

Brody's Road to Redemption

Oregonia, OH - 2011 was a rough season for Ohio Elite Series pro, Brent "Brody" Broderick. Coming off a medical exemption in 2010, Broderick failed to cash a single check in eight regular season events in 2011 and finished last in the Toyota Tundra Angler Of the Year standings. On the surface, it didn't look like there was very much to build on for the 2012 season. For Broderick, who dreamed of fishing at the highest level of the sport since he first picked up a rod and reel, 2011 was a lesson in patience and self examination that turned into one of the greatest, albeit painful, learning experiences of his career.

Broderick's first Elite Series lump came back in 2009 before he had ever made a cast as a professional angler. After qualifying for the Elite Series through the 2008 Bassmaster Opens, Broderick went to Texas to hone his sight fishing skills before the first Elite Series tournament of his career on Lake Amistad.

While setting the hook on a 9-pounder, Broderick injured something in his hand. "I peeled the muscle off of the bone plate in the palm of my left hand," he explained. "I knew something was wrong, but I kind of shrugged it off and fished throughout the season. As the year went on, the injury got worse."

Broderick explained that even after his rookie season in 2009, he thought that the injury would heal during the off-season. "I had these major complications with my hand and I was afraid to go to a doctor because I'd never really had any issues before and didn't really like going to the doctor," he admitted. "I thought it was just something that would get better."

Finally, Broderick sought medical attention and eventually ended up at Beacon Sports Orthopedics under the care of Dr. Timothy Kremchek, one of the top orthopedic surgeons in the country and the Medical Director for the Cincinnati Reds.

"He was actually excited to work on a professional fisherman," said Broderick. "It put me at ease that he understood my injury and treated it as a sports injury. It wasn't about just healing - I wanted to be able to fish."

Early in 2010, Broderick began an 8-10 month rehabilitation program to help heal two torn ligaments in his hand and repair the muscle. Even though he admitted that he wasn't fully healed by early 2011, he decided to fish the 2011 season rather than lose his Elite Series status. That's when the road got bumpy for the likable Ohio pro.

"I wouldn't say that I was seeking excuses, but man, the excuses sure would come easy," admitted Broderick.



Mind and Body

"Everybody can grasp at an excuse for why they don't do well, but for me, it all boiled down to the fact that I wasn't having fun. Things weren't going well with the body, and the harmony just wasn't there. I was letting too many critical things overwhelm my head," he said.

The trouble started right out of the gates in Florida, where he was still hesitant to put pressure on his left hand. "When you get a bite and you're setting the hook with doubt in the back of your mind, it's just not going to work out," he said. "These Elite Series guys will crush you if you're not 100% in the game."

The following tournament at Pickwick didn't go much better. "I got so dehydrated that I was in the hospital hooked up to an IV. By the time we got to Toledo

Bend, I'd lost 18 pounds in about two weeks time."

Prior to blast-off on the first day of competition at Toledo Bend, Broderick was passing kidney stones while Trip Weldon was calling out boat numbers. "The staff at B.A.S.S. was trying to get me to go to the hospital, but I remember telling them that there are no sick days in this sport." Broderick spent the majority of the Toledo Bend tournament curled up on the front deck of his boat and weighed just over 10-pounds for the tournament. "There were days that I probably shouldn't have even been out there." He admitted. "Several times I just went out, stuck a fish, and came in early."

Although his health improved during the second half of the season, the damage had been done. "I've never really told any of these stories because it creates an easy excuse for me as to why I didn't do well. The truth is that I was anticipating the next thing that was going to go wrong."

Turning Point

Broderick said that one of the major lessons he learned in 2011 came at the Arkansas River. There was just one thing that I saw happen and I suddenly came to the realization that crazy stuff happens to everybody out here and it's just a part of the game," he explained. "VanDam got two flat tires on the way to the ramp and the man drove on his rims, launched his boat, and whipped almost everybody.

"If that had happened to me, I'd of been so frustrated and I would have dwelled on it the entire day," he continued. "I realized that I had actually become my own worst enemy, and what I created in my



mind was actually coming true. Instead of anticipating the next fish, I was anticipating whether or not my boat was going to sink.

“Guys are always talking about staying positive and thinking the best. When you have those negative thoughts, your body and your mind tend to grab on to those things. There are little voices inside and outside the realm of fishing that start to take a toll.”

Critical Year

With two full Elite Series seasons under his belt (2009 and 2011), Broderick said that 2012 is basically a make or break season. “I feel like I know what it takes to stay in this thing, but this will be my third year on the Elite Series. It’s the year when everything should kind of be like riding a bike and your instincts

take over.”

Fishing out of a boat that he purchased and without a major title sponsor for 2012, Broderick is determined to prove that his struggles over the past several Elite Series seasons were experiences that built character and developed mental strength.

“My dream should not be extinguished because I let self-doubt come into play. Through these experiences, I have learned so much about myself, so much about the sport, and so much about what it really takes to make it out here.

“Hopefully, the sacrifices that I’ve made for numerous years and the struggles that I’ve gone through mean that I have some bigger rewards ahead,” he concluded.