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# Toronto Icy cycling championship puts a big chill on biking

Toronto Icy cycling championship draws hardcore bikers who aren't put off by treacherous conditions.



By: **Tim Alamenciak** News reporter, Published on Sat Feb 16 2013

For most people a skating rink isn't the ideal biking surface, but for Alberto De Ciccio, the Ice Emperor, it's perfect.

Donning his signature Centurion helmet, the 46-year-old master of rink riding powered through a blizzard Saturday night, racing three other riders.

De Ciccio held the top spot in the Toronto Icy cycling championship for six years. Now he competes for fun — a patron saint of the 24 other riders who showed up to compete.

His tires have been custom fitted with tiny screws pointing outwards — 850 spikes per wheel.

“My two tires probably weigh as much as my bike,” he said.

The competition is organized by Derek Chadbourne, founder of The Bike Joint. It began at Dufferin Grove Park in 2001. Annually it has drawn between 20 and 30 competitors. More than 100 people came out to watch the races this year.

“It's a Canadian thing. We do everything else on ice — why not biking?” said Chadbourne.

Racers pay \$15 to enter the competition and compete in heats of four. The tournament goes round-robin style until a winner is declared. The proceeds are given to a cycling-related cause — this year, a [cyclist struck in the course of a police chase](#) earlier this week will receive some of the proceeds.

Some come with sleek racing bikes, their tires studded with a thin row of spikes. Many, like 25-year-old Geoff Moore, take the competition as a chance to be creative.

“We were thinking of something that would look ridiculous,” said Moore, standing in the blizzard in Captain America pajamas.

He and his friends outfitted BMX bikes with custom road bike handlebars and studded tires. In past years they rode a tandem bike.

Moore came in third in his first heat, his BMX studs cutting through the rink ice and making a sound like bubblewrap popping.

The trick to cornering, says Moore, is to find the razor’s edge between falling and not:

“You have to learn to fall and figure out just short of where that fall happens,” he said.

De Ciccio started strong in his heat and finished second.

“When you get to a certain age you just come to have fun,” he said. “I’ve won this thing six years in a row. That’s why I’m the Ice Emperor.”

Returning champion Linda Shin, 33, won the female division with an aggressive ice-pounding performance. Three-year champ Sean Thompson, a 29-year-old former bicycle courier, won the men’s division in a tight finish, inching ever closer to overthrowing the emperor.