

First Annual “Battle on De Rosa”

Team Alabama Hammer – Bryan Talmadge and Allen Sturtevant
Team We-got-cheated - Brian Stangel and Dave Thielman

December 30, 2007 Santa Rosa, New Mexico
17 Degrees (Temp of 27 with 30 mph winds)
Water Temp: 37-39
Clarity: murky 1' (maybe)

With so much hype surrounding the "Battle on the Rosa" tournament this past Sunday, it is hard to fathom what happened exactly to my partner and I as we went up against the fiercest competition we could scare up on Saturday night at the wedding reception for Bryan and Lisa Talmadge. We thought we might actually have three teams competing, but with the wind and obviously stiff competition...the ghosts from Clovis were quiet come Sunday morning at the ramp. The amount of trash talking going on Saturday evening had me completely convinced we would be able to put a solid limit together no matter what conditions we encountered...and once again, I was wrong.

Thielman and I started out up river along with Bryan and Allen (Bryan's brother-in-law and the only other person I know insane enough to take the challenge) working steep bluff walls and looking for signs of life. After running the Maxxum 101 on 60% for about 90 minutes we decided to take a run over and see what Bryan and Allen were doing...they said they had two fish...but were lying (typical...they knew we were bringing our A game so they had to front). Later as the day blew on...we (actually me, Dave was still fishless...but it was a team effort all the same, he complained about the wind and I ran the boat) finally stuck a solid keeper on a football jig. My partner and I had some comfort that we were finally on the board and were again motivated (for about 10 minutes). Moving our way down the wall...we came around the corner to see Bryan and Allen sitting out in front of the "hot pocket" that I had found the week previous. Must have let the cat of the bag the night before...oh well, nobody was watching, we could fish on top of them. LOL

We worked our way across the pocket in deep water outside of the brush filled ledges with the wind taking us along much faster than we should have allowed. We had a couple other bites and saw Bryan boat a fish...Dave thought they were lying, but I was confident that Bryan and Allen were putting it together even with the wind. Dave's comment was "If I am not catching...nobody is catching." With that winning attitude I was comforted in knowing that we had it sewn up. With lots of attitude and flat out lying as we came across Bryan and Allen they were convinced we had a limit and a solid kicker in the box. Unfortunately for Dave and I, we were better liars than fishermen...as is usually the case. Our one fish was starting to struggle a little and instead of letting it die, we decided to chase

down Bryan and Allen at 4:30 and tell them we needed to weigh the fish and release it so it could live.

As we weighed our one fish, Bryan wanted to know how the rest were doing...and we said "...great, they are all still swimming in the lake". He proceeded to release a solid five fish limit of largemouth that looked to be in the 12# range...with the shortest being 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ "s. As Dave and I imagined, they must have cheated since there was no way they had us five to one. Without having done a proper livewell check in the morning, this aspect of the tournament is also under suspicion. Dave and I are confident that had we actually caught fish we would have been competitive...short of that, there isn't much else to be said. Bryan and Allen both know who the real winners were that day...LOL!

Until the next round...which I heard was almost today..."see YOU at the ramp!"