



Dragon Boat festival brings throngs

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FIRST POSTED: SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2012 06:03 PM EDT | UPDATED: SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2012 09:43 PM EDT

2012 Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival

IMAGE: 1 OF 13



Participants in crazy costumes at the 2012 Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival at Mooney's Bay. Saturday June 23,2012. (ERROL MCGIHON/THE OTTAWA SUN/QMI AGENCY).

The faint strains of “stroke ... stroke” could be heard along with cheers as dragon boat teammates strained at their oars on a hot Saturday at Mooney’s Bay.

It was the first racing day of the Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival, featuring more than 200 teams.

Organizers expect 75,000 people over the three days.

The summer sun beat down upon the gentle curve of the bay and upon the rather more alluring curves of certain festival-goers tanning on the beach, undressed for the heat.

Barbecue char teased nostrils, vying with the aroma of sweat and sunscreen and the occasional pong of a port-a-potty station.

The Youth Service Bureau, CHEO and the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre are among the charities that benefit from money raised on behalf of the Ottawa Dragonboat Foundation, which had already raked in over \$300,000 late Saturday afternoon.

Chantal Quesnel attended with a full itinerary.

“Eating, drinking and walking the beach and listening to the music,” the Scotiabank employee said.

Her support for the Scotia Spitfires was of the moral variety.

“I can’t row,” she said.

But Quesnel, who had showed up for an early race — “10-to-nine or something stupid like that” — had favourable reviews about the Kettle corn, poutine and gyoza, and she intended to move on to chocolate fondue.

Step-daughter Samantha Taylor shared her priorities as they watched Taylor’s 14-month-old son Jaxon romp with father Mark Mueca.

“We came to eat,” she said.

“And watch the races.”

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