

Fastest text-messenger in America to take on challengers

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The American record-holder for text messaging will be taking on challengers Saturday at the Fair, during a day when the Fairgrounds will be trying to set a world record for postcards mailed on the same day.

Ben Cook, the United States' record holder for speed text messaging, will face about a dozen challengers from across upstate New York in a 4:30 p.m. text-off Saturday, Sept. 5, at the West End Grille, near the James E. Strates Midway.

Cook has held the world record for fastest text messaging twice and is hoping to regain his Guinness Book of World Records title inside the Cricket Communications, Inc tent located at the West End Grille. Cricket is the sponsor of the event.

Cook, 21, set the American record on July 29, 2006, by taking 42.22 seconds to type the Guinness Book of Records' standardized message: "The razor-toothed piranhas of the genera Serrasalmus and Pygocentrus are the most ferocious freshwater fish in the world. In reality they seldom attack a human."

The current world record holder is Jeremy Sng Gim of Singapore who typed the standardized phrase in 41.40 seconds on Feb. 24, 2008.

Approximately a dozen contestants from Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse have qualified for the text-off during festivals, city events and radio promotions throughout the summer. Additional qualifiers will compete Friday and Saturday inside the Cricket tent at the West End Grille.

In addition to trying to beat Ben Cook, the contestant who texts the Guinness phrase the fastest will win an Xbox 360. All qualifiers win a Samsung Messenger phone and one-year of service from Cricket.

Also on Saturday, Fair visitors will be helping the Fair and the U.S. Postal Service try to break the Guinness Book of Records' for Postcards sent from a single location on a single day. That record is 4,976.

From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Fairgoers can buy a 44-cent stamp at a special "Record-Breakin' Station" set up in a tent near the Fair's main entrance, and send a postcard to a friend, family member, or even themselves.

The Post Office is supplying free postcards for the occasion, but people are welcome to bring their own.