

Let's go fishing, Dad

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Like father like son—fishing is a way of life for Dan Large and his son Nolan, who fish the year around from the Port Washington breakwater and harbor docks

Sunday, Nolan Large, 13, reeled in a 4.89-pound brown trout from the Port Washington harbor. That got him on the leader board for the onshore division of Racine's Salmon-A-Rama that runs until 10 a.m. Sunday, July 21.

His father Dan is also on the leader board with 5.03-pound brown trout he caught Saturday.



“We were seventh and eighth, but we dropped to 17th and 18th today,” Dan Large said Tuesday, adding they have another weekend to catch lunkers big enough to win prizes.

They registered their fish at the Bait Box in Port Washington, an official weigh station for the derby.

Even if they hadn't entered the derby, the Port Washington father and son would probably

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fish this weekend, either from the breakwater, in the harbor or from their 14-foot boat on an inland lake.

“We probably fish over 100 days a year. We go at least two times a week, sometimes three to four times. We catch a lot of fish,” said Dan, whose job as a house painter interferes with fishing in summer.

“My boat isn’t large enough for Lake Michigan, so we fish off the pier, in the harbor or in the creek,” he said.

“Some of our favorite times are during the winter when there is snow and ice. We fish in the harbor (where aerators provide some open water) and near the power plant, and we like ice fishing.”

Large’s wife Lori, a fourth-grade teacher at Dunwiddie Elementary School in Port Washington, and his daughter Olivia, 16, have no interest in fishing, but his son had his own rod when he was 5, Large said.

“He caught on really fast. When he was 6, he got a nice trout in the harbor,” Large said.

Nolan’s large catches include a 21-inch small-mouth bass, 18-pound chinook salmon, 13-pound rainbow trout and a 32-inch northern pike.

The Largest catch and release most of the fish, photographing the big ones, and keeping a few to eat.

Nolan, an eighth-grader at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, was allowed to fish alone for the first time last summer, but he must stay in areas where there are railings, Large said.

If his father can’t fish, Nolan said, he often asks a friend or two to go with him, but his favorite fishing partner is his father.

The fishermen always wear life jackets when fishing, whether onshore or in a boat.

“We have life jackets that lie flat but automatically inflate when they hit the water,” Large said. “We wear them all the time. I can’t make Nolan wear one if I don’t.

“Life jackets are like seatbelts. They don’t do you any good if you’re not wearing them.”

Getting comfortable safety jackets is worth the money, he said.

Large and his son each have about 20 fishing rods and half as many reels. Nolan’s wish lists for Christmas and birthdays include gift

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cards to Cabela's and Bass Pro Shop sporting goods stores. He cuts grass and does odd jobs to earn money for fishing gear, his father said.

"My friends say Nolan is just like me. I started fishing when I was young, too," Large said.

"I would bike from Saukville (where he lived) to Port Washington to go fishing almost every day. I would get teased because I had these dorky-looking baskets to carry my stuff. Every once in a while, I would come home with fish in them.

"My first car was an old station wagon so my fishing rods would fit."

Nolan said the best time to fish is when it's dark, before the sun rises or after it sets.

"We usually get up at 4 a.m. to go fishing. That's the best time," he said.

The fish that gave him the biggest fight, he said, was a 30-pound carp.

Nolan caught his brown trout with a live alewife. He catches alewives using tiny gold hooks.

Image Information: A 5-pound brown trout caught Saturday from the Port Washington breakwater by Dan Large was held by his son Nolan, 13. On Sunday, Nolan landed a 4.9-pound brown.