

The IGFTO Observer -
Newsletter

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Observing Today...Conserving for Tomorrow

The IGFTO Observer

A newsletter for International Game Fish Tournament Observers

Volume 7

Edition 4



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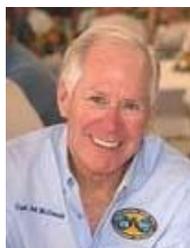


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2018 PRESIDENTIAL ARUBA CARIBBEAN CUP



Oranjestad, Aruba

October 18-21, 2018

By: Art McDonald

Aruba, Jamaica, oh I wanna take you to Bermuda, Bahama, come on pretty mama..... oh, sorry, I got carried away (Beach Boys circa 1989).

Aruba, one of the jewels of the Caribbean with it's beautiful beaches, friendly people, laid-back lifestyle, Dutch heritage and, oh, by the way, some fabulous billfishing, was the site of our latest IGFTO Observing adventure – in this year's 9th Annual Presidential Challenge Caribbean Cup held in the Varadero Marina in the capital city of Oranjestad. 13 IGFTO Observers (Barry Holeve, Brenten Baker, Bruce Key, Chris Hogan, Evan Hipsley, Greg

YOU MAKE THE CALL

By Art McDonald



You are observing in a billfish tournament in some exotic locale. It's been a rather boring day and, while anticipations were high early in the morning, the activity has been practically non-existent. In an effort to try and "mix-it-up," the mates are busy changing out rigs from natural baits to a combination of lures to try and cover more ground. At a point in time, with one of the mates putting out a lure, and, while "twirling" the line in order to place it in a flat-line clip, an aggressive blue marlin piles on the rig – snatches the line out of the mate's hand, and is

Marsolais, Karen LeCompte, Pat Brobst, Rich Engles, Sine Mate, Tess Sheil, Walt Palmeri, and yours truly) represented IGFTO in this 3-day All-Release Tournament. A total of 16 boats participated in the event targeting Sailfish, White Marlin, and Blue Marlin. The Tournament got off to a fast start with a quick Sailfish by the *Paso Largo* @ 8:20 AM on day one. The action continued all morning and by noon the fleet had released over 20 billfish. The afternoon belonged to *Tara* who ended up on the top of the Leader Board with an impressive 4 Blues and 2 Whites. In fact, *Team Tara* never looked back and led the Tournament from start to finish as they added another 5 Sailfish to their impressive start to take the overall trophy home. Second place was *Alina* (on time) over 3rd place *Watashee*. The Tournament set a record for the number of billfish releases which totaled 109 comprised of 13 Blue Marlin, 22 White Marlin, and 74 Sailfish – all on 30 lb. test line and non-offset circle hooks – that works out to an average of almost 7 Billfish per boat – not shabby at all! My only disappointment was not coming in a day or so early, or staying a day or so afterward to explore this beautiful island. Next year, I plan to do just that!

Welcome Aboard New Members

tight and heading for the horizon. The angler, who was standing a distance from the rod, quickly grabs the rod as line peels from the reel. The fight is ordinary, the fish is wired, and released in good shape. Question: Did any violations occur? Answer: Yes – a violation occurred. IGFA Rules clearly state: “Angling Regulations 1. From the time that a fish strikes or takes a bait or lure, the angler must hook, fight, and land or boat the fish without the aid of any other person, except as provided in these regulations.” Also mentioned in: The following acts will disqualify a catch: 1. Failure to comply with equipment or angling regulations. 2. The act of persons other than the angler in touching any part of the rod, reel, or line (including the double line) either bodily or with any device, from the time a fish strikes or takes the bait or lure, until the fish is either landed or released, or in giving any aid other than that allowed in the rules and regulations. The key words in both these sections are when “the fish strikes or takes a bait or lure” and, in this case the mate was holding the line - the angler was not manning the rod nor holding the line when the fish struck.

Busman's Holiday

By Art McDonald

Who says Observer can only “observe”? One of the terrific things

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IGFTO to Conduct Observer Training Course In Los Sueños Resort and Marina Playa Herradura, Costa Rica

about the IGFTO is the camaraderie we experience with the anglers and crews that we meet along the way, especially the friendships that mature over time as we work various tournaments as members of this great organization.

IGFTO president Steve Hargett called me midsummer to inquire if I would like to accompany him on a trip to Costa Rica for a 2-day adventure fishing the world famous sea mounds and FADs in the Pacific, 100 mile west of Los Suenos. Steve made arrangements with IGFTO Observer Scott Kozak, the owner of the 42' Maverick "Pacific Fly" to take us on this fishing trip to "Never Never Land", along with IGFTO Observers Mike Sampsel and Hans Kaspersetz.

Following an uneventful flight and a 3+ hour drive to Quepos, we found the "Pacific Fly" waiting for us along with Captain Rocco, and mates Gabriel and Santos. We boarded the boat around 6:30 p.m. and headed 100 miles offshore. Scott stayed behind, seeing us off at the dock and wishing us good luck. We spent the evening under way, sharing fishing stories and anticipating the fishing that lie ahead.

At daybreak, we put out small feathers to collect Bonito for pitch baits. Then we put out our spread – 2 lures off the outriggers and 2 pitch bait bonitos on the short lines. We agreed to rotate fishing stations every half hour so that everyone



The IGFTO will conduct a new Observer Training Course in Playa Herradura, Costa Rica this coming December 13. Please help get the word out to any of your friends or family interested in joining the IGFTO and for whom Playa Herradura would be a convenient location. This is the first ever OTC held in Costa Rica. The course includes a four hour training session, a complete set of notes plus downloadable reference files, initial membership in the IGFTO, IGFTO dress and work shirts, an observer log book, buff and lapel pin, and a Free continental breakfast. Once attendees have completed the course and their applications have been accepted, they become members of the IGFTO. The total value of the program is \$464 USD, but the cost per participant is only \$250 USD if paid prior to November 29th – that's almost 50% off, after November 29th the regular price of \$300 USD will be charged.. The program will be conducted at Los Sueños Resort and Marina Playa Herradura, Costa Rica from 9 am to 1 pm.

would have an equal opportunity at each of the lines out. Fifteen minutes into the troll the right long went down and Mike Sampsell was tight. He went toe to toe with a 300 lb. Blue, releasing it after 20 minutes.

By 8:00 a.m. we were five for eight - one Black Marlin and the rest Blues – eight bites in just 2 ½ hours.

Then, to our amazement, Hans locked up on a monster Blue. He fought the fish for 2 ½ hours until the nearly 700 lb Marlin came to the surface. Now that was fishing!

We put out a sea anchor, dined on a fresh caught Mahi, told a few more stories, and wondered if the next day could possibly be as good as the day we just spent. Daybreak came and we fished from dawn until noon. We released four of the six marlin we hooked up and then started the 5-hour, 80+ mile run back to the dock. Our total for the trip was 12 releases out of 20 hook ups, one Black and the rest Blue Marlin. Our experience affirmed everything we had heard about this incredible fishery.

When we arrived back at the dock in Quepos, Scott Kozak was waiting there to greet and congratulate us on a great trip. We spent the evening at a restaurant that served one of my favorite dinners – deep fried Snapper served with some Yucca and washed down with a little vino. The next morning we were off to the airport and a return to reality, but I'll be back, you can bet on that!

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.