

'Fowl' weather dampens duck race

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For the onlookers watching the thousands of rubber ducks making their way through the Port Dalhousie harbour, it was a race and one which was made that much more interesting for those who purchased one.

But for the ducks themselves, it was a race to freedom.

After being dumped out of a large container suspended by a crane, the ducks were carried by the wind and current towards a boom midway down the harbour where there was a small opening for the winning ducks to pass through.

But more ducks than the few which squeezed through the opening made it to the other side. With the assistance of the wind and fast moving water, hundreds of rubber racers were pushed under the floating barrier, leaving volunteer catchers on five boats scrambling with their nets to catch them before they reached the open lake.

Sunday afternoon saw the return of the annual Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines Duck Race after a one-year absence. The ducks sold for \$5 apiece, with the proceeds going to Community Care of St. Catharines and Thorold.

Race coordinator Peter Brown said the wet weather kept the crowds, who usually pack both sides of the harbour and, more importantly, purchase last-minute tickets for ducks, away.

In all, organizers raise \$28,500, which was a little less than in previous years but allows the Kiwanis to make their \$25,000 commitment to Community Care.

"We did not badly considering the day of the race was wet," he said.

But for those who did show up, it was an exciting race. Volunteer Brian Hider, who was standing on the shore working up the crowd with a megaphone, said the race dynamics are different every year.

"You may think the duck in the lead is the one that's going to win, but not necessarily," he said, explaining the current can push the ducks to either side and it may be one in the middle that squeezes first through the opening.

"You never know how it's going to happen," he said.



'Fowl' weather dampens duck race. After being lifted by a crane, the thousands of rubber ducks are dropped into the harbour.

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