

BIG DOG FIREARMS

(251) 217-7652

516 SARALAND BLVD SOUTH
SARALAND, AL

MGM: Anglers are active

FROM PAGE 8

Alabama. As a parent of a student who loves to fish, we wanted to start this team for the school. We expanded in 2018 to include seventh and eighth graders at Semmes Middle School. On average, we carry 12 to 20 teams to a tournament. We have teams qualified to fish the Alabama B.A.S.S. Nation state championship tournament. Some members have good chances to compete nationally.”

In a two-person team, the student athletes fish about 13 tournaments a year. In student tournaments, adult boat captains drive the tow vehicles and stay with the students all day in the boats. However, the students must fish with no help from the captains. For middle school students, boat captains can operate the boats and trolling motors, but must go where the anglers want to fish and not otherwise assist.

The Vikings raise money throughout the year to help pay for fuel, lodging at out-of-town events, entry fees and other miscellaneous expenses. The team also asks local businesses to sponsor them. Their biggest sponsor is Air Specialty of Semmes.

“The biggest thing we need is financial help to take some of the burden off our members’ parents,” Coach Lee confirmed. “The school administration backs us 100 percent, but we are independent on raising money. We also need community volunteers, especially boat captains who could travel with us and take students fishing. For me, it’s been a big joy to be around and help these kids. This is the only school sport in which parents can partici-

pate with their children.”

Both Brandon and Preston fished for the team since its inception. At the beginning of each season, anglers pick their partners and fish together through the year. As a senior, Brandon already began hearing from colleges about possible scholarships. He wants to study criminal justice.

“I came to this fishing club idea with my dad and we bounced ideas off each other,” Brandon recalled. “When we started the team, I wanted to go to college and fish for that school, but I

never thought a college would become interested in me. I see the fishing team as an opportunity to not only meet other students who share the same passion, but travel all over the state to fish many new waters.”

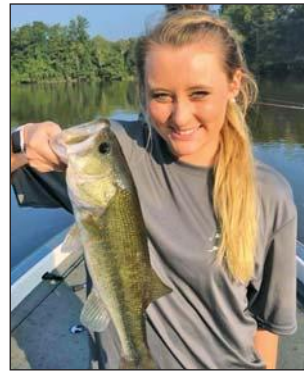
“I grew up fishing

my whole life and fished for everything,” Preston remarked. “On the team, we have a lot of coaches helping us out along the way. It brings a bunch of anglers together who have the same passion for fishing and want to do the same things. I want to have a future in bass fishing.”

Preston said, “For anyone who might be interested in joining a fishing team, the best advice I can give is to chase that dream no matter how far it takes you.”

“Go after your dream,” Brandon agreed.

For more information about the team, call the school at 251-221-3153 or Coach Lee at 251-591-5906. People can keep up with the team on Facebook and Instagram @mgmvikingsfish and Twitter @MGMFISHING.



MGM angler Maggie Freeman with a bass