

Opinion/Letters

Changing the Rules for the better


**NORTHERN
INSIGHTS**

by Larry Sanders



Sunday July 12, 1992. Mark that date down in your diary. Some decade from now, your grandson or great-granddaughter will ask if you were there the day they started to rewrite the rules for living in Northern Ontario. It happened in Rosspport. Just in case you weren't there, here's the story.

The Rosspport Fish Derby isn't just ANY fish derby. It's the great-granddaddy of ALL fish derbies. This year happened to be the 55th Annual - making Rosspport the longest-running fresh water fish derby in North America. Every year since 1937, hundreds of people descend on the tiny hamlet, transforming it into a summer carnival, with everyone on the north shore of Lake Superior coming together to celebrate being a northerner.

Problem with the derby

The problem with this fish derby and the dozens of others that have sprung up like it, is that, in the celebration, thousands of breeding-age lake trout fish are killed. Until now, the way the fish derby rules stand, ANY fish caught becomes an entry for the draw - one fish caught gives you one ticket in the drum. The "big fish" prizes usually go to the really avid fishermen - the ones with the high-tech depth sounders and down-riggers. This year, Bruce Hynnes of Thunder Bay won the top prize - \$2,000 in cash - with a lake trout of 19 pounds 4 ounces.

But what about all the smaller fish - the ones that didn't win a "big fish" prize - particularly lake trout between 9 and 12 pounds? If you watch MNR inspectors cut these fish open at the tables behind the weigh-in stand, you'll see these fish contain thousands of eggs. Those are the "breeders". They're too fatty to eat, so they end up as compost in a garden or trash in a landfill site.

The Rosspport Fish Derby Committee has decided to do something about the problem, after a year of thinking about it. Derby Committee Chairperson Bill Collinson announced from the podium that next year, the rules would be different.

"We are announcing a fish slot size for our lake trout category," he said. "By doing so, the best breed stock sizes will be excluded from entry. We challenge other fish derbies to follow our lead." Exactly what the "slot size"

should be will be determined by consultation with MNR fish biologists, and announced by the end of August this year.

So at the Derby NEXT YEAR in Rosspport, you won't be able to enter a "breeding weight" lake trout. If you want to go after the "big fish" prizes, and bring in some lake trout OVER a certain weight (likely over 15 pounds - a size that's too old to be a breeder), fine. But the Derby won't accept as an entry fish in the breeding size (likely 8 to 15 pounds).

Dave Speer, the Rosspport Fish Derby Committee member whose been pushing for the rule change, is overjoyed to see his lobbying efforts pay off. "The smaller fish," he says, "they're the eaters. Those are the ones that the people are going to bring and enter but they're the ones they're also going to take home and eat. The problem that we're having is that the (breeding weight) size - those are the ones people CAN'T eat - they're just too fatty. They're good breeders, but they're not good eaters. There's no sense bringing (the breeder weight size) to the derby and then putting them in the dump or into the garden. Those fish should go back into the water."

Release breeding weight fish

Bruce Hynnes, who took home the \$2,000 first prize, agrees with the change. "I like that idea," he says. "Save the breeding fish and so long as they're not hurt bad, they'll be able to put them back. If the hook is down deep in the throat then you've got a problem. As long as you catch them in the jaw, it's all right, if you pull the hook out easy and don't take off any of its natural slime off and slide it back in the water."

But the fisherman wearing the biggest grin at the Derby this particular Sunday was Ray Kenney, who has lived in Rosspport nearly all of his 86 years. He was one of the organizers of the first Derby, back in 1937. "I'm glad to see they're taking steps that our fish are being preserved so [the Derby] will last for a long, long time. If we do not preserve what we have, we will not have anything for future generations."

It won't be easy changing the rules for fish derbies. There will have to be concerted public education campaigns on the proper techniques for catching and releasing lake trout, so they live to breed. The challenge Rosspport has thrown out to all other fish derbies is to recognize that everything we do in life has some impact on the environment. Thus, we should all learn to act in such a way that the ability of future generations of northerners to also enjoy our natural heritage won't be compromised. Rethinking the rules for fish derbies is a great place to start.

Strongest division in boxing

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ments as they compete to bring honour to our country," said Cadieux, adding that the athletes give Canada a sense of pride.

The opening ceremonies were held on Saturday, July 25, and will run until closing ceremonies on August 9.

Dominic started competing in 1983 and joined the National

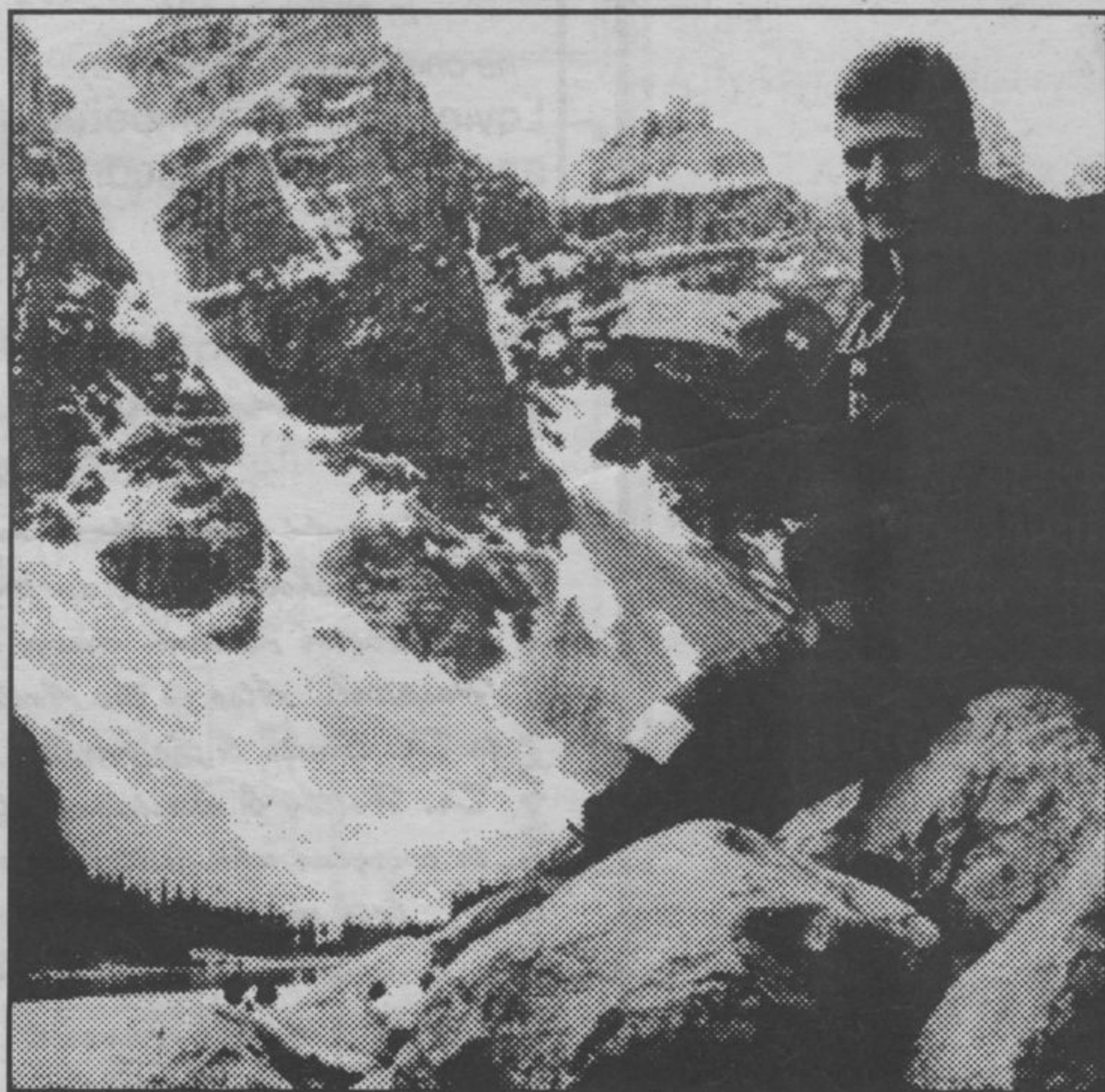
Team in 1989. He has been training in Toronto under Adrian Tendorescu, and is one of Canada's strongest competitors, having won the Canadian National Championship three times from 1990-1992.

Dominic, competing in the 48

kg light-flyweight category, has his parents travelling to Spain to cheer him on.

According to his brother Jerry, Dominic is in the strongest category. There are 32 fighters in the light fly-weight division, whereas most

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Relaxing at Lake Louise before heading to the 1992 summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain

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Due to limited parking at the airport, everyone is asked to come to the Marathon Plaza Mall or the Marathon Centre Mall where a bus shuttle service will be departing for the airport every 10 minutes, starting at 5:00 p.m. (PLEASE USE THIS SERVICE).

Tickets available at:

Terrace Bay Rec Complex and Town Police Service
Schrelber Rec Complex
Rosspport - Serendipity Gardens

Community calendar

•Alcoholics Anonymous meets each Monday and Thursday evenings at 8 pm at the Community Church in Terrace Bay.

•The Catholic Women's League meets every second Monday of the month in the basement of St. Martin Church at 8 pm.

•The Chimo Club holds its regular meeting every third Friday of the month.

•The Disability Action Group meets the third Thursday of each month