

THE BASS FEDERATION



BY DAVID HART

YOUTH ■

High-School Fishing Event a Hit

When Tim Mick asked a room full of high-schoolers to hold up a hand if they had ever fished, he was shocked to see only three or four arms pointing skyward. "When you hear all this talk about how few kids are taking up fishing, that really drove it home for me," he said. "I had no idea."

Mick, youth director for the Virginia chapter of The Bass Federation, is doing his part to change that. It started when he conducted a fishing seminar at Douglas S. Freeman High School near Richmond, Va., last March as a way to introduce kids to the thrill of fishing and its role in conservation.

For seven class periods a day for a period of five days, individual classes took part in Mick's presentations. In all, he spoke to 255 boys and girls. It was sort of a test run for the new national program (see related story on TBF 2), but it was expanded to include more hands-on lessons where students tied knots, cast

rods and spent part of a day fishing at a local park. He also invited speakers, including a state fisheries biologist, a conservation police officer, a lure maker, and a Virginia TBF member who works at the school and collects lures.

"A fisheries biologist brought a shocking boat to the lake to give a demonstration of the work they do, and the kids got to spend some time fishing," Mick said. "A lot of kids actually caught fish, and they were really having a good time."

Despite their initial lack of knowledge about fishing, the students gave the seminar high marks. About 190 ratings sheets were filled out and returned to Mick, with the average score for all the presentations being 8.5 out of a possible 10.

"Even though these kids don't have much exposure to fishing, there is clearly an interest in it," Mick said. "These types of in-school programs can have a positive effect on our sport and our waters. I spoke to two gym teachers who expressed an interest in starting an in-school fishing club."

