

Kiama Independent



The 15th Annual Blowhole Big Fish Classic takes place at Kiama Harbour

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BIG FISH: Angler Vaughn Little and skipper Mitch Ryan with their 76.5kg striped marlin. Picture: Supplied

MORE than \$25,000 worth of prizes were on offer when the Blowhole Big Fish Classic dangled a line at Kiama on the weekend.

The 15th Annual Blowhole Big Fish Classic took place on April 1-2 at Kiama Harbour.

There were two divisions, capture and tag and release for boats, with entrants competing for the 18 prize categories.

According to organisers, a poor weather forecast affected entries in the 2017 event with 15 boats entering the competition.

The Saturday however turned in excellent weather conditions for those anglers competing in the tournament, with early action on mahi mahi and a blue marlin of 100kg tagged and released to “Frantic”, skippered by Steve Banks.

Shortly after tagging that marlin, Frantic were in action again on a large yellowfin tuna estimated at 70kg-plus, only to lose it at the boat.

The emphasis on tag and release was evident throughout the day with “Snoop n Round” skippered by Ian Kilmore tagging another blue marlin of 90kg.

Plenty of striped tuna were reported, as well as bait schools of sauries and flying fish, plus mahi mahi were also in strong numbers closer in for “Storm Bay 2” and “Nauti Escape” to continue a run of tag and releases for junior and lady anglers.

Down the “Banks” the action centred on whaler sharks with “Stainless Stil” getting among the action, tagging and releasing six while in the midst of all these sharks.

Junior angler Jackson Smith tangled with a solid black marlin for three hours only to lose it near the boat when the snap swivel broke.

The only capture for the tournament went to Vaughan Little on “Outcast” skippered by Mitch Ryan, with a 76.5kg striped marlin on 10kg that scored 13,460 points.

Ryan reported plenty of marlin sightings off the ‘Drum Canyons’ but no sharks, so they switched to marlin fishing and came up with a good capture.

The Sunday featured the return of bad weather and big seas and despite starting the competition, when wind speeds exceeded 34 knots, gusting up to 40 knots at 11am, the tournament director cancelled fishing for the day due to safety reasons.



Mark Way with Champion Lady Angler - Tag and Release Melissa Papadimas.

Tournament director Mark Way thanked his committee comprising of Matt Cameron, Gai Delavere, Nick Hodgkins and Chris Gibbons for their help in making this tournament successful.

“You can control almost everything but not the weather,” Mr Way said.

“Last year we had great weather and 32 boats with anglers these days placing emphasis on

weather conditions. Ironically, the Saturday this year was ideal.

“Special thanks to Geoff Fitzgerald from Port Kembla Marine Rescue who replaced Bruce Mitchell as sked/radio operator for the tournament.”

The tournament presentation was held at Kiama Leagues Club, and results were as follows:

Tag and Release: Champion Boat - Stainless Stil; Highest Point Scoring Male Angler – Steve Banks; Highest Point Scoring Lady Angler – Melissa Papadimas; Most Marlin Boat – Frantic on a count-back from Snoop n Round; Most Sharks Boat – Stainless Stil; Most Other Game Fish Boat – Storm Bay 2; Champion Junior Angler – Jackson Smith; Champion Small Fry Angler – Harry Britten.

Capture: Champion Boat – Outcast; Heaviest Marlin – Vaughan Little, striped marlin 76.5kg on 10kg; Champion Angler – Vaughan Little, 13,460 points.