

RILEY HEMME - Kaukauna High School 2022 Hall of Fame letter

Being the master angler of the year has been an achievement that i've been chasing for the last 4 years. From watching my best buddy win master angler of the year my sophomore year, to coming up just short last year, I knew that I would have to give everything I had and fish harder than ever to catch as many masters as possible while balancing family, school, sports and work. The fishing started out hot in the spring and early summer and then got very tough in late summer. I was finally able to string some masters together in the fall. Master angler fishing is probably one of the most challenging adventures i've ever done. The commitment and drive was strong, but master fishing is more than that. It took hours of research, networking, talking with other anglers and bait shops, gas money, buying various tackle and equipment for each species, and long grueling days searching for that one bite. Having all that come together and experience landing those fish is what makes it all worth it.

One of my favorite fish would probably be my 30.50" walleye. I've been chasing a walleye of that caliber for years and to see that fish hit the net was something I will never forget. Also watching Brendan crush an absolute giant 14" perch on the same day was just icing on the cake to end an amazing day. There were definitely some lucky fish too as my master gar came on a trip that was 100% designated for pumkinseeds. I was with my buddy Jack. We were fishing down a deep weed line, all of a sudden we started seeing some fish surfacing over 50 feet. After realizing there were too many to be muskies, I realized they had to be gar. So we cut up some bluegill and starting fishing for them and 15 minutes later a 38' gar hit the net. One of the most fun trips I took this year was with my buddies Derek, Owen, and Ryan fishing for smallmouth. We all caught masters. Derek caught the biggest smallmouth I've ever seen at 21.50" and 6.8 pounds, a true giant fish. I also caught many of my masters with my dad and I'm very grateful to have experienced those fish with him. My inland rainbow, my sauger and dogfish, and my first master musky were all caught while fishing with my dad. Up until this year, I had never caught those masters before so being able to experience those with my dad was awesome. My sauger and dogfish trip had to be the most fun and important trip I took all year. At that point in the year, Brendan was tied with me and I needed a big day to take the lead again. That day I ended up with a 22.75" sauger and a 28.50" dogfish. I had almost given up at that point in the year, but catching those fish was definitely a turning point for me. I look forward to sharing my fishing knowledge with my brother and anyone else who wants to learn. All in all, no fish is ever a gimme and looking at each fish brings back special memories to that will never be forgotten.

Being the Master Angler 2022 is truly a dream come true for me. With that being said, I have so many people to thank. First of all, thank you to my parents for supporting me along the way. They encouraged me and I couldn't have gotten here without them. Also, I owe a thank you to

the Papesh's for their help during these 4 years of master fishing. Brendan and I have grown as anglers and have become lifelong friends that started with us playing baseball and fishing together. Going on trips with them and listening to Scott's words of wisdom about master fishing has played a huge role in my success. Thank you to Brendan for pushing me and fishing with me, I know he wanted and deserved this award just as much as I did and he deserves major props. He worked so hard and fished until the very last day and really gave me a run for my money. He should be very proud of his accomplishments over the past 4 years. We broke so many records and always wanted each other to succeed. I believe that was a key to our successful fishing. I'm very proud of the fact that both of our names will forever be on that master angler of the year trophy. This competition has been amazing and made us much better anglers. I think its safe to say, with the completion of our master angler eligibility, we are both excited to just go out and crush some walleye and trout and have a good time. Thank you to all my boys that fished with me and helped me along the way, and to Derek for somehow fitting a 46" Musky into a walleye net... still trying to figure out how you pulled that one off bud. Thank you to Mr. Franzen and the Kaukauna Fishing Team and to everyone and anyone who helped achieve this life long goal of mine. And finally, a big thank you to WIFA and all the sponsors for putting on this competition, which has inspired me to become a better fisherman and I am forever grateful for this experience and opportunity. I hope that I was able to inspire younger anglers and prove to them that you can accomplish anything you set your mind too, and that anything is possible with hard work and determination.

Riley Hemme

1x master angler of the year

3x hall of fame