

**OLD AGE & TREACHERY TO DOMINATE NEXT YEAR'S
ICE FISHING COMPETITION
3/9/99**

The first Magic Mountain Fishin' Shanty & Walt's Diner Ice Fishing Derby is history and from my viewpoint, it was a success.

Walt Parent planned and organized the derby to provide yet one more recreational resource for the area. I talked with Walt about the event and other thoughts he might have.

He plans to make it an annual event and to involve more sponsors in the future. He is open to suggestions from this year's participants or anyone who has any ideas.

I normally am not a proponent of most organized forms of sport, especially not one as dear to my heart as fishing. I have always pitted my hunting and fishing skills against the quarry and not with fellow sportsmen. I formed my opinions years ago when bass tournaments became popular. Since participating in this derby, however, I have altered my opinion somewhat.

I was invited by one of our local leading lights of the fishing fraternity to be "on my team" and my ego did the rest. Ricky Hunkins headed his team, which included Stanley Gemza and me.

My faith was rewarded when Rick posted the largest fish in the tiger muskie class. I most modestly admit to coaching Ricky in his monumental fight with the monster.

My participation in the event was doubly rewarding for my state of mind and physical well being. I have become an exceedingly dull boy of late with my work being a substitute for recreation. I found my anticipation building as I prepared for the big day.

I was an avid fisherman when I was growing up in Oswego County environs. Oneida Lake was the popular location and walleyed pike and yellow perch were our catch.

You were allowed 15 tip-ups and the limit was 25 pike with no limit on perch. You were allowed to leave your tip-ups in overnight and I once posted 14 hangers on them the next day. You had an added bonus of the two finest eating freshwater fish available.

The fishing we experienced in the derby was altogether a different type of fishing than I had known. My gear and lack of experience quickly proved it. I did, however, catch three northern pike and one tiger muskie in spite of my fumbblings.

The real fun was in the camaraderie of our crew and the constant anticipation of landing the winner. Rick and Stanley were already on the lake by the time I got there at 6 a.m. By 7 a.m. the lake was a beehive of activity as most of the local highway crew set up shop. The sound of the power augers and snowmobiles roused everyone in the surrounding camps who was not already up.

Rick and Stan had their snowmobiles and used them to respond quickly to flags and tending their tip-ups. They kept up a steady banter with each other as well as with many of the other locals.

Stanley enjoys a reputation as a constant agitator, enough so that when I signed in with Walt and he learned who I would be fishing with he declared I would be back demanding a refund.

There were 76 entries with 64 adults and 10 youngsters under 10. Many fish were caught and everyone experienced some success.

Walt wanted me to mention the cooperation of the shoreline camp owners and to thank them on behalf of everyone.

To make a long story short, I will be better prepared and a force to be contended with next year. Old age and treachery will outdo youth and skill anytime. The last word from Walt was that he was extremely sorry Roger Perkins could not find time to participate. He was busy repairing air conditioners.