

Sun shines on Champion of Champions pow wow weekend

By Donna Duric
Writer

It was a milestone year this past weekend as thousands came to enjoy the 35th annual Champion of Champions Powwow at Six Nations' Chiefswood Park.

There was a perfect mix of sun and cloud on Saturday as the Grand Entry made its way into the dancing arena, led by the eagle staff carrier and Six Nations Veterans' Association.

Around 250 dancers of all ages and styles wowed spectators with their beautiful regalia, from the jingle dress dancers to the elaborately-outfitted male fancy dancers, as they gracefully sauntered into the dancing arena.

And of course, the tiny tots melted everyone's hearts, looking adorable in their regalia as they regarded

the crowd with huge eyes, some dancing competitively for the first time.

People from all walks of life joined in an intertribal dance before competitive dancing got underway.

Over \$50,000 in prize money was handed out this year and over 100 booths showcasing crafts and community organizations wound their way through the forested canopy at Chiefswood Park.

Charlene Bomberry, chair of the Six Nations Powwow Committee, said the powwow is one of the most popular in North America, attendance-wise. "Our parking lots are full," she said Saturday afternoon as the competition portion of the powwow got underway. "Some of the traditional powwows get more dancers

than we do, in the west and in the states. They're huge." Bomberry attributes the event's success to the volunteers who work all year long to make the event possible.

"We've got a routine," she said. "Everybody knows their job and what's got to be done and what goes where. It's a lot of work but it's also a lot of fun. People enjoy it. We get tired but it's nice to see all our friends that come to dance and sing. I think we bring a lot to the community, economy-wise. A lot of the businesses are doing extra business this weekend."

The moderate weather played a role in the weekend's success, too, said Bomberry. "The weather is great this year. It's not too hot, not too cool - it's comfy."



The crowd beamed when the youngest of dancers took to the arena during the Champion of Champions Powwow this past weekend. (Photo by Donna Duric)