



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

by I.B. Hooked

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The Texas Outdoor Writers Association

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Another TIFT is in the books, and it was respectable, what with 185 boats in the bay challenge and 125 boats in the offshore challenge. The numbers on billfish were down from last year's record with 22 blues, 10 whites and 20 sails released and 4 sails hung up, but caca pasa. The Steussy Clan out of Mansfield picked up where they left off at the Mansfield Tournament with Riles claimin' 1st in reds, Kari takin' 1st in Ladies Bay and Marsh takin' the whole enchilada, being named Bay Grand Champ. The Murphy Clan off the Sandspit did their usual in the food fish category in the offshore division aboard Thunderbird, with Brittany claimin' 2nd place in offshore total, no billfish and Amber takin' 1st in no bill and 1st in total food fish.

Then we got Ben Heilker and them boyz aboard Mechanical Man. My, they do have a history around these parts. What seems like cons ago Papa Ben, The Mayor, The Senator and Brother-in-Law staged a raid on the Sandspit not seen since the Karankawas are the Singer family and made off with the gold. Them boyz had the audacity to come down here and flat stole



Veronica, the drink slinger from the Coral Reef, and her son, Mario Muniz, did some pre-LKT fishin' with Capt. Dave aboard Knot at Work. The dorado was 58-1/2 inches long. They get another that size, they might get in the chips this Saturday.

Lupe Sanchez and his family, relocating them to the wilds of Port O'Connor where they promptly started winnin' dinero and dodgin' spinners with him in the cockpit. Papa Ben became the first dude to win the Linda Putnam Memorial Boatman Award since its inception way back in '96, for the second time. The

Senator, Ken Armbrister, took 2nd in total points and Craig Hale took first place yellowfin with a 46.9 pound specimen that, though it was short of the 50 pound requirement to put his name on the Hilton Tuna Punch Bowl, it was worth mucho dinero in the jackpots. They had 1,782.5 points overall.

Next up, we got the silver anniversary of the Ladies Kingfish Tournament, or as Lupe once observed, the tournament where our better halves get to get back at us and make us take 'um slime fishin'. Hopefully, mama nature will cooperate, cuz the last time she reared her ugly head back in '94, Capt. Cliff Strain and the boyz aboard the 50/50 did a last second change from offshore to the bay division and the Miller girls ended up catchin' somethin' like 15 different species of semi-finned critters in the ship channel. I say semi-finned, cuz as I recall, the haul included an oscillated moray eel and an American eel. Murray the muller and his gang said to say "hi," and they'll be lookin' forward to this year's edition of moons over the Laguna Madre.

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.