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# THE TAG FLAG

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TOURNAMENT ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2002

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## ***Molle Legacy Captures 2002 Ixtapa Title***

By Jim Gill

Perpetuating a family tradition, Alan Molle, son of Smokey and Alene, secured top honors of the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Ixtapa Sail Fish Tournament. Alan, a first time Ixtapa participant, was substituting for the "under the weather" Alene. He won the tournament with a total of 1,900 points. His victory was ensured by a final day's performance of 860 points.

One game fish, worth 10 points, and the time of release, determined the contenders' victory circle. John Zehnder's second place victory, with 1,360 points, was only ten points ahead of third and fourth place. Anglers John Jackson and Arlen Steiner, both finished with 1,340 points. On a technical ruling, one of John Jackson's releases was determined to be earlier than Arlen's, garnering third place for John.

*(cont'd on page 2)*

## ***Evans, Jackson, McNamara & Yahiro Take 3<sup>rd</sup> Place ROLEX/IGFA***

By Jerry Yahiro

TAA's Eastcape 2001 team to the prestigious 2002 ROLEX / IGFA Offshore Championship, finished in third place, out a field of 57 teams. Bill Evans, John Jackson, Neal McNamara and Jerry Yahiro joined 239 international anglers for the four day tournament held May 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, in Cabo San Lucas.

The Offshore Championship Tournament was well managed and coordinated by IGFA's President, Mike Leech, and staff and directed by Sue Vermillion.

The total point difference between the first place team (New Smyrna Billfish Tournament, Florida, 2,518 points) and TAA's third

place team was less than one marlin, 239 points. (Fishing with 30-pound test line, each released marlin was worth 350 points.) *(cont'd on page 2)*

## ***Neal McNamara Scores Again At Eastcape 2002***

By Neal McNamara

The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Eastcape Billfish Tournament was held at Hotel Palmas de Cortez, Baja Sur, Mexico, on June 9-12, 2002. The event was an absolute smash hit with 71 marlin released by 24 anglers in three days of fishing. The record book reveals that the 2002 Eastcape was the most productive since 1987, when an unbelievable 163 billfish were released by 33 anglers.

Of the 71 marlin released this year, perhaps 4 to 6 were Pacific Blues and the remainder were Striped Marlin. Because the scoring for both species is the same, a precise count was not kept. It is unusual to note that no Sailfish were seen this year.

Neal McNamara repeated as overall champion with 7 striped marlin releases, the exact number that won the 2001 tournament for him.

*(cont'd on page 3)*

### ***Molle Legacy***

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Fifth place angler was Jean Geddes with 770 points.

“The 2002 Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament was a major success. Expertly planned by co-chairmen Pete Davis and Steve Davis. This banner event was complimented by the staff and accommodations at the Hotel Dorado Pacifico,” proclaimed veteran tournament organizer and past TAA president, Neal McNamara.

Recovering from a surprise rainstorm on Sunday, anglers turned in mixed results, on Monday, the first day. John Jackson established an early lead by taking the daily high point angler with 750 points. Second and third place anglers were Arlen Steiner with 440 points, and Rocky Franich with 300 points

Tuesday's results were slightly diminished with 28 sailfish releases, six dorado and one tuna boated. However, three new contenders

emerged from the pack. Daily high point angler was Lou DeMers with 580 points. Second and third places went to Jean Geddes, 460 points, and Bob Vizcarra, 450 points.

Following Wednesday's respite from competition, the anglers returned on Thursday, by topping the previous daily results with 46 sailfish releases, and boating 8 dorado. Veteran competitor John Zehnder captured top daily honors, with a best of tournament, 900 daily high points. Setting the stage for his next day triumph, Alan Molle finished second with 600 points. Finishing in third place was Rolfe Croker with 450 points.

The final day was the best overall with 48 sailfish releases, plus nine dorado and one tuna. Alan Molle secured daily high point by logging 860 points. Arlen Steiner finished second with 600 points and alternate angler, Cory Hill, surprised the field with a third place daily score of 470 points.

Friday's highlights also included the boat captains' party and awarding of top boat honors. First place went to Mels with 2,270 points. Cocoy placed second with

1,970 points, and Rebelde, third, with 1,770 points.

The highlight of the tournament's finale awards celebration was the recognition of TAA's past Board of Directors and founders. Plaques honoring 17 years of service were presented to John Jackson, Neal McNamara and Bill Hoey (Hoey was not in attendance.) A special award was presented to Jim Ramsey for his contribution as dock master and boat chairman for the past several years. Ramsey will continue to make the boat arrangements, while training an alternate.

Final individual results were: 1<sup>st</sup> place, Alan Molle, 1,900 points; 2<sup>nd</sup> place, John Zehnder, 1360 points; 3<sup>rd</sup> place, John Jackson, 1,340 points; and 4<sup>th</sup> place, Arlen Steiner, 1,340 points.

Angler awards for the four daily high points included John Jackson, Lou DeMers, John Zehnder and Allan Molle.

The two-angler teams were awarded as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> place team, Bob Fox and Alan Molle, (2,500 points); 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Arlen Steiner and Dan Radman, (2,070 points); 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Judy Franich and John Zehnder, (1,810 points); and

4<sup>th</sup> place, John Jackson and Steve Davis, (1,620 points).

Total fish count for the four-day tournament was 153 sailfish (released), 27 dorado and 2 tuna.

### **ROLEX / IGFA**

*(cont'd)*

The first day of fishing started well when John Jackson tipped a baited striped marlin shortly after the Team

### **ROLEX / IGFA**

*(cont'd)*

started fishing. John also tipped another billfish later in the day. Neal McNamara added another striped marlin for a daily total of 1,050 points. The Eastcape team led the tournament for day 1.

Day 2 added two additional striped marlin releases, one each by John and Neal.

The highlight of the day was an 89.74 pound wahoo caught by Jerry Yahiro, worth 179 points. The catch was the largest wahoo caught during the tournament and earned the first place award in that category. The Eastcape Team again led the tournament with a total of 1,929 points.

Day 3 turned out to be the possible turning point for the

Team. Upon boarding the boat, they decided to head to Los Frailes, a 2 \_ hour trip, from Cabo, for the day's fishing. Reports of great marlin fishing prompted the decision. However, none were caught. That decision may have cost the team the tournament title.

The fourth and final day resulted in one marlin caught and released by Bill Evans.

Team Eastcape 2001 ended the tournament with 2,279 points and in third place overall.

The Offshore Championship produced 242 qualifying fish during the 4 days of fishing. Marlin releases totaled 179, while 44 dorado, up to 49.9 pounds, and 19 wahoo, up to 89.74 pounds, were caught. No qualifying tuna were caught.

### **Neal – Eastcape 2002**

*(cont'd)*

The first day began with rough water and 13 marlin released. Mike McElroy won the daily high point on a tie-breaker with Bill Evans and Neal McNamara. Each of the three anglers released two strippers.

Only 12 marlin were released on the second day, despite the fact that the seas began to settle down. Dale Miles won the daily high with 3 quick releases, followed by George Rusdal. Dale ended the day in a tie for the lead with Neal McNamara.

The real story of the Tournament took place on the final day. The weather was perfect and most of the fleet headed North towards Cerralvo Island, based on reports from non-tournament boats that many marlin were in that area. How right that proved to be!

After the final count, 46 marlin were released and fattened almost every angler's score. Keith Leimbach scored a perfect 1000 points with 4 fast releases. McNamara also released 4 marlin, but lost 25 bonus points with one tough fish. Neal and Dave Ogle had three double marlin hook-ups and landed all 6 fish. In fact, one was a triple and they had to ask the mate to "get rid" of the fish, which he did after a bit of a struggle.

Triple releases were scored by Bill Coppock, Dale Miles, Mike McElroy, Dave Ogle and Ray Jones and doubles by Jim Gill, Sanbo Sakaguchi, Jack Betts, Debbie House, Dale Hupp, John Jacobi, and

Dave Stoller. What a day! All boats reported multiple marlin in their wakes and under teasers.

The consensus among the boat captains was that June 12, 2002, was the best fishing day at the Eastcape in 10 years! As they say, you should have been there as the "good old days" returned with a rush.

The format at the Eastcape is that the anglers fish in two divisions. The "Champion Division", is made up of anglers who have won Tournament Anglers Association sanctioned events in the past.

**Neal – Eastcape 2002**  
*(cont'd)*

All other anglers fish in the "Challenge Division". The winner of the Challenge Division moves up to the Champion Division in the following year. Thus, the Eastcape is two tournaments in one.

As a group, the Champions once again reaffirmed their status, out fishing the Challengers by 3.83 to 2.67 fish per angler.

Dale Miles won the Challenge Division with 6 stripers. One more release and he would have taken the overall championship from Neal. Challengers Ray Jones and Darrell

Ticehurst both finished strong.

The top 4 individual anglers were: 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Neal McNamara (1,725 points); 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Dale Miles (1,500 points); 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Mike McElroy (1,250 points); and 4<sup>th</sup> Place, Keith Leimbach (1,250 points).

Steve and Debbie House managed the 2002 Eastcape and did an outstanding job for the second year in a row. Darrell Ticehurst will be the Chairman for the 2003 event. The tentative dates are June 20-25, 2003.

**TAA's ROLEX / IGFA  
Offshore Championship  
Teams**

In an attempt to recognize the top four anglers from each tournament and standardize the selection process, the Association's Board of Directors has implemented a new guideline. TAA will be represented at the annual ROLEX / IGFA Offshore Championship Tournament by two teams.

Each team will be comprised of the top four, individual high point anglers, from both the Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament and the Eastcape Billfish Tournament.

If a designated team member can not participate in the ROLEX / IGFA Offshore Championship, the Board recommended that the angler with the next highest individual points, in the respective tournament, fill the vacancy until the four angler team is selected.

The two teams for the 2003 ROLEX / IGFA Offshore Championship are:

**Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament**  
Alan Mole, John Zehnder,  
John Jackson, Arlen Steiner

**Eastcape Billfish Tournament**  
Neal McNamara, Dale Miles,  
Mike McElroy, Kieth Leimbach

**Milestone Achievement**

Twelve Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament anglers achieved milestone levels for individual, TAA tournaments, lifetime billfish releases. These anglers were recognized at the awards party and will receive their respective release patches. They are:

John Jackson	150
Dave Plut	75
Jim Ramsey	50
Kathy Holeman	25
Jim Severson	25
Rolfe Croker	20
Jack Betts	15
Steve Lynch	15
Dale Miles	10

Alan Molle	10
Brian Hill	5
Jean Geddes	5

A full listing of all TAA anglers' lifetime releases is included in this issue of the TAG FLAG.

### ***2003 TAA Tournaments***

#### **Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament**

January 25 to February 1.  
Fishing days are Jan. 27, 28, & 30, 31. One opening still available. Contact Steve Davis,  
Tel #, 707-794-1562,  
email: [sdavis@firedept.net](mailto:sdavis@firedept.net)

#### **Eastcape Billfish Tournament**

June 20 to 25.  
Contact Daryl Ticehurst,  
Tel #, 650-347-5919,  
email: [darrel@home.com](mailto:darrel@home.com)