

Walleye Classic fishing derby draws record crowds

By Jeff Ward

The 18th Annual Catch and Release Walleye Classic, organized by the Lake Manitoba Narrows Game and Fish saw a club record for attendance and some large cash prizes paid out to the winners.

The derby took place on Sept. 17 with 195 competitors taking part and even more joining them for dinner. The three winners of the competition were Ian White, who took home the first place prize of \$3,217.50 for his 8.56 pound walleye. Second place went to Jayden Kreller, who took home \$1,930.50 for a 7.52 pound walleye, and Corey Petrash took home third place and a \$1,287 cash prize for his seven-pound fish.

Event organizer Rhonna Rodriguez said that she was thrilled to see so many people come out and enjoy the competition. In addition to the competition, there was also a silent auction during the afternoon. Parkland Yamaha and Twin Motors from Dauphin joined the event and brought trucks, a boat, a quad and a portable shed for attendees to tour.

"This was my first year doing the classic and it was really encouraging to see the support," said Rodriguez.

"We did do some new things this year like online registration, which made it much easier for people to reserve a spot. The event has been going on for 18 years, so it's great to be a part of something like this because it's really a way of life."

Rodriguez said that the weather was fantastic and the fishing conditions were perfect. Participants were able to purchase hot chili on a bun for lunch while they weighed their catch before heading back out onto the water for the afternoon.

One of the other changes to the event was a designated staging area, and Rodriguez said that the change was well received by fishers. There were also two secret weights valued at \$300 and \$200. Jon Cooley won \$300 and Carlson Murdock won \$200.

Rodriguez said that for her first time being a part of the event, things went really well and she's looking forward to improving her numbers next year. She said that the help from the board of directors and from volunteers helped make the event a success, adding that she couldn't have done it without them.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY JANICE BELL

Dennis Giesbrecht gets ready to weigh a walleye caught by Sun Choi during the 18th Annual Catch and Release Walleye Classic.



The winner of the \$300 four-pound hidden weight was Jon Cooley, left, with a 3.88 pound walleye with Dennis Giesbrecht.



The winner of the \$200 three-pound hidden weight was Carlson Murdock, left, with a 2.90 pound walleye.



Ian White, right, won \$3,217.50 for his 8.56 pound master walleye. He is pictured with LMNGF fish chair Dennis Giesbrecht.



Jayden Kreller, left, received \$1,930.50 for his 7.52 pound walleye. Congratulating Kreller is communications chair Rhonna Rodriguez.



Corey Petrash won \$1,287 for his seven-pound walleye.