

This past weekend's showdown for qualifier #3 brought the Ohio Walleye Federation's teams to the shores of Berlin Lake. Berlin is the sight of the historic championship from 2022, where record bags were weighed. Oh, what a difference a year can make.

The pre-fish was reported to be less than stellar from everyone that I talked to. The prior weekends high's in the 80's were met by a 50-degree temperature drop mid-week with low's in the 30s and frost reported on the ground. Berlin Lake and river has nearly 80 miles of shoreline between the lake and all of the creeks that flow into it, which give the fish the upper hand in this one.

The consistent thought on Sunday morning was that the fishing had to get better. Though there was a great positive attitude amongst competitors, the walleye did not cooperate for most teams. Catching fish and cashing a check in an extremely tough bite is something to really hang your hat on. These were the teams that were able to do just that.

It is "rinse and repeat" for Anthony Naples and Christopher Durkin. They pulled out a squeaker of a win by .05 pounds with 3 fish for 9.59 pounds for their second consecutive OWF win. Naples and Durkin have gained a reputation of being one of the top teams in Ohio when it comes to catching fish with a jig and crawler. That expertise came in handy as they reported that they caught their 3 fish doing just that. They told the crowd at weigh-in's that they were jigging in anywhere from 2-8 feet of water. Christopher actually told the crowd that he owes his success to a lucky shirt. This is the 4th consecutive tournament that the team has won, including 2 tournaments that weren't with the Ohio Walleye Federation. They are 1 hot team.

The 2nd place team of Nathan and Lyle Miller narrowly missed out on their 1st OWF win. They were in 2nd place with the only 5 fish limit weighed in of 9.54 pounds. They, too, were jigging in shallow water. They reported catching their fish with a combination of live bait and plastics.

In 3rd place, was the team of Aaron and Randy Hall. They weighed in 3 fish for 8.52 pounds, bringing home a good check and 3rd place plaques. They reported catching all of their fish "cranking". They said that they had to throw their crankbaits all the way up to the bank and bring it back from there. The team leaned on their local knowledge to grind out the bites that they got.

In 4th place, with 2 fish for 7.26 pounds was Adam and Carl Momirov. They reported using a jig and night crawler in the many willow bushes around the lake to catch their fish.

Rounding out the top 5 was the also extremely hot captain Rick Mulraney with teammate and daughter Emily Mulraney fishing with him at Berlin. Rick and Emily weighed 2 fish for 7.09 pounds. This was Emily's first tournament fishing with her dad, and she seemed to really enjoy herself! Rick reported catching his fish in shallow with 1 coming on a jig and night crawler and the other coming on a blade bait.

In total, the 26 teams fishing there was one 5 fish limit weighed in and a total of 27 fish with a grand total weight of 76.58 pounds from Berlin Lake.

The OWF is now taking a couple of weeks off due to the holidays and to allow the teams from the club to fish the National Team Championship a chance to compete in that. Good luck to the teams representing the club on the national stage. Hopefully, everyone brings home a Top 25. Our next event will be on June 11th at Chautauqua Lake. After last years inaugural event on the lake, we are anticipating it to be bigger and better than last year. There is speculation that if the fishing cooperates, it will take north of 30 pounds to win that event! Can't wait to find out and make sure you don't miss out on the opportunity to fish in it.

The Ohio Walleye Federation would like to thank our title sponsor, Erie Marine Sales, for all of the support that they provide to us. If it weren't for them, we wouldn't be able to provide 100% payout at all tournaments.

For additional information or to sign up for an event, please check us out on Facebook – Ohio Walleye Federation or on our website;  
[www.ohiowalleyefederation.com](http://www.ohiowalleyefederation.com).