



It's all happening May 23 - 25!

EMO

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CLASSIC

The Original Six!



The joy of fishing in the Emo Walleye Classic never gets old for these six gentlemen. Jim Steele, left, Dennis Smith, Frank Grunewald, Frank McWhinnie, Doug McBride, and Steve Ballan all have fished every EWC tournament since its inception 18 years ago.



Team #1, Oliver Gibbins and Les Morrison are pictured waiting for their flight to take off in last year's Emo Walleye Classic. They defended their 2017 win with a haul of 19.53 pounds to claim their second-straight title.



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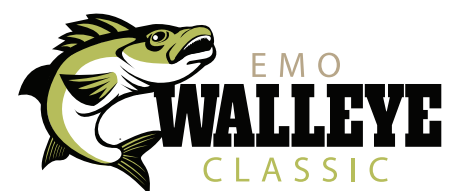
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Defending champs eyeing 'three-peat'

By Jamie Mountain
Staff writer
jmountain@fortfrances.com

Winning the Emo Walleye Classic even just once is a tough challenge.

Twice in a row? The degree of difficulty rises.

But for Oliver Gibbins and Les Morrison, their sights are set on an unthinkable third-straight crown as they head into the 18th-annual tournament that runs tomorrow through Saturday.

"It was quite thrilling," Gibbins, a Morson native, said about winning back-to-back titles at the EWC with Baudette's Morrison.

"We were pretty pumped that we did it two years in a row, we didn't expect that," he conceded.

It didn't take long for the defending champs to let the rest of the competition know they were going to be in for a tough weekend at last year's tourney.

Gibbins and Morrison wowed the crowd with a Day 1 total of 11.63 pounds and never looked back as they claimed the EWC title for the second-straight year.

The duo took home the \$7,500 winners' cheque after topping the 31-boat field with a two-day total of 19.53 pounds, which was 8.31 pounds more than the runner-up team of Dan and Josh Pollard (11.22).

It also was the second-straight year the Pollards fin-

ished second to Morrison and Gibbins, with the latter claiming the 2017 tourney with a total of 22.03 pounds compared to their 11.22 total.

Morrison and Gibbins claimed the first-flight big catch prize both days last year, adding a Day 2 total of 7.90 pounds to the 11.63 they had tallied on Day 1.

They brought the house down on Day 1 with a 6.09-pound lunger that ended up as the biggest fish of the day.

Morrison and Gibbins also nearly had the biggest catch on Day 2 but their 4.09-pounder was just .10 of a pound shy of Bryan Bonot and Callum McCormick's catch.

Heading into tomorrow, Gibbins noted that the pair's pre-fishing plans this year will be much the same as it has been in years past.

"I think we're gonna go out Saturday and fish the fish derby in Stratton, they have the opener every year," Gibbins told the Times last week.

"And that's just kind of like a fun time. You go and fish that and then we kind of get an idea of what's happening on the river the week before [the tourney] and then we'll pre-fish maybe a day or two before the tournament."

"We'll probably do that kids' derby [Kids Gone Fishing] through this year," he revealed.

"We're gonna participate in that. Go out for a couple hours,



2017 and 2018 Emo Walleye Champs!

take the kids out fishing there and we'll be pre-fishing at the same time. We'll pre-fish some local [fishing] holes in the area, see how they are and take a kid fishing," he added.

"Take a kid who may have not ever been fishing before, hopefully put them on a fish or two."

In terms of strategy for this year's tourney, Gibbins noted that he and Morrison would

likely implement the same one they have used for their success in past years.

"We always know where we're gonna go, so we'll just pre-fish the area the day before and hopefully if that's going good, we'll just go check it out—and even if we don't catch anything—we'll probably still go to our area there and just scope it out," he noted.

"And if there [isn't any- thing], we'll just start scrambling around and do our usual thing—get in panic mode and start running and gunning."

A new rule change to this year's tourney will see the west-end boundary for the tournament be the mouth of the river at Lake of the Woods to the Fort Frances dam.

This change will allow teams to fish the entire Rainy River

system excluding all rivers and streams flowing into or out of the Rainy River and excluding the American side of the river.

"We'll pre-fish there [near the west-end] the day before the tournament, I think," said Gibbins.

"We'll probably head down there and see what it's like. Usually we're just stuck to our area but now you got all that boundary, so we'll probably head down that way for pre-fishing and if it doesn't work out, we'll just keep scrambling around."

Gibbins noted that he and Morrison are feeling the pressure ahead of this year's tourney as being the two-time defending champs, but that they'll do their best to rise above any challenges that pressure brings.

"There's definitely pressure there all the time, but we'll just go out and fish like we normally do," he noted.

As for what he and Morrison enjoy most about competing in the EWC, Gibbins said that they like the central location of the tourney.

"I like the location. It's a great area; it's right smack dab in the middle of Rainy River way. You can fish east or west and basically cover the whole river now," he noted.

"It's a perfect spot, you know. Perfect spot if you want to go east or west and like I said, it's smack dab right in the middle of the river system."

"That and I love going to the arena," he enthused.

"That's another good thing. I like the way they weigh our fish and it's always a good time."

Plenty in store for EWC this year

By Jamie Mountain
Staff writer
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There will be plenty of events in store, and no shortage of fun, for all who plan to attend the 18th-annual Emo Walleye Classic this week.

The tourney officially kicks off tomorrow with the "Kids Gone Fishing" event from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

The event is open to all students in Grades 5-8, who will be paired up with anglers that are fishing in the tournament.

"We have approximately 10 kids fishing in the 'Kids Gone Fishing' this year, that's what we were hoping for," said EWC director of marketing and nighttime entertainment Leeann Galusha.

"Just seeing kids enjoying the outdoors is always a good thing. They get to spend time with well known local fishermen who may (or may not) tell them their secret spots," she chuckled.

"It's a good thing because maybe it'll get them excited for when they're old enough to be able to fish in this tournament themselves."

The angler boat parade, which was brought back last year after a one-year hiatus, will follow at 5:30 p.m.

The lineup from the west end of town will be at 5 p.m., with the parade to start at 5:30.

Volunteer check-in then will take place at the Emo/La Vallee Arena from 6:30-8 p.m., with the reading of the tournament rules also happening from 7-7:30 p.m.

Galusha said that the tournament could use some extra hands.

"We are still in need of volunteers for the penny table, clean-up, and to bartend," she remarked.

"If anyone is willing to donate just a few hours, we could always find a spot for you!"

The competition itself gets started on Friday with the Day 1 boat launch at 8 a.m., with a second flight launching at 8:30.

The Day 2 launches will go at the same times, with weigh-ins starting at 4:30 p.m. on Day 1 and then at 4 on Day 2.

Events not on the water include a fish fry hosted by the Emo Legion on Friday evening from 5-7 p.m.

Cost is \$18/plate for adults, \$6 for kids aged 6-12, and free for those five-and-under.

The tournament champions' trophy presentation will take place at 6:30 p.m., with the Emo Legion putting on a prime rib dinner from 5-7 p.m.

It will be served by Emo Legion members and costs \$25 a person.

DJ Party Rock—talented local DJ Melanie Williams—then will take the stage to close out the tourney beginning at 9 p.m.

The concert is age of majority and tickets can be purchased at the door for \$10.

Another popular attraction throughout the tournament will be the penny table, featuring many donations from area merchants.



Above, Team 21, Taylor Harbort and Trapper Bahr, headed out with their flight in last year's tournament. The pair finished in eighth place.

Below, with coffees in hand, Team #24, Shirley McQuaker and Rylan McQuaker wait for their flight to leave.



Get your "Groove On" at the Emo La Vallee Arena Saturday, May 25th 9:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. With a talented local DJ \$10 admission at the door / Age of Majority

EMO DRUGS Welcomes you to attend the 18th Anniversary of the Emo Walleye Classic May 23rd 24th & 25th Proud Gold Sponsor of the 2019 Emo Walleye Classic. Good luck to all anglers & organizers!

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Proud sponsor of the Emo Walleye Classic Congratulations on a job well done to all volunteers and board members. Best of luck to all anglers!

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Darren Blattner Enterprises is announcing a change in ownership of its Propeller and Skeg Business in Emo, Ontario. Cliff Waldner, of Arc Prop Repair in Alberton, Ontario is pleased to serve the Rainy River District and beyond by providing the same service Darren has for the past 25 years. It'll be business as usual at Blattner Enterprises in Emo where Cliff and Darren will be working together to ensure a smooth transition of the business and services until July 2, 2019. Following July 2nd, Cliff will be your guy for all prop and skeg repairs at his Alberton Township shop located on HWY 602, Fire #1810. Any questions you have can be answered easily by calling Darren's Shop: 807-482-2693 or by emailing: arcproprepair@gmail.com. Darren would like to thank all those who have helped make his business a success in the past 25 years. It's been a pleasure serving you.

Proud Sponsor of the Emo Walleye Classic May 23, 24 & 25 Good luck to all participating anglers and volunteers. Special thank you to all board members, your time does not go unnoticed.

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Smallmouth shootout at Sturgeon Bay



Several anglers from North-west Ontario spent last week in Sturgeon Bay, Wisc. participating in the annual Sturgeon Bay Open Bass Tournament on Lake Michigan.

It is a premier team event, similar to our top bass tournaments in this area, the Kenora Bass International and the Fort Frances Canadian Bass Championship.

It has a long history and anglers from our area have been fishing it for years, even winning it several times.

Dave Bennett and I fished the tournament together for eight or nine years in a row and always had a good time but since I've started fishing the tournaments down south in recent years, I have had scheduling conflicts and have missed the Sturgeon Bay Open three of the past four years.

Since our Bassmaster Elite Series event in Oklahoma got cancelled last week at the last minute, Seth Feider, one of my competitors on the Elite Series who is from Minnesota and I teamed up and stopped at Sturgeon Bay on the way home.

Sturgeon Bay is located on the Door County Peninsula, about 45 minutes north of the city of Green Bay. When Bennett and I first visited Sturgeon Bay, a four pound smallmouth was considered a big fish, similar to our area but over the past ten years there has been an explosion in the size of the fish there and now if you weigh in any four pound fish you probably aren't going to stand a chance at winning the two day event.

Over the years, my biggest smallmouth there was a 7.60 pound fish and I have seen a few other seven pound fish brought aboard as well as quite a few six pound smallmouths. Thirty pound-plus limits for five fish are not that rare. It's pretty amazing.

The wildcard when you fish the Great Lakes, which all feature excellent smallmouth fishing is the weather. The water is big without any of the islands



we have on our lakes here so it's like venturing out on the ocean. When the wind blows, it gets rough and that can take the fun out of fishing that big water pretty quick because there is nowhere to hide.

Last week we were lucky to get nice weather during the days leading up to the tournament which made it enjoyable to be out there.

Things changed however when the tournament started.

We were greeted with strong north winds rolling right into the takeoff area.

Over the years, tournament days have been cancelled a few times on strong wind days, generally if the area was hit with a small craft warning and we were really close to that happening both days over the weekend but we ended up going.

This time of year, most of the bass are shallow as they prepare to spawn along the shoreline in the coming weeks but they are constantly moving around, usually to wherever the warmest water is and when the wind changes direction it alters where the fish will show up.

The first day of the tournament we ran all over the place but it was a tough day for us and we just never landed on a big school of fish. Our five fish limit weighed 19.89 pounds and that landed us in 57th place in the 135 team field.

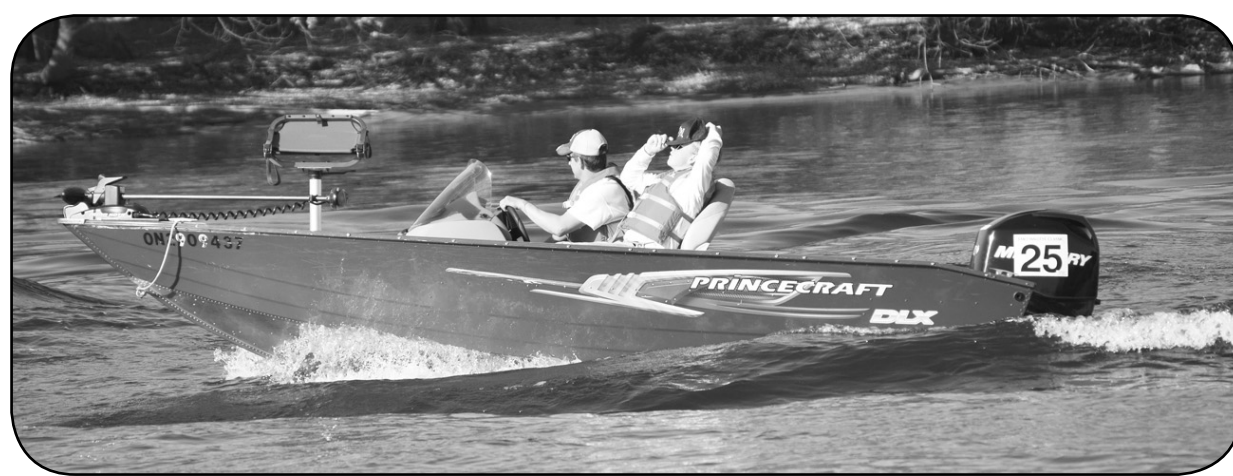
We decided on day two that we would stay close to the take-off area where we felt like we had the best chance to catch the biggest fish and make some sort of comeback. It is no secret that the biggest fish consistently show up in that area but during the few days we had to practice we were not able to find them. Fortunately for us, the wind moved the fish around and they showed up on a few places where we had caught them in the past. We had a much better day, with our five fish limit weighing 26.98 pounds, including a 7.05 pounder that Seth caught.

It just missed winning big bass of the tournament. Our rally gave us a two day total of 46.87 pounds and landed us in 16th place at the end of the weekend so we made enough money to pay for the week in Sturgeon Bay.

Wisconsin anglers Corey Sprengel and Ryan Dempsey won the tournament with 52.49 pounds for ten bass!

The big fish of the tournament was 7.13 pounds. It is quite the fishery.

After being on the road for a few weeks I'm very excited to get home and enjoy some of our fantastic fishing in Sunset Country for the next while.



Team 25, Jason and Dylan Tessier cruised for lunkers during the 2018 Emo Walleye Tournament.

EWC shaping up nicely

By Jamie Mountain
Staff writer
jmountain@fortfrances.com

The 18th-annual Emo Walleye Classic is slated to kick off tomorrow and preparation for this year's tourney has been going well.

A few changes this year has opened the boundaries to the west in order to get more participants as well as anglers being allowed to have more time to fish out on the water both days.

"Like every year, our goal is to see more people enter the tournament—especially since it's always the first one of the year," noted EWC director of marketing and Nighttime Entertainment Leeann Galusha.

"We've opened up the boundaries this year in hopes that it'll bring more registrants to participate in this wonderful event."

Tournament boundaries will be from the dam in Fort Frances to the mouth of the river at Lake of the Woods (there is a wind sock located at Wheeler's Point which will be used as the boundary).

All creeks and rivers flowing into the Rainy River are out of bounds.

This change will allow teams to fish the entire Rainy River system excluding all rivers and streams flowing into or out of the Rainy River and excluding the American side of the river.

As of last Thursday, 28 teams had signed up to participate in this year's tourney.

Galusha was hopeful that a full field of 30 teams could be reached ahead of the first fight boat launch on Friday morning.

"We are anticipating at least 30 [teams] but there's still room for more for any of those last minute people," she stressed. "More people, the merrier!"

Registration is open to all Canadian and U.S.-born residents aged 12 and over.

The cost is set at \$500 per team, which can be done by downloading the and submitting the 2019 team entry form at www.emowalleye.com

As well, there is a \$100 non-refundable entry fee deposit, and payments must be made in full before the rules meeting on the evening of May 23.

"So far I think the preparation has been going well," Galusha enthused.

"We've welcomed a few new committee members this year and new ideas are always a plus. We are down to [the tournament] just being days away, so we've been busy getting everything finalized," she added.

All contestants must sign a liability waiver and those younger than 18 years of age must have a parent or guardian sign a consent form and liability waiver.

Any cancellations up until 30 days before the tournament date will be refunded half of the entry fee (\$250) but any cancellations that come within 30 days of the start of the tournament will not receive a refund.

As well, each contestant must be licensed according to the Ontario Recreational Regulations.

A full set of tournament rules can be found online at www.emowalleye.com/rules

For more information, call Colleen Vennechenko at 482-2171.

"As I said earlier we've opened up the boundary to the West. We've also changed the hours to return, giving the anglers a little more fishing time," Galusha added about what the community should know about this year's EWC.

"We also have a local DJ for the dance Saturday night and [we are] looking forward to seeing you all," she enthused.

Don Rusnak

Member of Parliament — Thunder Bay-Rainy River



Congratulations to the organizers, volunteers, participants and sponsors of the 18th Annual Emo Walleye Classic!

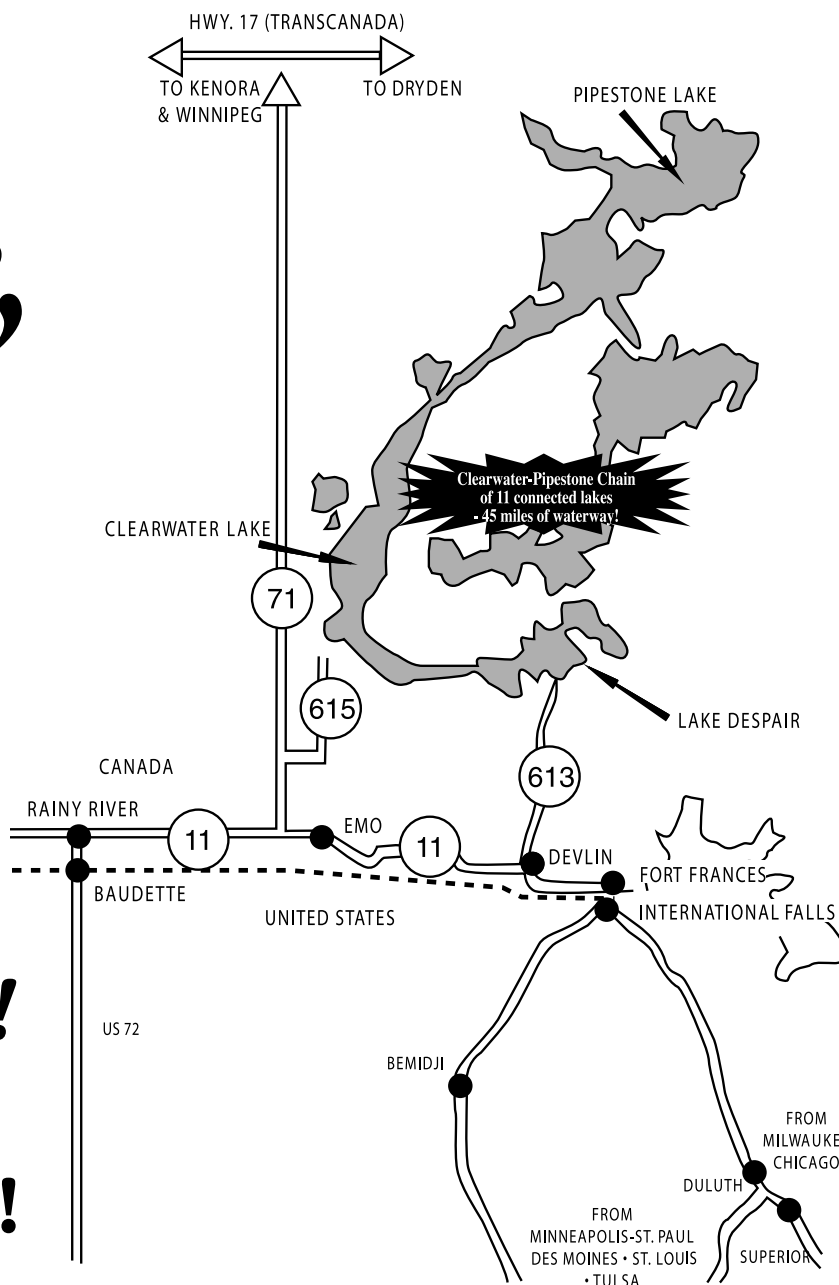


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Best Wishes & Congratulations to all 2019 Anglers & Organizers of the 18th Emo Walleye Classic.



EMO WALLEYE CLASSIC

2019 TEAMS

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Les Morrison | Oliver Gibbons |
| 2 | Dan Pollard | Josh Pollard |
| 3 | Bill Godin | Nolan Mann |
| 4 | Riley Caul | Jon Barker |
| 5 | Todd Grennier | Kalin Grennier |
| 6 | Grant Swire | Leroy Wilson |
| 7 | Trapper Bahr | Taylor Harbort |
| 8 | Travis Wood | Erin Wood |
| 9 | Jim Steele | Ed Bullied |
| 10 | Tim Blair | Keith Blair |
| 11 | Patrick Mills | Greg Mills |
| 12 | Doug McBride | Steve Ballan |
| 13 | Aaron Bisson | Chad Jack |
| 14 | Dennis Smith | Terry Allan |
| 15 | Frank Grunewald | Frank McWhinnie |
| 16 | Irwin Hughes | Amber Hughes |
| 17 | Ed Carlson | Jason McQuaker |
| 18 | Cody McKinnon | Brian McKinnon |
| 19 | Ted Heyens | Kelvin Caul |
| 20 | Ryan O'Connor | Patrick LeMaistre |
| 21 | Darwin Thompson | Rick Thompson |
| 22 | Greg Hartlin | Tyler Cousineau |
| 23 | Bryan Bonot | Callum McCormick |
| 24 | Travis Rob | Scott Lawrence |
| 25 | Keith Wilson | Roy Morrison |
| 26 | Billy Fedorkiw | Lisa Smith |
| 27 | Dale Hartlin | Curtis Hartlin |
| 28 | Carter Robinson | Ryan Redford |
| 29 | Shirley McQuaker | Karsyn McQuaker |

Find out more at www.emowalleye.com

Activities for EVERYONE in the family during the Emo Walleye Classic!



Kids Gone Fishing!



Kids Gone Fishing is open to students in grades 5 to 8. In this event, the kids will be paired with an angler from the championship and spend two hours fishing with the pros. Each child will also receive a gift bag and meal voucher for Grogg's Chip Truck located at the Arena.
L-R: Maccie Gibson, Aynsley Teeple, Addison Hyatt, Mathew Fuhrer, Spencer Boles, Benjamin Boettcher, Malcolm Martin, McKenna McTavish, Dax Laplante, Aiyana Cochrane



Fish Fry Friday Prime Rib Saturday



Watch the weigh-ins at the arena!



Angler Parade!


Starting at 5:30pm and proceeding down Front Street, the parade is a great way to see all the anglers and their boats. Many anglers will have some treats to share with the kids as well!



Team #3 Todd Grennier and Kalin Grennier



Team #18 Irwin-Hughes and Amber Hughes



EMO WALLEYE CLASSIC

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

May 23 - May 25, 2019

THURSDAY, MAY 23

- Kids Gone Fishing** 1:30 - 3:30 pm
• Fish with an angler!
• All kids will receive a gift bag including a meal voucher for Grogg's Chip Truck at the arena
• Open to any students in grades 5 to 8
• Entry/Consent forms must be received by May 15th
- Angler Parade**
• Lineup at west end of town 5:00 pm
• Parade begins 5:30 pm
• 10 x \$50 Participation Prizes - random draw for participating teams.
- Vendors & Bar Open** 5:00 pm - 12 am
Emo/LaVallee Arena
- Penny Table Open** 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
- Volunteer Check-In** 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
- Reading of the Rules** 7:00 - 7:30 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena

DAY TWO - FRIDAY, MAY 24

- First Flight Takeoff** 8:00 am
Front Street Boat Launch
- Second Flight Takeoff** 8:30 am
Front Street Boat Launch
- Vendors & Bar Open** 12:00 pm - 12:00 am
Emo/LaVallee Arena
• Penny Table
• Information booth & Grogg's Chip Truck open offering a wide variety of tasty treats!
- First Flight Returns** 4:30 pm
Front Street Boat Launch
- Second Flight Returns** 5:00 pm
Front Street Boat Launch
- Weigh-in Begins!** 4:30 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
- Fish Fry** 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
• Served by Emo Legion
• Adults \$18, Ages 6-12 \$10, Ages 5 & under Free

DAY THREE - SATURDAY, MAY 25

- First Flight Takeoff** 8:00 am
Front Street Boat Launch
- Second Flight Takeoff** 8:30 am
Front Street Boat Launch
- Vendors & Bar Open** 12:00 pm - 1:00 am
Emo/LaVallee Arena
• Penny Table-Draw at 7 p.m.
• Grogg's Chip Truck open offering a wide variety of tasty treats!
- First Flight Returns** 3:30 pm
Front Street Boat Launch
- Second Flight Returns** 4:00 pm
Front Street Boat Launch
- Weigh-in Begins!** 4:00 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
- Tournament Champions Presentation!** 6:30 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
- Prime Rib Dinner** 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
• Served by Emo Legion
• \$25/plate
- Penny Table Draw** 7:00 pm
Emo/LaVallee Arena
- Get Your Groove On with DJ Party Rock!** 9:00 pm - 1:00 am
Emo/LaVallee Arena
• Talented local DJ!
• Admission \$10 at the door. Age of Majority.

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