



Wyoming men on national flyfishing team

Associated Press

SHERIDAN, Wyo. — A Sheridan man has become the latest Wyoming resident to join a national flyfishing team that will compete in the 23rd Annual World Flyfishing Championships and Conservation Symposium.

Sam Paul Mavrakis is the fourth man from the Cowboy State to join the team. Jackson residents Jay Buchner, Ed Opler, Jack Dennis and Jeff Currier are also members, along with three men from Arkansas, Idaho and Massachusetts.

"The teams are made up of five competitive anglers," said Buchner, who has competed on Team USA six times. "The coach will not compete and the captain will not compete."

Dennis is the team's coach while Opler, who has also competed in the past, is the team captain. Kathy Buchner, Jay's wife, fished on the team last year but is not a member this year.

France won the team competition last year, when the U.S. team had its highest finish at 12th place.

"We are looking forward to a higher finish this year," Buchner said.

The World Flyfishing Championship is an amateur competition sanctioned by the International Federation of Sport Flyfishing. Enthusiasts from around the world compete in the catch-and-release tournament, which is hosted by a member country each year.

Next month, Flyfishing Team USA will travel high in the Pyrenees Mountains of northeast Spain, near Jaca. Teams from 24 countries will compete on rivers or streams open to the public over eight days.

"You get four or five days to prefish, but you can't fish on any of the (competition) stretches," Mavrakis said. "It's different than the (Jackson) One-Fly Tournament, where it's all day. They break it into three-hour stretches, three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. You have four rivers you fish, and one day of lake fishing."

A tournament official accompanies each angler to measure his or her catches. Each fish landed and safely released is worth 100 points, and additional points are awarded for length.

Mavrakis' wife, Carol, will accompany him to Spain.

"It is going to be great," Mavrakis said. "It's going to be fun. I'll go and learn a lot and see what the rest of the world does.

"It is going to be tough. I've fished in a lot of places, but never in Europe."