



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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Many, many moons ago, like the middle of the last decade when Hawg Laird was still terrorizing most of the better dives on the Sandspit, I was the recipient of one hell of an invite thanks to Hawg, a semi-private wade fishin' tournament on the Norias section of El Kingo Rancho. I've been spoiled ever since.

He picked me up shortly after bar closin' time and we chugged coffee until we hit the gate off 77 north of Raymondville where the foreman, a semi-in-law met us for the ride to the coast which turned out to be a bay system off the ICWW or inter coastal water way. The sun had just come up as we drove for an hour and a half across the ranch to our fishin' area. The group that we'd been assigned to had already set up a camp of sorts, couple of picnic tables and an old tarp erected for shade. We'd brought along a half dozen cases of beer and three forty pounds bags of ice that we'd bought from McDonald's back when Billy O'Conner still owned the place and allowed the cleanup crew to sell the extra ice out the back door for five bucks a bag or so I'm told.

Somewhere around ten in the morning the bite was off so we're all sittin' in shade sippin' suds and passin' around a bottle of some of the finest Tequila I've ever had when we finally get around to introductions. C'ept for Hawg, myself and the semi-in-law foreman the rest of the group were all high school football coaches from San Antonio, Kingsville, Fal and the Upper Valley. When I told'em I lived on the Sandspit one asked me what I knew of Port Isabel, I told them I'd lived there for a year and caught a couple of the games since I lived on the fingers and you could hear the PA system from my front deck when the wind was right. Three of the gents asked in

unison "What in the hell do they feed those kids?" I just kinda looked at the gents and said "Food I guess, lots of fish and shrimp and not a hell of a lot of fast food", and then asked them about that particular question. In unison they remarked at the number of gorillas and rabbits on the Tarpoooooon football team and how they were glad they didn't have to play'um. Now folks this was some grown men that weren't totally in the bag that coached 4-A and 5-A teams rather successfully and they're askin' a gringo like me what the secret is. Well, about five bottles of killer Tequila later they still didn't have a satisfactory answer so we went back to fishin' which was funny as hell since we were more than a little wobbly, like to the point where most of us got real wet changin' bait or takin' fish off the hook.

Congrats to the Tarpooooons, give'um hell in San Antonio but don't tell'um what ya ate in your formative years.

DOCK TALES

Sorry for snubbin' Dale Naugle in the last OI Fart's Surf Fishin' Tournament, the gent won close to a C-note with a pompano that weighed less than half a pound, it wasn't intentional but a problem with the records committee. The second OI Fart's Tour that was to have fished last Wednesday was cancelled due to perceived bad toupee weather. I'm told it will be fished this Monday out of Dirty AI's.

We welcome your fishin' photos. Drop them by 2600 Padre Boulevard on the Island, or mail them to I.B. Hooked, c/o Coastal Current Weekly, P.O.Box 2429, South Padre Island, Texas 78597. Be sure to include the name of the angler, weight and type of fish, where caught, and name of boat if applicable. Photos with SASE will be returned.