



ANGLERS YOUNG AND OLD crowded banks of Crawford's Lake near Campbellville all day Saturday, when the Halton Sportsmen's Association sponsored a one-day bass derby as part of Conservation Week. About 400 showed up to fish and prizes were distributed to winners in senior and junior age classes. No record sized bass were taken but a number of small ones were caught. This group found a boathouse dock the ideal spot to cast their lures and worms.—(Staff Photo)



THE BIG BASS DERBY held at Crawford's Lake on Saturday saw two Toronto brothers take home prizes. John MacDonald, nine, displays his new pole at left which he received for first prize in the junior contest while Halton Sportsmen's Association president Paul Coulson congratulates Michael MacDonald, 14, who took second prize in the senior division and won a new reel.—(Staff Photo)



IT'S A WHOPPER in the eyes of a young boy, although it wasn't a prize winner at the bass fishing derby Saturday. Billy Black came from Burlington to enter the derby and was quite satisfied with his 5 1/2 ounce bass.—(Staff Photo)

Anxious anglers invade fabled Crawford's Lake

By Roy Downs
 Hundreds of anglers who have dreamed for years of hauling monstrous bass from the hitherto forbidden waters of Crawford's Lake near Campbellville had their dream come true on Saturday. Well... partly true anyway. The lake was opened to fishermen for one day only, for a bass derby sponsored by the Halton Sportsmen's Association. Until this year the lake has been privately owned by the Mahon family but Halton Region Conservation Authority recently purchased the property to preserve it.

For most of the fishermen, it was a disappointing day. After years of itching to test its waters with a shiny lure or gob of worms, most anglers found the bass either not biting or too small to be of any consequence. There are plenty of big ones in the lake—some six-pounders were spotted there this spring during the spawning season and a few lunkers were seen swimming past lure during Saturday's derby.

But nobody caught one. Those who had dreamed of fishing the forbidden waters had to settle for small ones, which seemed to be biting in quantity. Many got their limit, and their thrills, with six to 10 inch fighters, a lot of which were thrown back in hopes of making up the limit with better sized ones. But the big ones weren't biting. Biggest reported tipped the scales at 15 ounces.

Sportsmen's Association president Paul Coulson and his executive were extremely satisfied with the derby. There were no accidents, nobody fell into the deep lake, and most of the anglers had a grand time dangling their lines from rock bluffs overhanging the water or traipsing through swamps to get out to log-infested edges. And a lot of the fishermen were fisherWOMEN or children.

Some came armed with \$500 worth of gear, contrasting directly with the young lads brandishing tree branches, a length of string and a rusty old hook. Oddly enough, just as many bass were caught on the simple equipment as on the expensive stuff.

Sportsmen's Association officials attempted to count the number of bass that were caught, but gave up when many anglers walked out right past the registry booth. Although 247 did register in advance of fishing, many didn't even bother to register. Total attendance was well over 400.

Mr. Coulson suggested at least 50 small bass were caught. Other unofficial estimates range as high as 100.

"We proved that Crawford's Lake is no fishermen's Utopia," smiled Halton Region Conservation Authority's resources manager Dave Murray, as he reviewed the statistics. "Maybe now they'll leave the

lake alone and quit trying to poach the fish."

The Authority has had to patrol the property and erect "no fishing" signs since the Mahons turned over the lake earlier this year. Poachers were numerous and recent publicity about the Authority buying the land led many to believe that if it was Conservation property, it should be open to fishing.

Crawford's Lake has also been stocked with quite a few Rainbow Trout in recent years. The Authority put some trout in there this spring, too.

Largest fish caught Saturday turned out to be a trout, not a bass. Cindy MacDonald, a young girl from Guelph hooked a big Speckle around noon hour and it weighed in at one pound, 15 ounces and measured 16 inches in length. Unfortunately, there wasn't a prize for the biggest trout—just bass.

Senior age group prize winners were Bill Stark, 18, of 1086 Joan Dr., Burlington with a 15 ounce bass, Michael MacDonald, 14, of 103 O'Hara Ave., Toronto, with a 9 1/2 ounce, and William Baudler, 16, of 21 Elizabeth St., Milton who hooked one 6 1/4 ounces. Officials noted they were all young men—the more mature adults either failed to report their catches or skulked off home with more than their limit of six.

In the junior division John MacDonald, 9, of 103 O'Hara Ave., Toronto (brother of Michael who placed second in the senior division) came first with an eight ounce bass. Perry Caputo of 369 Pearl St., Milton aged 11, was the second prize winner with a 7 1/2 ounce and third prize went to 13-year-old Steve MacDonald (no relation)

of 45 Floresta Ct., Ancaster with a seven ounce.

All won fishing poles and reels, purchased by the Halton Sportsmen's Association.

The H.S.A. ladies auxiliary ran a refreshment stand through the day, selling soft drinks and sandwiches to hungry and thirsty fishermen. The organization kept two patrol boats in the water all day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to keep an eye on anglers in case anyone fell in. They also did a roarin' business selling worms to those who came unprepared.

The anglers, some of whom beat the nine o'clock starting time and were there as early as 7 a.m. lined the banks and by noon hour it was practically impossible to find a place to stand. At one point a floating dock threatened to dump a load of anxious anglers in the drink, as about 20 children and adults proved too much for its waterlogged supports. It sank almost waist-deep in the water before half the fishermen had scrambled to shore.

Department of Lands and Forests officers also patrolled the derby, checking on limits and demanding to see anglers' licences.



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