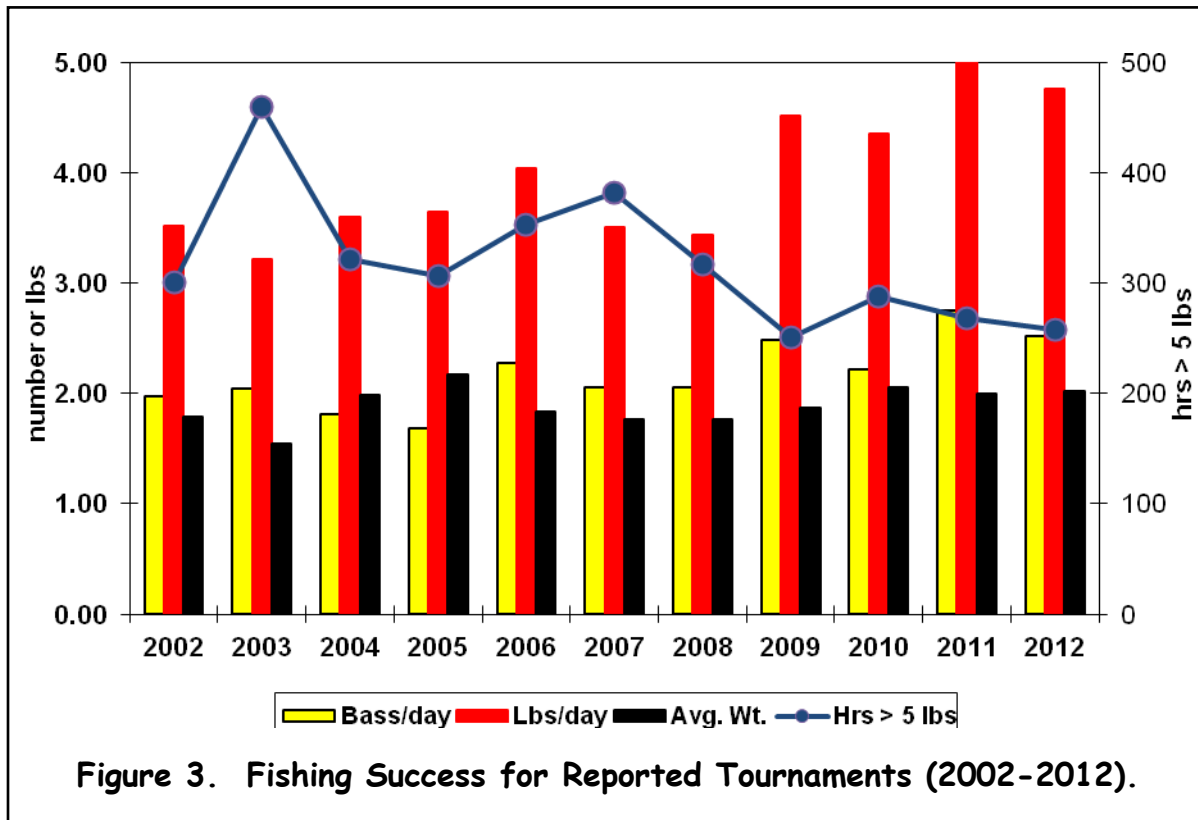
**Table 4. Summary of bass weighed-in that were seven pounds or larger from the 2012 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program Report.**

<u>LUNKER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LAKE</u>	<u>TOURNAMENT</u>
12.56	10-Mar-12	Pickwick Lake	FLW BFL
11.78	25-Feb-12	Pickwick Lake	Peanut Craft Lures Trail
10.44	29-Sep-12	Pickwick Lake	FLW BFL
9.76	30-Jun-12	Pickwick Lake	Clays Bait and Tackle
9.31	29-Sep-12	Pickwick Lake	FLW BFL
9.20	25-Feb-12	Pickwick Lake	Clays Bait and Tackle
9.18	25-Aug-12	Pickwick Lake	Itawamba County Bass Club
9.02	18-Aug-12	Pickwick Lake	Clays Bait and Tackle
8.06	31-Mar-12	Ross Barnett Reservoir	FLW BFL
8.04	25-Mar-12	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Media Bass Trail
7.96	31-Mar-12	Lake Ferguson	Fishers of Men
7.78	14-Jul-12	Pickwick Lake	Clays Bait and Tackle
7.63	26-May-12	Lake Lincoln	Media Bass Trail
7.55	28-Apr-12	Back Bay	SMABC
7.55	24-Mar-12	Pickwick Lake	Clays Bait and Tackle
7.50	7-Apr-12	Pickwick Lake	ALDNR B.A.I.T.
7.50	20-May-12	Ross Barnett Reservoir	Media Bass Trail
7.45	28-Jan-12	Okatibbee Reservoir	Collinsville Bass Club
7.31	13-Oct-12	Calling Panther Lake	Believers Bassmen
7.30	7-Apr-12	Ross Barnett Reservoir	C G M Bass Tournaments
7.29	10-Mar-12	Bay Springs Lake	Lee County Bass Club
7.25	10-Mar-12	Pickwick Lake	FLW BFL
7.22	27-Oct-12	Pickwick Lake	Clays Bait and Tackle
7.18	11-Feb-12	Flint Creek	Fishers of Men
7.07	20-Oct-12	Bay Springs Lake	Four Lakes Bass Club
7.00	26-May-12	Lake Lincoln	Media Bass Trail
7.00	7-Apr-12	Ross Barnett Reservoir	C G M Bass Tournaments

**Table 5. Organizations that submitted reports in the 2012 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program.**

<u>Club</u>	<u>Number of tournaments</u>	<u>Number of Anglers</u>
AL BAIT	6	241
Amber Riley Benefit	1	34
American Bass Anglers	11	148
Attala Bass Club	6	120
Bass Shamps	5	142
Believers Bassmen	10	224
Belmont Bass Anglers	6	64
FLW BFL	17	1619
Black Friday Tourney	1	62
Budweiser	1	147
CGM Bass Tournaments	6	366
Champions	3	100
Clay County Bassmasters	1	19
Clays Bait and Tackle	9	384
Collinsville Bass Club	2	98
Duncan Marine	3	303
Fallen Heroes	1	99
Fishers of Men	13	479
Four Lakes Bass Club	9	200
Gabe Wigginton Benefit	1	24
Itawamba County	7	112
Jared Mann	1	39
King of the River	5	257
Lee County	8	101
Madison City Bass Anglers	1	12
Media Bass	24	734
Memphis Bass Club	4	46
Mon Night FruitJar	13	225
Monroe County	11	130
MS Bass Busters	8	125
MS Bass Fed	2	133
Northport Bass Club	1	45
Oxford Bass Club	1	52
Peanut Craft Trail	4	155
Pickensville Marine	4	150
Safe Harbor	5	383
SMABC	8	207
Squincher Open	1	31
Team Trails of MS	6	136
Tupelo Bass Club	9	101
Wolf River Bass Club	1	9





- Team tournaments were again slightly more popular than individual tournaments with 58% of the reports submitted from team events. These tournaments averaged 18 teams per tournament. Individual tournaments accounted for 42% of the reports and averaged 32 participants per event.
- Limits of bass were weighed-in by 50% of all anglers or teams, and were slightly lower than the percent limits weighed-in in 2011.
- Tournament bag limits varied from 4 to 5 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 with MDWFP. 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 1. Summary of bass tournament results from the 2012 MDWFP Bass Tournament Program.**

<b>Waterbody</b>	<b>Report Cards</b>	<b>Entries</b>	<b>Bass Caught</b>	<b>Bass Per Day</b>	<b>Pounds Per Day</b>	<b>Percent Success</b>	<b>Average Weight</b>	<b>No. &gt;5 lbs.</b>	<b>Big Bass</b>	<b>Average 1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>
Aberdeen	4	70	152	2.46	4.98	40	2.04	1	4.88	12.41
Aliceville	4	165	373	2.26	4.44	78	1.95	3	4.76	14.36
Back Bay	2	49	154	2.96	4.37	41	1.47	3	5.90	11.77
Bay Springs	21	397	849	2.59	5.09	62	2.09	22	5.28	15.58
Bee	2	40	139	3.45	7.68	39	2.23	2	5.02	15.99
Bogue Homa	1	38	52	1.37	3.32	26	2.43	1	5.30	16.14
Calling Panther	1	22	41	1.86	4.86	14	2.61	3	7.31	16.06
Chicot	1	18	18	1.00	2.38	11	2.38	0	3.54	12.05
Chotard	3	59	188	3.00	6.84	40	2.33	4	5.66	15.28
Columbus	8	412	852	1.97	4.05	13	2.07	3	4.57	12.24
Eagle Lake	1	27	77	2.85	7.95	26	2.79	2	5.31	20.50
Elvis Presley	13	225	486	6.14	4.07	79	0.68	1	3.14	5.47
Enid	4	66	191	3.21	5.75	54	1.77	4	5.73	14.55
Ferguson	8	361	1363	3.16	8.93	85	3.01	28	6.47	22.94
Flint Creek	2	52	104	1.95	3.58	60	1.86	1	7.18	12.87
Gainsville	1	30	64	2.13	4.92	75	2.31	3	6.18	16.52
Grenada	1	5	11	2.20	2.81	0	1.28	0	3.13	5.40
Gulfport Lake	5	86	270	3.54	5.66	67	1.57	2	4.97	11.56
Jourdan	2	42	147	3.20	4.57	80	1.47	0	3.75	10.54
Lincoln	1	36	79	2.19	4.34	72	1.98	4	7.63	19.67
Little Eagle	2	42	138	3.27	6.58	45	2.02	2	5.29	13.57
MaynardCreek	1	25	44	1.76	3.39	54	1.93	0	4.47	14.58
Moon	1	6	3	0.50	1.09	0	2.18	0	2.58	3.95
Okatibbee	5	108	196	2.33	3.28	61	1.89	4	4.59	12.69
Pascagoula	17	719	1430	2.49	3.92	62	1.55	8	4.25	12.36
Pearl River	11	260	728	3.46	5.04	70	1.53	1	3.72	11.62
Pickwick	54	2245	5273	3.09	6.33	60	2.21	70	6.37	18.94
Ross Barnett	27	1797	3313	2.22	5.15	60	2.33	65	6.36	18.37
Sardis	5	117	238	2.35	4.38	51	1.87	4	5.16	14.16
Stovall	2	52	135	2.60	5.77	100	2.21	2	5.44	16.29
Trace	1	14	22	1.57	2.19	29	1.39	0	2.56	8.37
TTW lakes	19	312	711	2.90	5.15	56	1.85	10	4.83	14.21
Tunica	1	14	29	2.07	4.24	50	2.05	.	.	11.92
Washington	2	38	37	0.97	3.54	21	3.70	4	6.34	21.21
Wolf	3	57	191	3.28	5.91	42	1.79	2	4.42	12.81
<b>Totals</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>8,006</b>	<b>18,098</b>					<b>259</b>		
<b>Average</b>				<b>2.52</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>5.06</b>	<b>13.91</b>

**Table 2. Final rankings of tournament lakes in Mississippi based on 2012 reports.**

Ranked by “Fishing Quality Indicators” from lakes with 5 or more tournament reports							Overall Rank
Average weight/bass (lbs.)	Average Number Caught per 8-hour day	Average Pounds Caught per 8-hour day	Index of hours to catch a bass > 5 lbs.	Average big bass weight (lbs.)	Average 1 <sup>st</sup> place weight (lbs.)		
Ferguson 3.01	Elvis Presley 6.14	Ferguson 8.93	Ferguson 1.10	Ferguson 6.47	Ferguson 22.94		<b>#1. Ferguson</b>
Ross Barnett 2.33	Gulfport 3.54	Pickwick 6.33	Bay Springs 1.53	Pickwick 6.37	Pickwick 18.94		<b>#2. Pickwick</b>
Pickwick 2.21	Pearl River 3.46	Gulfport 5.66	Okatibbee 2.30	Ross Barnett 6.36	Ross Barnett 18.37		<b>#3. Bay Springs</b>
Bay Springs 2.09	Ferguson 3.16	TTW lakes 5.15	Ross Barnett 2.35	Bay Springs 5.28	Bay Springs 15.58		<b>#4. Ross Barnett</b>
Columbus 2.07	Pickwick 3.09	Ross Barnett 5.15	Sardis 2.49	Sardis 5.16	TTW lakes 14.21		<b>#5. Gulfport Lake</b>
Okatibbee 1.89	TTW lakes 2.90	Bay Springs 5.09	TTW lakes 2.65	Gulfport 4.97	Sardis 14.16		<b>#6. TTW lakes</b>
Sardis 1.87	Bay Springs 2.59	Pearl River 5.04	Pickwick 2.73	TTW lakes 4.83	Okatibbee 12.69		<b>#7. Sardis</b>
TTW lakes 1.85	Pascagoula 2.49	Sardis 4.38	Gulfport 3.66	Okatibbee 4.59	Pascagoula 12.36		<b>#8. Okatibbee</b>
Gulfport 1.57	Sardis 2.35	Elvis Presley 4.07	Elvis Presley 6.75	Columbus 4.57	Columbus 12.24		<b>#9. Elvis Presley</b>
Pascagoula 1.55	Okatibbee 2.33	Columbus 4.05	Pascagoula 7.64	Pascagoula 4.25	Pearl River 11.62		<b>#10. Pearl River</b>
Pearl River 1.53	Ross Barnett 2.22	Pascagoula 3.92	Columbus 1.67	Pearl River 3.72	Gulfport 11.56		<b>#11. Pascagoula</b>
Elvis Presley 0.68	Columbus 1.97	Okatibbee 3.28	Pearl River 2.10	Elvis Presley 3.14	Elvis Presley 5.47		<b>#12. Columbus</b>

