



## INAUGURAL ALL-AMERICAN STRIPED BASS TOURNAMENT FOR HOPE

**On Saturday May 7, 2022 the Newburgh Waterfront was blessed with a group of hardcore fisherman who fished through rain and high winds to raise money for the nonprofit Hope For The Warriors.**

Founded in 2006, Hope For The Warriors has been dedicated to restoring a sense of self, family and hope for post-9/11 veterans, service members and military families. Since its inception, Hope For The Warriors has served over 40,000 through a variety of support programs focused on health and wellness, sports and recreation and transition.

In the first Striped Bass Tournament on the Central Hudson River in years, anglers, businesses near and far, and Individuals joined forces to raise funds to support the 4-Star Charity Navigator rated Hope For The Warriors. Nearly 20 boats were donated to support the event and anglers from as far away as Virginia traveled to support the event that brought a very special air of support the organization that serves Americas warriors and their families. Local business owners joined in the effort by donating services, operational locations, goods, money, and time to make the inaugural event an amazing success, raising \$75,000 for the nonprofit and the military families that it serves.

With an outstanding effort of a group of local and not so local supporters, and the HOPE staff, months of planning returned dividends, and provided a free day of fishing for more than a dozen veterans during the event. While the conditions were difficult at best, fish were caught, and the participating veterans enjoyed a fantastic day on the river. The event began with boats arriving from many local marinas, and some as far away as Long Island as they gathered at Riverfront Marina in Newburgh at 6:00 a.m. Special thanks to Riverfront Marina and their dedicated staff who donated their dock space for the event and worked hard to accommodate the participants. After getting boats settled at the dock, the event moved to Billy Joe's

Rib Works, also located at the Newburgh Waterfront. Billy Joe's did an amazing job, providing breakfast for all entrants, and the supporters of the event. The graciousness of Billy Joe's provided a dry and spacious atmosphere for the registration, kick-off speeches, and some very special guests. Speakers included Retired U.S. Army Colonel and actor Greg Gadson, who told his emotional story about how he survived an IED attack in Iraq and shared some courageous thoughts about overcoming adversity and how Hope For The Warriors helped him and many other servicemen and women that he knows. Also, a guest speaker was U.S. Marine Corps veteran John Rose, who also survived a near life ending IED attack in Iraq. Rose exhibited humor in his story while he explained how HOPE helped him and continues to do so as he moves on in his new life. We also had a very special singing of the National Anthem by renowned signer U.S. Army active-duty Sergeant Major Mary Kay Messenger, who joined the event from West Point. All this took place before the shot-gun start that sent boats in all directions on the River in search for striped bass.

The "catch and release" tournament had prizes for the longest measured striper overall, plus a ladies division and a junior division. There were also sponsored prizes offered for largest striper over 50", which was a \$50,000 prize, and five separate "tagged fish" prizes of \$5,000 each. The event was captured in video by drone, and with photography as well.

To top off the day was an after-fishing BBQ for all participants and supports which included an awards ceremony, a raffle of great gifts, and a live auction. Food was once again supplied by and catered by Billy Joe's with free beer provided by Newburgh Brewing Company. There was also a DJ and yet another moving speech by U.S. Marine Corps John Rose, and a great time had by all. All this culminating in a great supportive effort for Hope For The Warriors and those who they serve.