

SPORTING TRADITIONS

THE MAGAZINE 2023



AMERICAN ENGINEERING AMERICAN QUALITY AMERICAN MADE HOOKS



STRONGER



LONGER



SPECIES: SAILFISH

HOOK: L2004EL

SIZES: 3/0 - 10/0

FEATURES: NON-OFFSET, LIGHT WIRE, FORGED POINT

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Visit www.preschallenge.com for Current Tournament Results, Conservation News, Tournament Dates, Rules and Information



SPORTING TRADITIONS

THE MAGAZINE 2023

THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE SERIES WAS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES:

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THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE EVENTS WERE SANCTIONED BY THE OFFSHORE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

2023 PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE EVENTS
· Presidential Women's World Fishing Challenge
· Presidential Flamingo Fishing Rodeo

THE PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE CONSERVATION SERIES
Presented by
PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.
205 East Enid Drive
Key Biscayne, Florida 33149
Ph 305-904-4678
joan@preschallenge.com

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



For over 25 years, the Presidential Challenge Conservation Series has been dedicated to the initiatives of game fish conservation as well as promoting sport-fishing eco-tourism as a sustainable business around the world. Here are just a few recent highlights of our efforts.

Four University of Miami students have been awarded the 2023 Capt. Harry D. Vernon, Jr. Memorial Scholarship while working toward advanced degrees at the prestigious Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric and Earth Sciences. In order to qualify, applicants must be studying pelagic marine animals or environmental and economic studies relating to pelagic species. Capt. Harry Vernon was the founder of Capt. Harry's Fishing Supply in Miami, Florida, and an avid recreational angler. He fished around the world and was very active in promoting sport fishing and conservation. These scholarships are made possible by the work of the Presidential Challenge Charitable Foundation, which raises funds through a series of tournaments known as the Presidential Challenge Conservation Series.

Work also continues on the Adopt-a-Billfish satellite tagging initiative. First begun in the early 2000s in Central America, Adopt-a-Billfish takes a science-based approach to satellite tagging of billfish in order to further our knowledge of the various species. Recent projects have focused on white marlin in the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. These enigmatic billfish inhabit vast swaths of the world's seas and yet very little is actually known about their migratory patterns and spawning areas. In 2022, I visited the North African nation of Morocco and fell in love with the nation, its people and the fishing there. I was able to return in 2023 with NOAA marine biologists Derke Snodgrass and Eric Orbeson, where we successfully tagged 13 very healthy white marlin with PSAT tags—check out the recap of this expedition in this issue. The information gained during this expedition will be shared during the seventh annual International Billfish Symposium in 2024.

Abriendo Mentos, which is Spanish for 'Opening Minds,' was established in 2009 by founders Meradith Leebrick and Drew Ragland. The couple had been living in Potrero, Costa Rica, for several years and were asked by their Costa Rican neighbor if they could begin offering some English classes for his daughter and her cousins. What began as very informal tutoring sessions with no supplies, no resources, and no physical classroom space, grew steadily into a full-fledged after school program for dozens of local children.

Since 2009 the organization has continued to grow by leaps and bounds, with highlights including the addition of adult education programming, the donation of a computer lab leading to the establishment of a technology program, the creation of a women's economic empowerment programs, the development of an international volunteer structure, and a formal program expansion to the neighboring community of Brasilito. The Presidential Challenge Charitable Foundation continues its financial support of this organization each year following the Presidential Flamingo Fishing Rodeo.

The Presidential Challenge is also continuing our watchdog efforts with the Costa Rica Sportfishing Commission to ensure a bright future for recreational fishing within that Central American nation, which has been under siege recently from a variety of different aspects.

Our signature event, the highly popular Presidential Flamingo Fishing Rodeo, carries on the traditions of fun, family angling competition in a low-stress environment; since its inception, it's become the largest summer tournament in the seaside community of Flamingo in northern Costa Rica. As the development of the Marina Flamingo project continues to move forward, the marina has become the center of activity for this quaint beachside community. The low entry fees, multiple species to fish for and minimal rules make the Flamingo Fishing Rodeo a real winner for everyone.

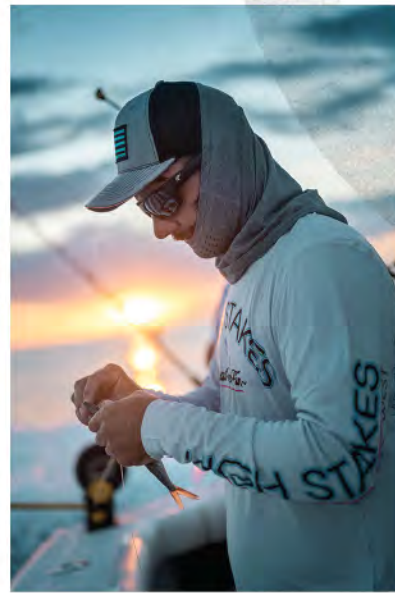
We also need to thank our donors and sponsors, many of whom have supported the Presidential Challenge for decades. Without your support, none of this work would be possible. The same goes for our anglers, volunteers, observers, scientists and all the others who have worked tirelessly to ensure a bright future for billfish species around the world.

Tight lines in 2024 and beyond!

Joan Vernon
Director, Presidential Challenge Conservation Series



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THE FISH.



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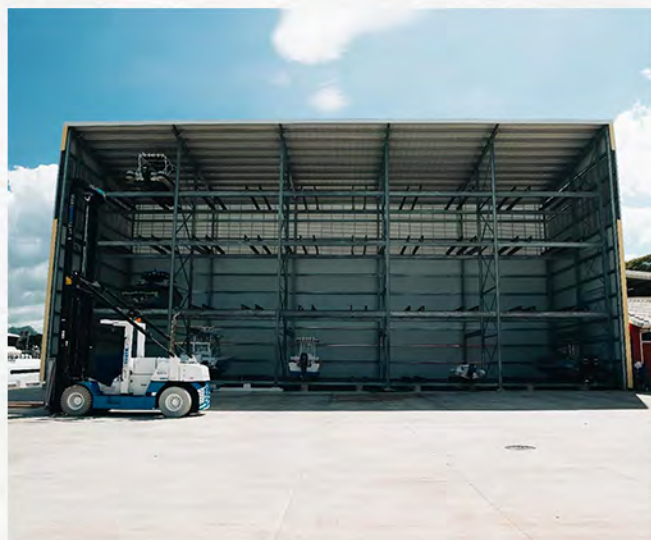


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FINAL RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL FLAMINGO FISHING RODEO

PRESENTED BY MARINA FLAMINGO

Flamingo, Costa Rica: Hosted by the new world-class Marina Flamingo, the eighth annual Presidential Flamingo Fishing Rodeo saw an action-packed two days of fishing amid perfect weather conditions in the seas off Flamingo, Costa Rica July 28-30, 2023.

This year, a record 33 teams and 160 anglers, many of whom were representing families, junior or lady anglers, participated in the fun event. Participants were welcomed at Marina Flamingo for final registration and the rules meeting; afterward, dancers from Villareal Public School put on a show for the gathered anglers, with cultural dancing in traditional attire and live music.

With the competitive rodeo format of the tournament, all fish were scored equally, with mandatory release for all billfish species and gamefish scored based on length rather than being weighed.

Day One saw plenty of action, especially for the offshore boats. The team fishing aboard *Seacario* took the early lead in the Flamingo Casino Offshore Division with 13 sailfish releases and 230 points, followed by *Mainline* with 180 points. Catch verification was done by cell phone video, and all billfish were released. *Tiberon Azul II* was the top inshore boat in the CR Marine Supply Inshore Division on Day One with 100 points followed by points. Nathan Landers on *Kelly Dawn* scored a 44-inch tuna and *Patron's* Dr. Hansel Larios had a 62-inch wahoo. Jose Gomez from *Family and Friends* had the largest dorado of 57 inches. The participants enjoyed a festive dock party at Marina Flamingo after fishing, and looked forward to the next day.

On Day Two the action slowed a bit, but that didn't stop the team on *Kelly Dawn*, representing their home port of Marina Pez Vela in Quepos, from pulling out the win in the Flamingo Casino Offshore Division with a total of 581 points. They caught nine sailfish, six tuna and four dorado—two days of great fishing out of Flamingo. *Pura Vida 55* from Los Sueños Resort and Marina was second with 18 sailfish and one dorado, while another Los Sueños boat, *Family and Friends*, placed third with 428 points from 11 sailfish, one blue marlin, one wahoo and one dorado. Rum Runner rounded out the top four with 426 points.

The CR Marine Supply Inshore Division winner was the team fishing on *Rickdiculous* from Marina Flamingo with 136 points, scored from catching three nice dorado.



Second place was *Tiberon Azul II* with four roosterfish, and *Mainline Flamingo*, an all-lady team, placed third, also with four roosterfish.

The top billfish boat was *Pura Vida 55*, who caught and released a whopping 20 sails over two days. In second was *Seacario* from Marina Papagayo, also with 20 sailfish. *Family and Friends* rounded out the top three with 11 sails and a blue marlin. Nikita Timmerman from the *Salochankita* was named the tournament's Top Lady Angler, while Jose Gomez from *Family and Friends* was the Top Male Angler. Kendall Valverde from roosterfish releases with two. The Top Junior Boy Angler was Bradley Dobbins and Catalina Suarez was the Top Junior Girl Angler.

In the gamefish standings, Dr. Larios' 62-inch wahoo on *Patron* held up for the win for that species, while Alberto Gutierrez landed a 47-inch tuna on *Reel Escape* to win in that category. For the tournament there were 13 blue marlin and 191 sailfish released, along with 27 dorado, 19 tuna, 11 roosterfish and two wahoo.

The tournament's presenting sponsor, Marina Flamingo, is the newest and one of the most upscale facilities of its kind in Central America. It can accommodate vessels of all lengths, with an array of premier services and amenities, including 184 slips with floating docks, a high-speed fuel dock, and full immigration and customs services onsite. The marina is an oceanfront wonderland of onsite restaurants, marina-view accommodations, a ship's store, and VIP Club. Step outside the marina's 6.2 acres of facilities and you'll have access to many of the Pacific's best white-sand beaches and many other world-class activities to enjoy.

The Presidential Flamingo Fishing Rodeo benefits not only marine conservation in Costa Rica but also a local charity called Abriendo Mentas, which is a nonprofit organization to help provide assistance to people in that part of Costa Rica to have access to enhanced education and employment opportunities. For more information on the event, please visit www.preschallenge.com or email tournament coordinator Joan Vernon, pezvelajv@aol.com.

8TH PRESIDENTIAL FLAMINGO FISHING RODEO



FINAL RESULTS

#ANGLERS- 156
#BOATS- 33
SAILFISH- 191
MARLIN- 13
DORADO - 27
TUNAS - 19
WAHOO - 2



TOP INSHORE



TOP OFFSHORE

CR MARINE INSHORE DIVISION

TOP INSHORE BOAT RICKDICULOUS 1363 POINTS	2ND INSHORE BOAT TIBERON AZUL 100 POINTS	3RD INSHORE BOAT MAINLINE FLAMINGO 100 POINTS
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FLAMINGO CASINO OFFSHORE DIVISION

TOP OFFSHORE BOAT KELLY DAWN 581 POINTS	2ND OFFSHORE BOAT PURA VIDA 441 POINTS	3RD OFFSHORE BOAT FAMILY & FRIENDS 428 POINTS
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DESYFIN JUNIOR DIVISION

TOP JUNIOR BOY BRADLEY DOBBINS 181 POINTS	2ND JUNIOR BOY CHASEN CARNEY 50 POINTS	TOP JUNIOR GIRL CATALINA SUAREZ 25 POINTS
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KINGSAILFISH FUNFISH DIVISION

LONGEST DORADO - SPONSORED BLP ABOGADOS
JOSE GOMEZ 57" FAMILY & FRIENDS

LONGEST TUNA - SPONSORED BY CA BUSINESS STRATEGY
ALBERTO GUTIERREZ - REEL ESCAPE 47"

LONGEST WAHOO
HANSEL LARIOS - PATRON 62"

MOST ROOSTERFISH RELEASES - SPONSORED BY FLAMINGO URGENT CARE
CHASTITY DAWN - MAINLINE FLAMINGO 4 RELEASES

MOST BILLFISH RELEASES - SPONSORED BY WET ASS II
PURA VIDA 400 POINTS

TOP MALE ANGLER - SPONSORED BY KRAIN REAL ESTATE
JOSE GOMEZ - FAMILY & FRIENDS

TOP FEMALE ANGLER - MARIE'S RESTAURANT
NIKITA TIMMERMAN SALOCHANKITA

TOP FAMILY - PURA PESCA FISHING SUPPLY
TIMMERMAN FAMILY SALOCHANKITA



TOP JUNIOR BOY



TOP JUNIOR GIRL



2ND JUNIOR BOY



2ND INSHORE



2ND OFFSHORE



3RD INSHORE



3RD OFFSHORE

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TEAM TRILO BITE WINS

PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION'S

WOMEN'S WORLD VIRTUAL FISHING CHALLENGE

NEW WORLDWIDE TOURNAMENT ENCOURAGES LADY ANGLERS
TO PARTICIPATE IN COMPETITIVE SPORT FISHING

The organizers of the Presidential Challenge Charitable Foundation have announced the final results of the Presidential Women's World Virtual Fishing Challenge. This virtual format event took place Feb. 1 – March 31, 2022, with women anglers competing in teams around the world. Eligible species included all billfish species (100 percent release for blue, black, white and striped marlin as well as sailfish and spearfish) as well as mahimahi, which may be weighed or measured. Blue and black marlin were scored at 500 points each; white and striped marlin are 300 points; sailfish and spearfish are worth 100 points. Mahi are one point per pound. The tournament was scored using the CaptApp application, which verifies catches using video and geo-location, among many other features—cellular reception is not required for the app to operate, and anglers fished from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. for six days during the two-month period in two categories.

The big winners this year were fishing for Team Trilo Bite, representing Italy and fishing out of Marina Pez Vela in Quepos, Costa Rica. Anglers Alice Stevanin and Stacy Parkerson found a hot bite in progress just off the central Pacific coast and made the best of it, releasing five blue marlin, four black marlin and 48 sailfish in their six days of fishing to tally an incredible 9,300 points.

Placing second was Team Salt Shakers, a team of American ladies fishing out of Guatemala's Casa Vieja Lodge. Mary Weingart, Kathy Gillen, Connie O'Day, Brenda Moore, Kristin Salazar and Nicole McKenny scored 6,500 points during their six-day stretch of fishing. In third was Team Intensity, also fishing out of Guatemala—Lacey Hagler, Phoenix Rogers, Samantha Carney, Natalia Frost, Lara Doran and Holly Hearn earned 5,600 points. They also captured the award for the largest mahimahi at 46 inches. Additional teams participating represented Costa Rica and Kenya, among other notable destinations.

"Once again this year, this event was very well received and participation is increasing," says event organizer Joan Vernon. "The virtual format means teams can fish at home or in any other destination around the world, and the CaptApp application verifies all the catches with reviewable video, which worked very well. Proceeds from the event will benefit also several worthy charitable and conservation-based organizations. We're already planning for a bigger and better event in 2024."

RESULTS



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TOP TEAM FEBRUARY
SALT SHAKERS (USA) 4000
POINTS

2ND PLACE TEAM
SALT SHAKERS
6500 POINTS

TOP TEAM MARCH
TRILO BITE (ITALY)
9300 POINTS

3RD PLACE TEAM
INTENSITY (GUATEMALA)
5600 POINTS

TOP OVERALL TEAM
TRILO BITE
9300 POINTS

LONGEST MAHI MAHI
INTENSITY
46"



PRESIDENTIAL CHALLENGE CONSERVATION SERIES



**PRESIDENTIAL WOMEN'S
WORLD FISHING CHALLENGE**

FEBRUARY 1-MARCH 31, 2024



**PRESIDENTIAL FLAMINGO
FISHING RODEO**

AUGUST 3-4, 2024



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ADOPT-A-BILLFISH HEADS TO MOROCCO



BY ERIC ORBESEN

After a successful fishing expedition off the North African nation of Morocco in September 2022, Joan Vernon reached out to marine biologists Derke Snodgrass and myself from NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center to gauge interest in satellite tagging in the region. Popoff satellite archival tags measure and record temperature, depth, and locations estimates of the tagged fish for up to one year, giving insight on how fish use the water column, as well as provide valuable data on migration corridors. The behavioral patterns of billfish in the northeastern Atlantic Ocean are relatively unknown, with significant gaps in our understanding. Recognizing this knowledge deficit, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and its Standing Committee on Research and Statistics have called for a deeper exploration of billfish habitat preferences and their movement patterns in the northeastern Atlantic.

Plans took shape swiftly, and over the following year, everything fell into place. The collaboration between the scientists, Vernon's team of anglers, and the boat's crew paved the way for a remarkable research endeavor. The strategy was meticulous: we would target only white marlin for this study, and only the healthiest fish were selected for PSATs, while exhausted, injured, or otherwise unhealthy individuals were released with conventional tags. Every fish was recorded on video, and a snooter device was used to control and protect the fish during the tagging process. A visual assessment was conducted to distinguish between white marlin and roundscale spearfish, primarily based on head and gill cover shapes, known as opercles. To ensure species identification, a fin clip was taken from either the dorsal or pectoral fin for later genetic analysis.



After our arrival in Mohammedia, our team met with Capt. Marco Canu over dinner to strategize for the following day. On the morning of September 15, 2023 the expedition began aboard *El Matador*, a beautifully maintained 1998 40-foot Gamefisherman, which proved to be the perfect platform for safe fish handling and tagging.

The first two days of fishing were with Laurent Sahyoun, *El Matador's* owner and a passionate sport fisherman in his own right. Three fish of the nine or so white marlin that were caught were tagged using satellite tags. The first was estimated to be about 70 pounds; the second and third were both estimated to weigh around 50 pounds. The angling team of Vernon, accompanied by Kim Hermanowski, Bill Pino, and Fernando Duarte, arrived on September 16 and were set to begin fishing the following day.



The fishing remained good, with the fourth fish of the trip coming as the second of a doubleheader after the first one broke off while being handled boatside. In total we were able to successfully implant four additional tags in healthy white marlin that day alone.

Our fourth day of fishing was a little slow with only one bite in the morning, and the first fish tagged wasn't until after lunchtime where we tagged two more for the day. Over the course of the next few days, we had many other fish caught but some broke off after getting a legal catch and some had health issues where we elected not to risk the additional stress of a PSAT tag. We ended up with 13 of about 24 caught fish over the six days of fishing.

The tags are programmed for a variety of durations ranging from 180 to 365 days at large for a total of 2,855 days of monitoring. All tags, with the exception of the 365-day tag, will measure and archive readings of temperature, depth, light, and time every three seconds, and transmit summaries of the data via the Argos satellite system. If you or someone you know happens to find a tag on a fish or washed up on the beach, we offer a \$500 reward for its return.

If you are interested in participating in citizen science for highly migratory species, you can request a free conventional tagging kit for use on any billfish or tuna caught in the Atlantic Ocean by emailing tagging@noaa.gov or calling 1-800-437-3936. The results of this research will be presented at the seventh annual International Billfish Symposium in San Diego, California in early October 2024.