

## Shouldn't Ice Fishing Be An Olympic Sport?

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Ok, you may think I'm crazy but hear me out. Michigan is really hurting economically and we need a few fresh ideas, right? How about the Olympics, the real ones, not these gonzo XX games and how about bidding for the Winter Olympics?

I'll bet you never knew that Detroit was in the running for the Olympics in 1944. Well, of course they didn't get them. They lost out to London...BIG MISTAKE there. Actually the whole thing was cancelled, something about a world war.

So after they cleaned that mess up and got back to acting more civilized, Detroit got back into the bidding. They tried again in 1952 - lost out to Helsinki. Then they tried in '56, '60, '64, '68 and finally one last shot for the 1972 Olympics - lost out to Munich. Quite a few of you remember what happened there. Spielberg made a movie out of that tragedy.

But all those bids were to host the Summer Olympics. Nothing against Detroit but who really wants to spend a summer there? Would you believe Cleveland even bid for the 1920 Summer Games? They lost – same reason.

Are you seeing a pattern here? Well, let's throw'em a curve. Let's bid for the other Olympics - the WINTER Olympics. And have you seen all the weird new "sports" they've added to the Games? I'm thinking we should add our own new event into the mix – ice fishing. We've already got the Shiver On The River, Tipup Town and the Gladwin County Ice Carnival (when there's ice).

I know you're thinking 'that won't be very exciting to watch' but your wrong. There are all kinds of special effects we could add to jazz it up. I'm leaning toward a combination of Most Extreme Eliminations and America's Funniest Home Videos.

Let me tell you about one of my ice fishing tales. See if this story convinces you that ice fishing is NOT boring.

About five years back I was ice fishing with my guide (details about him later) on Nestor Lake in Clare County. Suddenly I realized I had a

dentist appointment in Midland. I rushed home to floss the venison jerky outta my teeth and made it there just in time.

My dentist took one look at my mouth and said 'what the hell were you doing this morning?' When I explained he gave an understanding (perfectly logical) nod and asked, "have you ever fished on (secret location) lake?" Nah, some jerk put a fence around the property I said.

He smiled and said, "Yeah, that jerk was me, that's my place." Then he asked if I would like a key to the gate and go fish up there. Whoa Nellie, you betcha. So now you get the REST of the story, as Paul Harvey would say.



Rick's Fishing Guide, Rick

My guide and I were fishing at (secret location) a couple years ago. We're jigging and have a few tip-ups out. Suddenly he says, "There goes your pole down the hole." Now he's known to pull a few fast ones so I called him on it. "Too late, I'm not kidding – it's gone."

Well, sure enough I checked one of my holes and it WAS gone – not my homemade pole, not my \$5 Jay's jigging pole but my brand new \$30 special ice fishing rod and reel that I'd just bought!

Shortly after this disaster, my line snapped with a BIG one on – of course it had my favorite lure attached. Then we lost two baits on the tip-ups. This was rapidly turning into a colossal miscarriage of fishing justice.

A few minutes later the flag on our last tip-up waved at us so I wandered over and started pulling in line. At first it came up easy and I thought it was another miss when suddenly the tip of a rod appeared in the hole and up came my rod, reel and a big wad of line.

We started laughing hysterically. Then the hole went black and the line started zinging out of my gloves. I yelled “there’s something big on the end.” My guide was full of suggestions and yelling ‘don’t you dare lose that fish.’ He also threw in a few !@#%\$!

Well, I finally got the FISH up to the hole and his head out but the hole was too small. It was a huge pike and he was mad. After several attempts to extract Mr. Whopper, we took a spud and made the hole bigger and squeezed him out. He had two tip-up baits and my favorite lure still in his mouth. How big? He was big – I mean B.I.G. – HUGE.

Oh sure you think it’s just a fish story and we did mention more than once ‘nobody’s gonna believe this.’ But it’s all true and I’m not even exaggerating for dramatic purposes. Now let me tell you about my guide.

His name is also Rick and I’ve known him since the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I use the term “friend” loosely because when we’re fishing he takes it seriously; after all, he’s the guide.

When I out-fish him it’s because he was spending too much time being my guide. And when he catches more fish than me it’s because he’s the superior fisherman. He actually is a good fisherman and he does out-fish me – on occasion. So I indulge his whims – I have to because he’s got the truck and brings the venison jerky.

We always play a little game – first fish, biggest fish, most fish. He never wants to be the one to call it quits for lack of fish. I think it’s a guide thing.

One day I had already caught the first fish and the most fish so I said let’s call it a day. He hauls up this little bluegill and announces ‘last fish.’

When I told him last fish was never one of the categories he said, “New category – I sure am glad you finally wanted to stop, I kept that poor thing on for 30 minutes and he was getting pretty tired!”

Needless to say we have a good time. Sometimes catching fish really isn’t the point. But I think if it’s an Olympic sport it may be my one and only chance to bring home the gold! Although I already have a Wolfjam tungsten jig with gold plating – does that count?

The selection for the 2014 Winter Olympics is July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in Guatemala City. That’s like picking Barrow, Alaska in December to announce the host site for the Summer Games.

The three sites still in the running are Pyeong Chang, South Korea; Sochi, Russia and Salzburg, Austria. Some sites that didn’t make the final list were Almaty, Kazakhstan; Jaca, Spain and Sofia, Bulgaria. Detroit didn’t try.

So it’s time to start putting on the hard sell to bring the Winter Olympics to Michigan. And I see no reason why ice fishing can’t be the next sport that we Americans can dominate. I can see it now, Rick Off The Record wins the gold and my guide finishes a close but disappointing second. Let’s give the bronze to some schmuck from Kazakhstan.

Come to think of it, maybe we should just try for the XX Games after all.



No, this isn't Rick and Rick