



Perris Press Release

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Kids and Parents Reel in a Good Time at Annual Fishing Derby

A fishing derby for children and teen-agers drew anglers from the committed to the casual.

About 300 fishing enthusiasts under the age of 15 took part in the 31st Annual Tommy Thomas Kids Fishing Derby at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, all trying to land rainbow trout, blue-gill and bass for prizes and prestige. The annual derby is named after a long-time park volunteer who wanted to teach children the joy of fishing.

Saturday dawned sunny and warm and the most hard-core fishing folks had their poles in the water by 7 a.m. Park Ranger T.W. Irace took the time to chat with many young anglers, explain the proper way to hook bait and handed out new gear to those who needed it.

"This event is all about kids and parents spending time together," Irace said. "It's fun to talk to the kids and have them tell their stories about how they their fish."

Ruby Villa, 7, and her dad, Joe Villa, were eager to talk about their day on the lake. By the time the fishing derby was two hours old, Ruby landed two fish. As she talked about hooking her first catch, the second took the bait from her fishing pole and landed in her net.

"It was fighting pretty good," said Ruby as she displayed the two-pound fish that she reeled in by herself. "It's heavy!" Her dad beamed at Ruby's fishing prowess.

"It's great to be here, to spend time with my daughter and be out of the house," he said.

Buddies David Nuno, Sebastian Cuevas and J.J. Garcia of Perris landed several fish early in the derby. J.J.'s dad, Joel Garcia, kept an eye on his young charges.

"The fishing is excellent," he said. "'We've had a really great day."

Haley Wynn came to the fishing derby with her grandfather, Jerry Reyes. Granddad's motto: "A bad day of fishing beats a good day at work."

"It's nice to take time with the children and grandchildren," Reyes said. "It makes memories for them. It's something they will always remember."

Haley said she loves to fish.

"It's fun when you catch that first fish," she said. "It's exciting."

Xiong Vang and his family have been coming to the fishing derby for three years. His party included his son, nephew and brother.

"We like to have fun under the sun," Vang said. "It's nice to watch the kids play in the water and fish. If they catch fish, I love it. If they don't, we will still have fun."



Xiong Vang shows his nephew, Josh Vang, 6, the proper way to cast a fishing line.

While other youthful anglers concentrated on making sure their bait was in good order or kept a sharp eye on the line for any fish strikes, Rachel Guerrero, 13, passed the time differently while waiting for a nibble: she read a book on her kindle.

"I'm multi-tasking," she said, looking up from reading "The Emerald Atlas."

Mom Stephanie Guerrero, dad Lee Guerrero and younger sister, Aubri, 10, said the day of fishing at Lake Perris made the weekend something special.

"It's wonderful to talk to each other while we enjoy life in this beautiful location," Stephanie Guerrero said.



Ruby Villa, 7, shows off one of the fish she reeled in at the fishing derby at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area. She is flanked by her dad, Joe Villa, and Park Ranger T.W. Irace.



Buddies David Nuno, Sebastian Cuevas and J.J. Garcia display their basket of fish. The trio live in Perris.



Rachel Guerrero, 13, reads on her Kindle while angling.