

Deming New Mexico teams don't duck the competition

Duck Races and Softball games

Story and photos by Gregory Harris

The familiar sound of waddling webbed feet were all around on the last weekend of August in Deming, New Mexico. For the past 28 years, the last weekend of August has meant one thing in Deming...the running of the ducks, also known as the duck races. At first this may sound a little ridiculous. How could a flock of ducks stir up so much excitement? Well, the races at McKinley Duck Downs are only part of this fun-filled weekend. The duck races are as much a celebration of Deming as it is a frenzy of fowl.

This weekend in Deming means a lot more than just a duck race. There are events taking place varying from a dinner theater production of "The Duck Variations" (which was excellent), the Duck Royalty Pageant where locals dress up in duck costumes and are judged, a green chili cook-off, a pancake breakfast, several dances, a carnival complete with rides and midway, all topped off by the Great American Duck Race parade. It's definitely a full weekend.

This year marked the 28th Annual Great American Duck Race and the spirit of competition prevailed through out this small town

with a population of 14,116 (as of the 2000 census). Locals and visitors alike competed in duck races, outhouseraces, a tortilla toss, a horseshoe and washer tournament, hot air balloon competitions, and of course, the Duel in the Desert Slow-pitch Softball Tournament. The softball tournament has run for almost as long as the Great American Duck Races.

The title of tournament director fluctuates between coaches from Deming High School from year to year, and this year's director was Head Varsity Softball Coach Cindy Nunez. The softball tournament raised money for the Deming High School softball program. When Cindy was putting together the 2007 version of the Duel in the Desert Softball Tournament, men's and co-ed teams of any and all levels were invited to take part in the competition. There were 15 men's teams and 10 coed teams. Most of the teams hailed from Deming and as they say, birds of a feather flock together...and flock they did to the Hooten Softball Complex for a weekend of fun.

The tournament has "no sanctioning body, it's just for fun" said one player.



The Great American Duck Race Parade in Deming, New Mexico.

Well, it looked like everyone was having fun, and this is how the whole tournament went. In the first round of the men's division, Mojaxx defeated the Dirty Sox and the Bulldogs beat Flashpoint. Then, the Heaters got by the Phat Boyz while Steersafe beat the Angels. Next up, the Ravens defeated the Miners as the Tribe beat the Wise Guys. Finally in the first round,

Morris FH moved on to the next round by getting by the Pumas.

That afternoon, it was time for the second round, where Mojaxx defeated the Bulldogs and the Heaters went down to Steersafe. Next, still in the second round, the Tribe defeated the Ravens, followed by a victory over the Benchwarmers by the Morris FH team. Now there were only two games to decide who would match-up for the final game of the winner's bracket. Mojaxx defeated Steersafe to move on, while the Tribe defeated Morris FH. Mojaxx came out on top in the final of the winner's bracket only to face none other than the Tribe once again, after they made their triumphant return from the loser's bracket. The Tribe defeated the Mojaxx team setting up a rematch for game three. In game three Mojaxx finally came out on top winning the Duel in the Desert Men's Division Championship.

On the coed side, the Bulldogs defeated the Benchwarmers to start it off, while Who's Next posed the question, defeating Nuttz and Buttz. Next up, Just Do It didn't do it, going down in defeat to Shake-N-Bake, while the Reyes team defeated the Killer Bees. The ATM team, then defeated the Bulldogs as Morris FH went down to Who's Next.

With just four teams left, ATM shook off Shake-N-Bake to move on and face the Reyes team who had defeated Who's Next. In the final round of the winners circle, Reyes defeated ATM to meet the winner of the loser's bracket. Who's Next turned out to be the next and last opponent for the Reyes team. The Reyes team were crowned the winners of the coed portion of the tournament.

With tournaments taking place in Las Cruces and Rio Doso there weren't as many teams to go around for the state as a whole, but the many quality teams that competed in the DOD assured that the tournament was all that it was quacked up to be.



The Pumas' Eric Vancome makes it to second standing up.