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Fish catch break at soggy derby

By DONAL O'CONNOR STAFF REPORTER
Posted 6 hours ago

With noticeably fewer anglers turning up for Saturday's Optimist Trout Derby, fishing should be good in Victoria Lake for the next couple of weeks.

Lots of kids, parents and grandparents braved cold, rainy weather early Saturday to cast a line, but the riverbanks weren't as crowded as usual for the annual spring event.

As well, anglers who weren't positioned at the extreme south end of the lake at the R. Thomas Orr Dam seemed not to be having much luck.

"They started biting around 8 a.m. and then they stopped," said Marilyn Dale, who was with her husband Bill and grandchildren Tyler, 9, and Dakota Leung, 7.

Still, the family seemed to be having lots of fun.

They began fishing at 6:30 a.m. after the Dales, who live in Milverton, picked up the kids as early as 6 a.m.

"I'm in charge of untangling lines and putting the bait on," said Bill Dale.

Slader Straiko, 5, was out for the first time fishing with his dad.

They started around 7:30 a.m. but had nothing to show for their efforts two hours or so later.

Downriver at the dam, however, there was evidence of success.

Tyler Anderson, 10, had pulled in a few, one of them estimated by his dad Randy Anderson at 1.5 to 2 pounds.

Nearby a group of older fishers from Sebringville and Kitchener, who had showed up early with a tent for the rain, had caught five trout.

"It's been cold and wet too," said Optimist Club of Stratford president Brian Pearson, who was weighing catches at the Veterans Dr. bandshell. "It's hard to get excited about the weather."

Pearson said it probably didn't help that the derby this year -- always on the forth Saturday of April -- fell on the Easter weekend. "It's going to be pretty good fishing down here for the next few weeks," he predicted. Anglers 16 and under don't need a fishing licence, said Pearson.

The sky cleared by about 10:30 a.m. when promised warm weather began drifting in to at least wind up the 26th annual Optimist fishing derby with a springtime feel.

Picking up the Robert (Bob) Nichols Memorial Trophy for the biggest fish was Brad Lang, 16, of Stratford. who pulled in a trout weighing 3 pounds 4.5 ounces.

Runners-up for the biggest catch were Tim Lagrainge, 13, of Stratford, and six-year-old Milana Kerekes of Embro.



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A number of anglers went home with new fishing rods following hourly draws of names from all who registered for the derby.

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