



Observing Today...Conserving for Tomorrow

The IGFTO Observer

A Newsletter for International Game Fish Tournament Observers

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Aqua Inspiration 2023 | Golfito and Quepos, Costa Rica

June 5-9, 2023

Story by: Reese Bowles

After months of planning, Aqua Inspiration year two kicked off in Golfito, CR, on Monday, June 5, 2023. The event was sponsored by the IGFTO, Junior Achievement-Costa Rica, Marina Bahia Golfito, and Marina Pez Vela Youth career days.

IGFTO members and Junior Achievement-Costa Rica met all student and school administrative participants at the CPT Golfito Carlos Manuel Vicente Castro School. All 120 participants received event shirts. During the visit, Junior Achievement-Costa Rica instructed students on critical career-building skills such as team building, communication, self-presentation, and leadership.

That evening, twenty team members and volunteers met at The Crew Lounge for a walk-through of the sequence of events and were then treated to a dinner hosted by IGFTO.

On Tuesday, June 6th, IGFTO members along with Junior Achievement-Costa Rica, Marina Bahia Golfito staff, and volunteers from Marina Pez Vela met 120 junior and senior students and school administrative participants at the Marina Bahia Golfito. All participants received a healthy breakfast, followed by a group photo session before students were divided into smaller groups. Each group was assigned to 1 of 9 designated stations. The students rotated through all nine stations, accompanied by chaperones, spending 15 to 20 minutes at each station associated with marina operations. Topics included fuel dock skills for servicing mega -yachts, opportunities in the sport fishing industry in Costa Rica, marine hospitality skills, Costa Rica tourism, super yacht career opportunities, rod and reel handling, and sport fishing skills. All groups met downstairs in the La Playa restaurant for lunch and moved upstairs to the crew lounge for the motivational speakers wrap up and raffle prizes.



Aqua Inspiration Golfito; Photo Credit: Sebastian Harris

On Thursday, June 8th, IGFTO, along with Maria Bakit Jimenez, from Junior- Achievement Costa Rica, met 90 students and school administrative participants at the Cerros High School near Quepos. All participants were again presented with event shirts. During the visit, students were instructed by Junior Achievement-Costa Rica on critical career building skills such as team building, communication, self-presentation, and leadership. The evening of June 8th, twenty team members and volunteers met at Koky's for a walk-through of the following days events and treated to an IGFTO-hosted dinner.

On Friday morning, June 9th, 90 junior and senior students arrived at Marina Pez Vela in Quepos for a day of exposure to career opportunities associated with marina operations. This included boat yard repair and maintenance, the Costa Rican Coast Guard, opportunities in sport fishing, marine conservation and biology, sport fishing techniques, and environmental stewardship opportunities. The students were divided into small groups and rotated through these "stations" accompanied by chaperones. These stations were staffed by the respective experts in their field. Students rotated through these stations every 20-25 minutes. The day concluded with a provided lunch, a motivational speaker, and a raffle of donated prizes. Both events were a resounding success as evidenced by the enthusiasm and participation of the students.

Recognition needs to be given to all the volunteers, sponsors, and donors. Without these folks, the event would not have been such a success. Sincere thank yous go to Marina Pez Vela, Junior Achievement-Costa Rica, Bobby McGuinness and Cazador Sportfishing, Quepos Tackle Shop, Unlimited Dive Shop, FECOP, Galati Yacht Sales, BB Seas Maritime and Bruce Blevins, Greg Angel and Sea Angel Fishing Team, Butch and Debbie Carlson and Gypsy Girl Sportfishing, Showtime Sportfishing, Cruiser Yacht Armatore, RK Productions, CR Primo,

Bayliss Boatworks, A Reel Difference, Barbara Evans, and all the staff at Cerros High School.

Thanks also to on-site assistance from Maria Bakit Jimenez, Neil Harris, Alcides Alfaro, and Evan A. Hipsley, Jr.

One never knows how much of an impact one can have in someone's life with just one day of showing them the opportunities that await them. But the success we had with these events gives me such great hope for the future and we can't wait to further expand this program to other marinas in Costa Rica. Year one was a good start, this year was a great success. We look forward to next year being an even greater success.

All in all, both events were a resounding success. This was evidenced by the enthusiasm and participation of the students. Many stations reported incredible attentiveness and questions asked by the students.



Aqua Inspiration Quepos; Photo Credit: Pepper Ailor

Aqua Inspiration Golfito [Photos](#) [Photos](#) (Links to Junior Achievement Costa Rica Facebook)
Aqua Inspiration Quepos [Photos](#) (Links to Junior Achievement Costa Rica Facebook)

YOU MAKE THE CALL
Story by Art McDonald

The venue is Costa Rica with a hot sailfish bite. The boat you're assigned to is well-known and a past tournament winner. Fishing, so far, has been good with several sailfish releases including a couple of "doubles." One of your anglers is hooked up with a frisky sailfish and, as is customary, the boat continues in a sweeping circle around the hooked fish with other angler's lines in the water looking for a second or third fish.

At a point in time, the captain decides "Let's go get this one" and begins to back down toward the fish. As this is happening, the other anglers are retrieving their lines when, suddenly, the hooked sailfish changes direction and gets entangled with one of the other angler's lines before it can be brought aboard.

Seeing that the second angler's line is entangled with the active fish's line, the Captain yells from the bridge to the second angler "Freespool" – which the angler does. The hooked-up angler continues to fight the fish, and, at a point in time is able to get the leader within reach of the mate–tangle and all. The mate does NOT touch the mainline and the sailfish is released by the mate cutting the leader. You have determined that, in your opinion, the entanglement did not impede the fish's ability to fight to a successful release.

Did an IGFA rule violation occur?

My original thought was that, given the facts, no violation occurred. Had the line remained taut, the fish may have been unable to fight. So too, if someone touched the mainline in an effort to untangle the lines, a violation would have happened and, of course, if the fish was "double hooked" or foul-hooked by the second angler there would have been a violation.

SO...I ran this scenario by **Jack Vitek**, of the **IGFA**, and here are his comments: "I ran it past a few colleagues, and we all agree that this would result in the DQ. Even though the second line/reel was in free spool, and in theory did nothing to assist the angler in fighting the fish, the rules clearly state that a fish is "disqualified" if it becomes hooked or entangled in more than one line. Regardless of whether the drag is engaged or not, unfortunately, this would DQ the fish. The only suggestion is that the second line be cut immediately if it is thought that the two lines would become tangled."

Barbara Evans - Pirate Princess – 5th Generation U.S.C.G. Captain **Story by Art McDonald**

This issue we focus our attention on Ms. Barbara Evans – IGFTO Observer extraordinaire!

Chances are if you have attended virtually any IGFTO Tournament in the past several years you have run into the smiling face of Barbara Evans ("Capt. Barbie") – her smile and good nature are virtually impossible to miss. Capt. Barbara Evans' roots go way back – all the way to a great-great-grandmother who fished all her life – in fact, there was even a newspaper article in 1949 extolling great-great grannie's purchase of a rod n' reel at the age of 80! One

might say Barbara has it in her blood!

Barb was born in Maryland and received her early boat training between the Chesapeake Bay, Ocean City, and Bethany Beach, Delaware. Her first captaining experience was when she was 6 years old after her Dad pushed her out on a Sunfish and said, "When you get hungry, you will learn how to sail!" Things were a little different back then, but she learned and continued to love the sea – not only sailing but power as well! Her grandfather had a fishing boat so she was boating and fishing before she could walk. She remembers when it was time for her nap, her Dad would take off his belt and lash her to the bunk so she wouldn't roll out while she was sleeping.

Barbara left home at 17 and moved to the Florida Keys where she lived for 11 years in the winters and went back to Ocean City, Maryland in the summertime. She made the decision that she loved Florida year round and moved to Marco Island 41 years ago – initially to set up a sailboat rental operation at Tigertail Beach. As she says, "I got sand in my flip-flops and never left Marco." After getting her USCG Captain's license (she's the fifth generation Evans and the first female to become a captain), she ran a private boat for a corporation entertaining their clients and friends fishing between the Gulf of Mexico and Duck Key/Hawks Cay in the summertime. She works part-time as a hairdresser and runs a fishing operation on her own boat, the Pirate Princess. If you're in the Marco Island area and have a hankering to go fishing, be sure to call Barbara!

She had heard about IGFTO and, because of her addiction to fishing (which she hopes they never find a cure for), and the principles IGFTO stands for, she was definitely on board for the adventures of observing. Her love of fishing and love for the sea were exclamation points to her joining. IGFTO tournaments she's attended include Puerto Rico, Aruba, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Stuart, Florida. She's also been an angler in the Pirates Cove Billfish series (including the Alice Kelly Tournament), the Mid Atlantic, and White Marlin Open in Ocean City. She's also a world traveler having visited 38 countries so far, including several in Asia, Africa, South America, the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, and her visits to countries for IGFTO Tournaments. She has more on her "bucket list."

There's certainly no grass growing under Barb's feet!



Barbara Evans and a beautiful Mahi Mahi fishing out of the Dominican Republic

Industry News

Costa Rica's Central Pacific Sport Fish Group running out of Excuses By [Todd Staley](#)
June 26, 2023 Courtesy of the Tico Times

The opposition from the Pacific Sport Fishing Association of Costa Rica to Bill 23.643 making it illegal to sell sailfish in Costa Rica continues to baffle me. The comments of their spokesman Daniel Espinoza on a recent Channel 6 news report on the subject were nearly unbelievable.

It is [illegal for commercial fisherman to target sailfish](#), but longline fishermen are currently allowed up to 10% of their catch to be sailfish as incidental catch and be sold on the National market. If encountered alive, all sailfish must be released. The problem is very few are released because for them it is like throwing money back in the ocean. Read the entire article here: [Excuses](#)



Dead sailfish on commercial longlines increases when lines are left unattended.
Courtesy of Tico Times

IGFTO & The Billfish Foundation Come Together for the 52nd Pensacola International Billfish Tournament

Story by Evan A. Hipsley, Jr.



Pictured L to R: IGFTO Director Evan A. Hipsley, Jr., The Billfish Foundation President Ellen Peel, and Gary Sluder, Past President and Pensacola Big Game Fishing Club Board Member. Photo courtesy of [PhotosbyFranB.](#)

The 52nd Pensacola International Billfish Tournament, hosted by the Pensacola Big Game Fishing Club, kicked off in downtown Pensacola on Wednesday, June 28, 2023. 38 teams from around the Gulf gathered in the Pensacola Museum of Commerce for the kick-off party, registration, Captain and rules meetings, and delicious food and beverages.

A handsome display of awards were on hand that would be distributed on Sunday July 2nd at Seville Quarter Heritage Hall during the Closing Brunch and Awards Ceremony. Thursday June 29th at 1200 CST, a shotgun flare start sent the teams into the Gulf of Mexico in search of. The scales opened on Friday and Saturday from 3-7 p.m. at the historic Palafox Pier Yacht Harbor Marina and as anticipated, many changes to the leaderboard occurred during the final hours of weigh-ins on Saturday July 1st. With the exception of a Swordfish, no Billfish were brought to the scales thereby continuing conservation efforts within the Gulf of Mexico. Read the full story here: [52nd PBGFC PIBT](#)

Welcome to IGFTO New Observers!

IGFTO Director Evan A. Hipsley, Jr. facilitated the second Quepos, C.R. Observer Training Course for calendar year 2023 on June 8th at Marina Pez Vela building IGFTO's presence. Graduates:

Juan Chaves	Garabito C.R.
George Ford	Herradura C.R.
Rex Unruh	Eureka Springs, AR



Welcome Aboard New IGFTO Observers! L to R: Rex, George, (Director Evan Hipsley), & Juan. Tight lines.

Click for more information on [IGFTO](#), upcoming [OTCs](#), and [FAQs](#).

Annual Dues Reminder

Each calendar year commencing on October 1st, our annual renewal process begins. In order to be considered a "member in good standing" and to be eligible to both sign up and participate in tournaments as an IGFTO Observer, your dues must be current. Check your

emails frequently; we've made it convenient and easy to pay with the invoice and link provided therein. Have a question about your dues, send an email to the [IGFTO WEBMASTER](#).

Need to contact one of the IGFTO Directors, navigate here: [DIRECTORS](#)

**We're here for you.
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