



Observing Today...Conserving for Tomorrow

The IGFTO Observer

A newsletter for International Game Fish Tournament Observers

Volume 7

Edition 1



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2018 LOS SUEÑOS SIGNATURE TRIPLE CROWN

141 Marlin Released in Leg I

Los Sueños Resort and Marina, located at Playa Herradura on Costa Rica's Central Pacific Coast, held the first leg of the 2018 Los Sueños Signature Triple Crown billfish series January



Photo by Pepper Ailor

17-20. A total of 49 of the world's most competitive bill fishing teams comprised of 236 individual anglers challenged each other over three days of fishing, releasing a total of 598 billfish, including 457 sails and 141 marlin. Nearly one out of every three fish released was a marlin.

DAY 1

It was *Family and Friends* that got the tournament started, calling in a marlin hook up at 8:00 am on the first day of fishing, releasing it just two minutes later. It took *On Location* a little more effort to achieve the same 500 points though, releasing five sailfish at 8:06 am, followed by a double sailfish release at 8:12 am for an early lead. By 1:12 pm *Geaux Fly* had taken over the lead with a marlin release, fish number 157.

The fish numbers called out by tournament control represent the total number of billfish released to that point and by 2:00 pm the fleet had released 133 sails and 45 marlin to take them to fish number 178. At the end of the day *Geaux Fly* remained in top position with 2,700 points (2 sails, 5 marlin), *Wire We Here* was in second with 2,100 points (6 sails, 3 marlin), and *Tag Team II* finished third with 2,000 points on time (5 sails, 3 marlin), over *Tuna Trappe*.

DAY 2

Fittingly, it was *First Light* to call in the first fish of Day 2 at 8:07 am. By 10:00 am the fleet had released a two-day total of 281 billfish, including 208 sails and 73 marlin. *Geaux Fly* still commanded a strong lead with 3,200 points, 800 points ahead of *Wire We Here* in second with 2,400 points and *Shoe* now in third with 2,300 points.

Agitator, the Series Champion from both the 2016 and 2017 Triple Crown tournaments, gained momentum after releasing the last fish of Day 1, a marlin, at 4:27 pm. By 12:00 pm on the second day of competition *Agitator* had plucked away at the fish to take second place with 2,800 points on time over *Wire We Here*.

By the end of the day *Tag Team II* managed to squeeze *Geaux Fly* out of their top position, releasing a marlin at 3:32 pm and ending the day with 3,300 points (8 sails, 5 marlin). *Geaux Fly* finished second with 3,200 points (2 sails, 6 marlin), over *Agitator* in third with 3,100 points (6 sails, 5 marlin).

DAY 3

Going into Day 3, *Geaux Fly* was not taking second place well and released the first two sails of Day 3 by 8:08 am, overtaking *Tag Team II* by 100 points. *Wire We Here* wanted back on the leader board and released a marlin at 8:55 am to overtake first. *Tag Team II*, up for the challenge, released a marlin at 9:50 am to move up the ladder. *Wire We Here* wasn't backing down though and released a marlin at 10:05 am to take first once again. By Noon *Wire We Here* was still in first with 4,200 points, followed by *Tag Team II* with 4,100 points, and *On Location* in third with 3,600 points. *On Location* found the fish, releasing a marlin at 1:05 pm and moving to second, then releasing a sail at 2:01 pm for first.

Alpha Bravo, a silent contender, moved to third position at 2:27 pm with a sailfish release.

By 4:00 pm on the last day it was *Wire We Here* finishing in first with a three-day total of 4,700 points (17 sails, 6 marlin), *On Location* in second with 4,300 points (23 sails, 4 marlin), and *Tag Team II* in third with 4,100 points (11 sails, 6 marlin).

A strong marlin bite gives nearly any team in the top 10 a chance to win because they all have the opportunity to make a big jump in the standings. For example, *Blue Eagle* finished 10th on Day 2 and moved to 4th in the overall standings. *Dealer's Choice* finished 26th on Day 1 and moved to 7th overall. One marlin more or less could make all the difference.

Leg I Final Top 3 Boats:

First Place: *Wire We Here*, 61' Garlington, 4,700 points, 17 sails and 6 marlin.

Second Place: *On Location*, 57' Capps Sportfisher, 4,300 points, 23 sails and 4 marlin.

Third Place: *Tag Team II*, 55' Viking, 4,100 points, 11 sails and 6 marlin.



New Facemask Vendor Adopted

At the December 2017 meeting, the IGFTO Board of Directors voted to approve the purchase of 1,000 facemasks and accept a donation of an additional 250 from HooRag, a new sponsor. Also approved was the motion that facemasks be distributed to each member as they attend a tournament and new IGFTO member upon approval of their application. The facemasks will also be placed for sale in the [ship's store](#) and priced at \$13. Welcome HooRag and thanks for your support.



YOU MAKE THE CALL

by Art MacDonald

You are observing in a Blue Marlin Tournament... the angler has hooked up to an impressive fish and is fighting it from the chair wearing a harness attached to the lugs of the reel. It's been a "give & take" battle that has gone on for a couple of hours, wearing down the angler in the process, as the fish has continually dogged deep. The angler's right hand in on the reel handle when he decides to use his left hand to grab the line and pull it toward the reel – essentially a "hand lining" process, instead of using the rod in the traditional pumping method to fight the fish. This method is often portrayed in

episodes of the television show “Wicked Tuna” when fighting Giant Blue Fin Tuna off New England.

QUESTION: Does this “handlining effect” constitute a violation of IGFA rules?

ANSWER: The act of the angler pulling the line onto the reel would NOT be an IGFA Rules Violation – as long as the fish is being fought from a chair or standing up. The act of fighting the fish with the rod in the rod holder (as seen on Wicked Tuna) would not be IGFA legal. Of course, ONLY the angler is allowed to touch the line. Someone other than the angler touching the line would disqualify the catch or release.

Welcome New Members

To new and all IGFTO members: It takes a lot of work to make the IGFTO work. If you have a talent or expertise that you think can help us to keep IGFTO as good as it can be please email or call president Steve Hargett +1(404) 336-3388. Especially needed are volunteers to help us keep our new website up to date (we do not need programmers but rather people who can update tournament information carried on the site). Also needed are editor(s) and writer(s) for our newsletter. Don't be shy. We need your help!

We welcome the following new members.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Buddy Aimar | Charleston, SC |
| Joel Berk | Woodland Hills, CA |
| Joseph Bowles | Va. Beach, VA |
| Julio Castaneda | Chinandega, Nicaragua |
| Mike Clark | Manassas, VA |
| Heidi Cluck | Corpus Christi, TX |
| Paul Finger | Cutchogue, NY |
| Michael Kirchhoff | Dawsonville, GA |
| Jerry Lanzerotti | Palm Beach Gardens, FL |
| John McClean | Los Suenos, Costa Rica |
| John Shives | Port Isabel, TX |
| Rick Sowers | Port Aransas, TX |
| Michael Zorzi | Rehoboth Beach, DE |

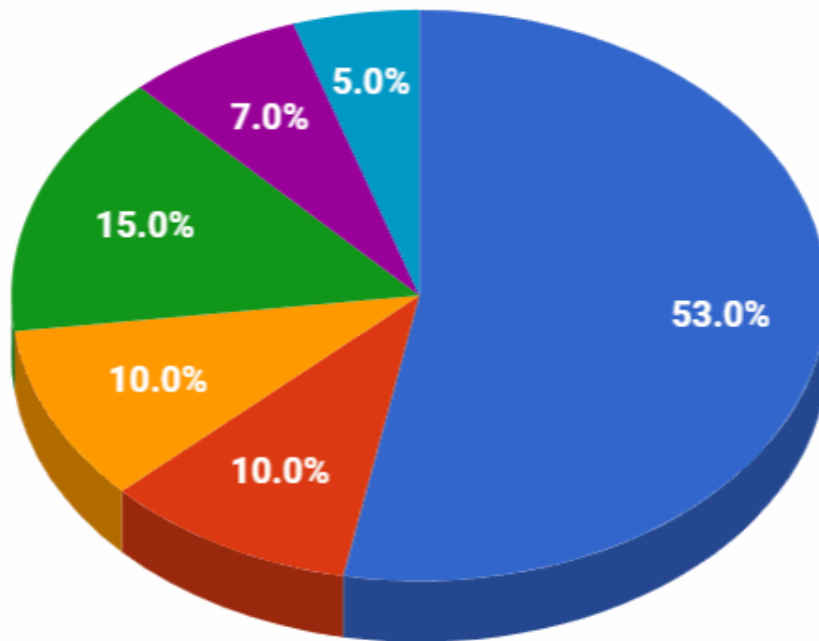
IGFTO Membership Make-Up

More than half (53%) of IGFTO members come from the state of Florida. But did you know that New York and Connecticut tie for the second largest concentration of members?

IGFTO is a multinational organization. Aside from the U.S.A. we have members from Aruba, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico, Puerto Rica, Trinidad, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

IGFTO Members in 2017 are from

● Florida ● South ● Mid & West ● New England ● International ● Honorary



About the IGFTO Website

Did You Know You Can Learn:

Which tournaments are coming up this year?

How many fish were released at each of these tournaments in the past?

Which IGFTO observers are planning to attend this year's tournament?

Who the IGFTO coordinator is?

What the official rules are?

IT'S ALL ON THE IGFTO WEBSITE www.igfto.org

It's easy. Go to the site and click on *Member Login* at the top right of the site. Enter your igfto email address and your password. Click on the box "I'm not a robot" and wait for the check mark to appear. Then click on *Sign In*. That's it your in!

Now click on MEMBERS and then the first blue subhead – *Tournament Info for Observers*. Up comes a page with a block for each tournament and in each block is a *Travel Chart* which tells you who's signed up to observe, which flights they're arriving and departing on, and where they are staying. A contact telephone number is also listed so you can call and see if someone wants to go a day early and fish or just get together for drinks and/or dinner. You'll also find an *Observer Information Guide*. Click on this to learn what the observer package is for that tournament – it describes the transportation, lodging, meals, compensation and schedule of events for the tournament. Click on *Tournament Rules* and you'll find the detailed rules for that tournament.

Now click the back arrow to the *Members Only Welcome Page* and this time click on the second blue subhead – *Tournaments*. Another page comes up with a block for each tournament and a filter by tournament year. Click on the year of your choice and the tournaments held that year will appear. Click on a specific tournament and you'll find everything you need to know about that tournament. Not just the statistics of the fish caught by species but the names of the observers who attended as well.

Wondering if you should sign up for a tournament but not sure which one? Go on the site right now and get the information you need to make your decision. Happy surfing!

IGFTO Joins The Billfish Foundation's Select Chairman Club

Consistent with our mission to support billfish conservation, IGFTO joined The Billfish Foundation's Select Chairman's Club for 2018. TBF's president Ellen Peel sent the letter below to our president Steve Hargett.



Dear Steve & friends at IGFTO,

I am honored to have this opportunity to thank you for your recent donation given in support of The Billfish Foundation. Your generous contribution of \$2,500 given in December of 2017 helps ensure healthy billfish populations for future generations. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law - please retain this letter for income tax purposes.

By partnering with TBF, you're helping provide vital resources to address imminent threats to billfish and work toward long-range solutions for billfish conservation.

Again, please accept my most sincere thanks for your support and the vital role you play in helping make our work possible.

Best wishes for a Happy New Year,

Ellen M. Peel
President

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OFFICIAL MEMBER OF TBF'S SELECT CHAIRMAN'S CLUB

We're here for you.

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IGFTO 2017 Highlights

Barbara Evans and Sine Mate lead the group in number of tournaments IGFTO members devoted 4,147 people days to observing in 2017. Eighty-four individuals participated in 10 tournaments in Aruba, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Dominican Republic and Florida. They called the release of 4,764 billfish including 4,300 sailfish, 411 blue marlin, and 53 white marlin. Barbara and Sine each participated in 7 tournaments. Karen LeCompte participated in 6.

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Steve Hargett, Terry O'Neill, Michael Sampsel and Tess Sheil each participated in 4. Congratulations and thanks to all.

International Game Fish Tournament Observers Inc. is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt charitable organization dedicated to the preservation and conservation of game fish worldwide. We provide trained and insured observers to authenticate the "catch and release" of billfish and game fish during international big game fish tournaments.

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