

YAMAHA CONTENDER MIAMI BILLFISH TOURNAMENT CONCLUDES ITS 29TH ANNUAL EVENT

Proceeds Go to Marine Conservation

The Yamaha Contender Miami Billfish Tournament concluded another successful and exciting fishing tournament and fundraiser for marine conservation and education! The 2011 tournament produced a winning weekend for everyone! Held at the Miami Beach Marina on South Beach in Florida, 288 anglers aboard 61 boats fished for over \$106,000 in cash, plus valuable prizes and trophies. Thanks to its anglers and sponsors, this non-profit organization donated over \$25,000 to area marine conservation organizations and education including groups such as The Billfish Foundation, Florida Keys Marine Laboratory, Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), IGFA and The Ed Fund.

The weekend offered anglers beautiful weather and steady fishing each day, with 183 sailfish released in 2½ days.

On Thursday, March 31, the tournament was kicked off with the Cannon Downrigger Kick-Off Party and Captain's Meeting. Friday, April 1st, was the start of fishing competition, and as the fleet headed out the air was filled with the excitement. Some teams were after Funfish and the chance to get \$3,000 for the top Dolphin or \$3,000 top Kingfish, while others were after the glory of being the Top Outboard and Top Inboard Boats. Although the weather provided some challenges, Andrew Garcia on *Voodoo Child* started the tournament with the first two releases within the first few minutes of fishing. But by day's end, *Owl's Nest* in the inboard division had racked up the most releases and 1,200 points. There was a three way tie for second place for Thomas Flyer, Midnight Blue and Night Prowler all with 5 releases. The Top Angler position was taken by Rick Thomas aboard the Thomas Flyer with 800 Points. The fleet released 49 sailfish by the close of their fishing day.

As the fleet returned to the docks the excitement of the weigh-ins was growing. Crowds gathered on the baywalk to enjoy the weigh-in show and the free dock party. The weigh-in was exciting as fish were brought in to compete on weight. The heaviest and only Dolphin was brought in by Greg Eickhorn on *Kawama* and weighed 14.9 pounds. Ryan Carr on *Pro Payroll* showed off the heaviest Tuna weighing in at an even 18 pounds. It was a battle amongst the Kingfish but heaviest Kingfish was brought in by Donny Condiff on *Reel Control* with 23.80 pounds. To make the festivities even more enjoyable, Zafra Rum, Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer and wine from the Presidential Challenge Wine Bar served up plenty of smiles to thirsty fisherman and spectators.

Day two brought 32 new boats and 140 more anglers into the mix of fierce competition. This was from the addition of the all new Miami Billfish Tournament Outboard Only One Day Blast. This brought out new teams filled with excitement as they competed for over \$17,000 in cash prizes. Team *Yamaha* had 7 releases to earn them the top Billfish Boat and total winnings of \$4,445. On their heels was *Captain Jack* with 1,200 points and *Team Fly Girls* was third place outboard with 1,000 points. Paul Dreisch on Team *Yamaha* was Master Angler with 600 points and Top Female was won by Tracey Preston on *Team Fly Girls* with 600 points as well Top Junior Honors went to Beth Ann Beals aboard *Dockside Market* with 200 points. The Top Funfish boat was won by *Doing It All* winning them \$4,360 overall with 58.40 pounds of fish weighed in. Boat *Bimini Bound* came in second place with 28.20 pounds and third place team *Long Hours* following closely with 24.10 pounds. Top Funfish Honors and \$500 went to Bill Dieterle on *Mango Moon* with a 15.5 pound Tuna, Daryl Deka on *Doing It All* for a 29.3 pound Kingfish, and Top Dolphin at 10.3 pounds by Lismel Morales on *Ms. Lola*.

As the three-day tournament continued on with their second day of fishing, the sailfish seemed to have come out of hiding, and by days end 81 sailfish were released. *Midnight Blue* released eight to bring them into the lead with a two day total of 13 bringing *Owl's Nest* into close second with a total of 12 releases. The weigh in continued but still no Wahoo were to be found. Top Dolphin at 16.2 pounds came in from Thomas Paige aboard *Kabbana*, John Duval on *Pro Payroll* conquered the Top Kingfish with 39.60 pounds, and the Top Tuna at 21.60 pounds came in by Rick Thomas aboard *Thomas Flyer*.

After the final fish were weighed in, the Costa Sunglasses and Sportsman's Adventures "Reel" Dock Party began. Drinks continued flowing, great food was served up and the live music began playing as stories of the day's fishing adventures were shared while lots of laughs and good times were had by all.

Sunday was the final day of competition and excitement was in the air, as was a battle for the top positions

were taken to the very end. With only 14 total fish released on Sunday it was anyone's game, but *Midnight Blue* held strong and finished with 2,800 points. Captained by Capt. Jason Jennings, the team took home \$18,866.66 made up of \$10,000 for Top Inboard Boat, \$1,700 for two Dailies, \$2,066.66 for the two half day Dailies, and \$5,100 for the Pot of Gold. This also gave them the title of Overall Top Boat for 2011 in points! Second place went to *Owl's Nest* with 2,400 points, taking home \$18,363.33 in prize money. Third place Inboard Boat went to *Priceless*, with a close 2,200 in points and \$2,680 in total prize money.

High Standards owned by Frank Villasante and captained Capt. Nick Carullo, caught and released a three-day total of 12 sailfish and 2,400 points earning them Top Outboard Boat. *High Standards* took home \$17,493.33 in winnings from \$10,000 for the Top Outboard boat division, and winnings from various added value categories including \$4,420 for placing first in the Outboard Daily twice, \$1,033.33 for the Half Day Daily, and \$2,040 from the Pot of Gold. Second place outboard boat went to *Night Prowler* with 2,000 points earning them \$6,210 and third place went to *Viva La Vida* with 1,800 points and \$3,473.33

In other divisions, Master Angler went to Eddie Lopez aboard *Midnight Blue*, Top Lady Angler went to Thais Torres aboard *El Capitan* with 400 points and she also captured the heaviest fish by a lady with her 12 pound Dolphin. Top Junior Billfish Angler was Brett Brunner aboard *Voodoo Child* with 1,000 points.

The Funfish Division was not without its excitement as well. *No Vacansea* must have had just that in trying to find the bigger fish as they captured the Top Funfish Boat with a combined 129.60 pounds. The team took home \$3,050 overall. The Top Dolphin and \$3,000 went to Thomas Paige aboard the *Kabbana* for his 16.20 pound Dolphin. \$3,000 and Top Kingfish honors went to John Duval on *Pro Payroll* for his 39.60 pound kingfish which also gained him heaviest fish by a gentleman. And finally, \$1,750 went to Rick Thomas aboard *Thomas Flyer* for his first and second place Tuna totaling 41.3 pounds. Top Funfish Junior was Ridge Murphy aboard *Contender One* with his 16.4 pound fish. When it was all said and done, \$15,850 was awarded in Funfish prize money!

The Miami Billfish Tournament has now raised and donated over \$675,000 to marine conservation and education, fulfilling the Yamaha Contender Miami Billfish Tournament's mission to promote awareness and support marine enhancement, education and conservation.