



North Eastern Anglers Association

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## Biffle Dominates in Dizzie

DECATUR, Ala. — Through a series of flipping and pitching casts from a hidden cove, [Tommy Biffle](#) of Wagoner, Okla., accumulated 50 pounds, 13 ounces on his way to victory at the Evan Williams Bourbon Dixie Duel on Wheeler Lake. Biffle edged [Casey Ashley](#) of Donalds, S.C., who amassed 46-4 for second place during the third stop of the 2009 Bassmaster Elite Series.

With the victory, Biffle earns \$100,000 and valuable points in the Toyota Tundra Bassmaster Angler of the Year standings, which awards the top 36 anglers qualifying berths in the 2010 Bassmaster Classic. Biffle found a secluded spot on Wheeler Lake without any other boat traffic and remained committed to it through the weather-shortened event. Friday was canceled due to unsafe river conditions and the river levels increased nearly 2 feet since the first competition day on Thursday. Biffle, who bagged 14-13 on Sunday's final day, said he was fishing in about 6 inches of water on the first day and the water was stained

or the remainder of the event. "I was more concerned that the river bottom was going to drop and my area would be dry and that was my biggest fear," said Biffle, 51. "With the quality of the maps and GPS detail now you can find places that you could never find before. You know this is right up my alley as I don't like to have others near. I was fortunate no one came in there."

The area was large enough for others to join, and he was confident in being able to boat at least 15 pounds daily. The former race boat driver said he caught at least 50 fish daily throughout the event. He missed a couple big bites Sunday, however remained committed to using his pattern of a black and blue jig and a lizard. He was fishing around a lot of structure that included bushes. "I was able to skip an area if I missed a fish and come back to it later in the day, so it was a key to success," he said. "The perfect

condition would have been sunny all day and without the water dropping about 8 inches overnight, bigger bags would have been caught."

His last BASS victory was 2006 Bassmaster Elite Series event on New York's Oneida Lake, the inaugural season for the Elite Series. Biffle feels that the water temperature affected the bigger fish today. On Saturday, Biffle boated 19-14, the largest of the tournament.

"When I caught them really good yesterday the temperature was up about 68 or 69 degrees, today the highest it got was 64," he said.

Ashley made the biggest upward move of the day moving from 15th to second with a Sunday five-fish limit of 19-11, which was the Sunday's heaviest bag. He was using two different sized jerk baits and a jig throughout the event. It paid off for Ashley, who fell short of capturing his second Bassmaster Elite Series title.

The third-year Elite angler was fishing a variety of edges and bluffs in 6 to 12 feet of water. He was able to get a limit by 8:30 a.m. CT Sunday.

More on [www.neaafishing.com](http://www.neaafishing.com)

## Jerry's Tackle Tips

### Fishing & Rain

Fishing after a rain can help or hurt the fishing. You just have to study the situation and remember a few basics about these conditions. Most of it is common sense. If the water is rising, fish will move shallower, if the water is falling they will move out deeper. And don't forget you might want brighter colored and nosier baits should the water be muddy, whereas more natural or subtle colors can be used in clearer water

### Blake's Knowledge Base

Water temperature in the early spring can be very important to finding bass. The shallows are beginning to warm. Water temperature in one small area varies quite a bit based on depth. Water two feet down could be 10 degrees warmer than water just ten feet below. Bass are not known to be travelers moving from one area of the lake to another. They stay in the same general area they spawn in but their behavior changes from season to season based on the temperature of the water. In the spring when the water is warming up they may be closer to the surface where the water is warmer. In the heat of the summer

## Buzzbaits In The Shallows

Don't fall into the trap of believing that all bass adhere to the same patterns all the time, says longtime pro angler Gary Klein of Weatherford, Texas. Klein says some fish invariably "go against the book," and when they do, they present open-minded anglers with special opportunities to catch them.

For instance, consider casting buzzbaits for bass in February. Many anglers would dismiss this idea without a second thought ¶ too cold! However, Klein says this can be one of the most productive patterns going. "Fishing a buzzbait this time of year is close to my heart," he affirms. "I've got a tremendous amount of confidence in it. I've tested this pattern all around the country, and if conditions are right, it works! Also,

this is a great way to catch some really big fish. If you get a bite on a buzzbait in late winter, chances are it'll be a heavy-weight."

A good example of this pattern's potential came a few seasons back when Klein was fishing in February on Lake Ray Roberts north of Dallas, Texas. Heavy rains had caused flood water to brim over into adjacent cow pastures. Klein remembers, "I was fishing a flat around 3 feet deep. I'd tried flipping in the morning, but I didn't get many bites. Then I changed to a buzzbait in late morning, and in the next 2 1/2 hours I caught 14 bass

over 4 pounds, including one that I weighed on certified scales (then released) that went 12 pounds, 9 ounces. They were tearing that buzzbait up!