

Champion team wins second annual event

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Despite Saturday's wintery conditions, the second annual catfish tournament sponsored by the Southwest Nebraska Izaak Walton League went on as scheduled.

While organizers believe the weather kept some fishermen away, 12 two-person teams from Nebraska, Colorado and South Dakota fought the conditions and participated anyway.

And, at mid-afternoon when the contest concluded, the teams checked in 20 catfish totaling more than 50 pounds, according to Tom Elder, Ike's secretary/treasurer.

The team of Brandon Beard and Charlie Beard, both of Champion, edged out the second place team for top honors, checking in a total of 14 lbs. 4 ozs. of catfish. They cashed in, winning the \$450 first place prize.

Second place went to the team of James Moseley, Elwood, and Cory Adams, Hot Springs, S.D., who caught 14 lbs. 2 ozs. and won \$270.

The third place team came from Imperial, Mark Spady and Butch Raile, who caught 13 lbs. 5 ozs. They won the \$180 third place prize.

The Spady/Raile team also won the prize for the largest fish caught in the contest at 7 lbs., and won an additional \$240.

While they didn't win a prize, the second largest catfish caught in the contest was a 5 lb. 13 oz. specimen bagged by Mason Fanning and Brett Tropf, Elder said.

Teams launched into the waters at Enders Lake at 7 a.m., and some even stayed out until the 3 p.m. check-in time. However, Elder noted it didn't start snowing at the lake until about 1:30 p.m., several hours after the snow hit Imperial.

This year, the rules allowed bank fishing, and several teams opted for that, he noted, including the winning team.

Teams could check in only five fish total and they had to be 14 inches or longer, according to the rules.

Elder said they were hoping for 16 to 18 teams to compete this year, but realized the weather was going to hamper attendance.

Last year's winning team from Wyoming had registered for this year's event, but couldn't make it because of the hazardous travel.

Elder said he knew of several other Imperial teams who were waiting to register until Friday, and then decided not to because of the forecasts.

Since the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission issued a special permit for Saturday's fishing tournament, Elder said they decided to go ahead with it despite the conditions.

You just never know about the weather, Elder noted. At last year's first annual tournament, the weather was ideal.

A calcutta was also held Friday night at the Imperial Eagles Club.

Members of the tournament planning committee were PJ Pajerski, Jerry Pajerski and Brandon Beard.

The Ike's organization is making plans for the third annual tournament next year on the first weekend in April.