

Island Lake Ice Fishing Derby returns

By Brian Lockhart

Some people like to fish on a warm summer day.

Others prefer the challenge of trekking over a frozen lake, drilling a hole in the ice, and staying warm by taking shelter in a fishing hut. The more easy-going ice fisherman might enjoy simply sitting in a lawn chair and relaxing in the open air while they drop their line.

No matter how you fish, there's a great opportunity to enjoy the sport at the 14th annual Island Lake Ice Fishing Derby. The event is running from February 10 to 19 with some great prizes for those who are lucky enough to reel in the big ones.

The Island Lake Ice Fishing Derby is held in partnership with Credit Valley Conservation, Credit Valley Conservation Foundation, and the Friends of Island Lake.

Participants can compete for up to \$2,500 in cash prizes in the adult category, including big catch prizes for the top three Northern Pike, and the largest Yellow Perch and Black Crappie.

Youth prizes are available from the top three longest fish of any species.

Participants who register before tomorrow (February 9), at 12 noon, are also eligible for the early bird prize ? an individual Credit Valley Parks Pass.

A valid Ontario Fishing License is required to take part in the derby. Part of the derby occurs during Ontario Family Fishing Weekend, from February 17 to 19. A fishing license is not required on those days.

If you are new to the sport, ice rod and ice hut rentals are available. Minnows will also be available at the Conservation Area rental shop.

As this is an ice fishing derby, there must be enough ice on the lake to ensure a safe event. If the weather does not cooperate and the ice becomes unsafe for people to go on to fish, there will be an announcement made by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC).

?We're monitoring the weather closely,? explained Yasmine Slater, Superintendent of Conservation Parks with CVC. ?We will continue to share daily updates on our website's park advisories page. If winter conditions are not favourable, we might postpone or cancel the derby.?

Keep updated by visiting the CVC website prior to the start of the derby.

If you want to be part of the derby, you can register online or by phone until February 18. Registration will also be available at Island Lake's Rental Shop until noon on February 19.