EDISTO 2005

The first event of the 17th Annual South Carolina Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series began on beautiful Edisto Island. Boats began arriving by noon on Wednesday, and there was excitement and anticipation in the air as everyone scurried to rig baits, test the tension on their reels, and talk about their luck or lack thereof, over the past season.

The weather was beautiful with highs in the 70s and light breezes. The 3-day forecast was calling for winds to pick up and seas to increase as a strong cold front moved our way.

The tournament began with a great Captains’ meeting as directors Buddy Smith and Deidre Menefee greeted everyone with a wonderful opening meal of steak and baked chicken. Even Edisto Mayor Burley Lyons was present to greet everyone and wish all the boats luck, especially the local boys.

Day one began with clear skies and light breezes. All 35 boats had decided to heed the weather forecast and go for it on day one. Unfortunately, Recess developed problems shortly after leaving the dock and had to be towed back.

The day was beautiful both on and off-shore. As the boats slowly returned, we heard that marlin had been caught. Game On had called in a 107 incher and Legal Holiday had theirs at 106”. Aggressor had put a satellite tag in a small blue marlin and High Maintenance had released a sail.

As we waited, Aggressor weighed in the top wahoo at 57.5 lbs, C-Dog took the dolphin lead with 65.7 pounds, and Rapid Pace weighed a 27.6 pound yellowfin tuna. As the sun set, the last two boats came in with two beautiful blue marlin.

Game On went first and the cheers went up as the weigh master called out 409.4 pounds. Pictures were taken and the excitement continued as Legal Holiday’s fish came to the scales. To-
gether, side-by-side, it was hard to tell which one would be heavier. Everyone held their breath as the fish was hoisted to the scales and steadied. Three hundred and eighty-eight point two (388.2) was the call. Cheers of excitement and pride went up as the day ended. “Only at Edisto”, exclaimed Buddy Smith.

Friday (day two) started as a carbon copy of day one. Clear skies, light breezes, and mild temperatures again. However, to the west, severe weather, wind and cooler temperatures were heading our way.

Friday’s fishing was light. One white marlin was tagged by Marlin Luhr, and the only other significant event was a lead change from day one in the female angler category.

As dinner was beginning under the tent a strong line of thunderstorms ahead of the anticipated front raced through and put on quite a show with wind, rain and lightning.

Sometimes the weatherman is right and this was one of those times. Saturday saw gale force winds offshore, all but two boats had already gotten in their two fishing days.

The awards took place under blustery conditions. Game On took 1st place to continue their run from last year. Aggressor took top honors in the billfish conservation category. Rapid Pace took the lead in the Bluewater Conservation category by tagging two dolphin.

The top dolphin was an impressive 65.7 pounds and went to Earl Johnson of C-Dog. Top wahoo at 57.5 pounds went to Perry Tucker on Aggressor and the biggest yellowfin tuna at 27.6 pounds was caught on the Rapid Pace by Trey Sires. Top youth angler went to Brett Wood on Hot Rod Blue for his 22.6 pound wahoo and Lady Angler honors went to Vickie Arborgast of the Sassy Lady for a 37.5 wahoo.

As the wind blew and the temperatures dropped we all said goodbye to beautiful Edisto Beach. Thanks to the town of Edisto and Mayor Lyons for their hospitality and to the folks at Edisto Marina; especially Buddy Smith and Deidree Menefee for putting on a great event.
Bob Faith of “Caramba” with the 2nd place 51.2 lbs. wahoo.

Fred Bergen of “Legal Holiday” and his 388.2 lbs. blue marlin along with Captain Matt and kids and Eugenie Barrow.

Zach Counts from “C-Dog” and his 21.9 lbs. dolphin.

Frank Gibson and crew of “Sea Hawk II” with a nice 43.6 lbs. wahoo.

Earl Johnson and friend with a 65.7 lbs. “bull” caught on board “C-Dog”.

Bob Faith of “Caramba” with the 2nd place 51.2 lbs. wahoo.
**SC GOVERNOR’S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES 2004 WINNERS**

**Outstanding Billfish Boat**
- **Points:** 1 Blue, 409.4 lbs., 434.4 pts
- **Boat:** Game On
- **Owner:** Victor O. Roof, Jr.
- **Captain:** Grady Chandler

**Outstanding Billfish Conservationist**
- **Points:** 1 Blue (released) 325 pts
- **Boat:** Aggressor
- **Owner:** Shem Creek Charters
- **Captain:** Reid Bost

**Blue Water Conservation**
- **Points:** 2 Dolphin (tagged) 100 pts
- **Boat:** Rapid Pace
- **Owner:** SHSR Enterprises
- **Captain:** Sam Schirmer

**Outstanding Billfish**
- **Weight:** Blue marlin, 409.4 lbs
- **Boat:** Game On
- **Owner:** Victor O. Roof, Jr.
- **Angler:** Victor O. Roof, Jr.

**Outstanding Dolphin**
- **Weight:** 65.7 lbs
- **Boat:** C-Dog
- **Owner:** Charlie Yeomans III
- **Angler:** Earl Johnson

**Outstanding Yellowfin Tuna**
- **Weight:** 27.6 lbs
- **Boat:** Rapid Pace
- **Owner:** SHSR Enterprises
- **Angler:** Trey Sires

**Outstanding Wahoo**
- **Weight:** 57.5 lbs
- **Boat:** Aggressor
- **Owner:** Shem Creek Charters
- **Angler:** Perry Tucker

**Outstanding Youth Angler**
- **Fish:** Wahoo
- **Boat:** Hot Rod Blue
- **Owner:** Steve Wallace
- **Angler:** Brett Wood

**Outstanding Lady Angler**
- **Fish:** Wahoo
- **Boat:** Sassy Lady
- **Owner:** Robert Arbogast
- **Angler:** Vickie Arbogast

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1st place wahoo weighing 57.5 lbs. caught by Perry Tucker aboard “Aggressor”.

1, 2, 3, PULL!!!!
WALLACE F. PATE SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

Miss Whitney Williams of Mt. Pleasant, S.C. is the recipient of the 2004 Wallace Pate Scholarship. Whitney is a senior at Wando H.S. and is planning to attend Coastal Carolina University to study Marine Science. She is a member of the National Honors Society, Spanish Club, Junior Classical League and Yearbook committee. She was one of 42 applications that were considered. She will be receiving $1,500 to help pay tuition costs. Congratulations!

SCDNR MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION PROGRAM

In South Carolina, four species of sea turtles inhabit our coastal waters and beaches: loggerheads, leatherbacks, Kemp’s ridleys and green turtles. Loggerheads, the state reptile, are the most common sea turtle nesting and hatching on coastal beaches from May to October. Leatherbacks are common in coastal waters during spring and fall as they migrate between South America and Nova Scotia. Kemp’s ridleys and green turtles use coastal estuaries as feeding areas. Since 1980, SCDNR has had an active marine turtle conservation program involving research, management, monitoring and education.

Current research includes satellite telemetry of nesting female and juvenile loggerheads. To follow these turtles visit the web site (address below). Management involves nest protection on 19 beaches with over 500 volunteers. Monitoring efforts include the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (reports dead and debilitated turtles that wash up on the beach), and coastal aerial surveys to count leatherbacks during spring migration and loggerhead nests in summer. Education includes the Loggerheadlines newsletter and web site (address below).

During the turtle season the public is asked to:

1) not disturb sea turtles or their nests
2) obey local lighting ordinances,
3) be on the lookout for turtles in the water to avoid boat strikes and
4) report any signs of disturbance or poaching to local authorities or call 1-800-922-5431.

During 2004, there was a successful response to the leatherback and mating loggerhead sighting programs with 20 leatherback sightings and 6 mating loggerhead sightings. This program will continue in 2005.

It is hoped that the public will enthusiastically participate by encouraging others on the beach or in ocean waters to help sea turtle conservation in our state by reporting sightings to the SCDNR. Please visit our web site (http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/seaturtle/) to learn more about sea turtles or to report a sighting. Your support will help sea turtle conservation in South Carolina.

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The S.C. Department of Natural Resources’ Law Enforcement Division reminds the public of Coast Watch, which was developed to better help citizens report violations of saltwater recreational and commercial fishing laws, as well as marine environmental laws.

The Coast Watch hotline number (1-800-922-5431) is toll-free and available 24 hours a day.