

After a snow-filled winter, my 12-year-old son, Joey, and I decided to take advantage of the spring-like weather on the last day of winter trout fishing. We are fortunate to have 2 trout stocked lakes within 10 minutes of our home.

With the car packed and ready, we went to Rosedale Lake in Pennington. The weather was glorious (72 degrees). Rosedale Park is a beautiful, green-grassed area with a peaceful, wildlife setting. The park is manicured and clean with plenty of space to walk or hike, picnic or just read a book.

It is hard to believe two weeks earlier, the lake was frozen, solid. The grass was covered in a thick, untouched blanket of snow. Now, it was busy with geese, colorful red winged blackbirds and bird-songs filling the air. Anglers were scattered along the shoreline, while others took a nice walk along the ridge around the lake. From the spot where we planned to fish, we could hear children giggling as they went down the playground slide.

The park ranger came by and wished us luck just as we set our lines in the water. As he walked away, Joey and I began to chat about school and home. We were talking about the songbirds in the tree behind us as we watched one of the pole lines go slack. My son leaped to his feet the second he saw it. Slowly, he grabbed the pole, waiting for my signal to set the hook.

“Set and reel!” I said. His pole bent over like a rubber band. As fast as he could reel, the line pulled out. He could not believe how hard it was to reel this fish in. Then, we saw it, a big white belly jumped up in the air! The rainbow strip caught our eye. Both our mouths dropped. “It’s a rainbow. And it’s a big one!” I exclaimed.

Worried about the 6-pound test line breaking, I kept repeating, “Go easy.” I grabbed the net when we saw it, 10 foot from the shoreline. By then, a couple of anglers had run over to see what Joey had landed. They, too, watched the big trout take a jump 30 yards out. Holding the bent pole tight, Joey was exploding with excitement. I could barely get the fish in the net and bring him out of the water.

Who would have thought a simple Shakespeare rod and reel combo, with 6-pound test and Powerbait, would land a fish this size? The lake buzzed with excitement. Some took photos, others just where stood in amazement.

I took the fish to be officially weighed and measured. This rainbow came in at 23.25 inches long, 13.5 inches in girth and a whopping 5 lbs. 11 oz.

Fishing is not just about what is on the other end of the line. It is all about spending time in the outdoors, learning about nature, listening to children’s laughter as they run through the grass and spending time with your kids. But, is sure helps to have a great fish story to tell when you get home.

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