

Ponichtera Runs Away At Eastcape

The 19th Eastcape Billfish Tournament was all over after day one because Ken Ponichtera of The Dalles, Oregon led from wire to wire and bested the second place angler, Dale Miles, by 750 points, or three billfish releases.

A total of 56 billfish were released in three days of fishing by 33 TAA anglers. Records show that this was the 6th most productive event in all the years since the tournament started in 1983. Of the 56 billfish, Rick Bothmer released a nice Pacific Blue. The other fish were 54 Striped Marlin and one Sailfish. In addition, the group caught 5 dorado and a single wahoo.

Most of the fish were hooked either in the Punta Pescadero region or just a few miles offshore from La Ribiera. It is very interesting to note that almost exactly half of the billfish were hooked on lures and the other half hooked on dead ballyhoo. Circle hooks were mandatory when using bait. This year, live bait was not available at all for reasons that were never explained.

Ken was high point for day 1 followed by new TAA member Mark Rogers, who released two marlin. The second day proved to be the best with 23 billfish released. Ed Day led the field followed closely by Rick Bothmer. On the last day, Richard Kersten quietly released two stripers to take the daily prize, followed by Richard Schwager.

High boat for the tournament was a new one, Billfighter, with 8 releases or 2000 points, followed by Cutty Sark and Julissa. Daily high went to Billfighter twice and then to Cutty Sark on day 3.

The 2006 Eastcape was chaired by Neal McNamara and co-chaired by Dale Mile. In 2007, Dale will chair the tournament, and the co-chair will be Jim Severson.

The 2007 dates are June 14 to June 18 and we have booked rooms and boats for 40 anglers in anticipation of a good turnout for the 20th Anniversary. Mark your calendars now!

The official results follow:

Overall Champion Ken Ponichtera 1500

Champions Division

1 st Dale Miles	750
2 nd Smokey Molle	510
3 rd Neal McNamara	500
4 th Andy Jacobi	500

Challenge Division

1 st Ken Ponichtera	1500
2 nd Dave Ogle	750
3 rd Richard Kersten	750
4 th Mark Rogers	750

Teams

1st Ponichtera/Ramsey 1750
2nd Ogle Hafeman 1250
3rd Bothmer/McNamara 1225

In a new competition this year, the Challenge Division outgunned the Champions by a significant margin and each of the 19 challengers received a new offshore lure courtesy of Island Lure Company.

We wish to thank all of our other sponsors for their very generous contributions: Penn Reel Company, Hook & Tackle, and Costa Del Mar.

Our explanation of the team to represent the 2006 Eastcape at the 2007 Rolex/IGFA Offshore Championship is a bit complicated. Ordinarily, the top four overall anglers comprise the team. Those were, Ponichtera, Miles, Ogle and Kersten. However, Ponichtera and Miles had already qualified for the Rolex at Ixtapa so the next two anglers moved up, Mark Rogers and Bill Evans. But Mark will be on a sailboat to his new home in New Zealand so had to decline. This, then, moved Ed Day into the fourth and final team spot. For the record, we should tell all that Dale Miles also qualified for the Rolex by finishing in the top four at the 40th Annual Roosterfish Tournament. This “trifecta” may never be achieved again.