
Ernest Hemingway International Billfish Tournament

22/08/2014



The 64th 'Ernest Hemingway' International Billfish Tournament, (EHIBFT) one of the oldest sport fishing events in the world, brought together 22 teams from the United States, Sweden, France, England, Italy, Canada, Mexico, Latvia, Spain, Russia and Cuba. During four days of fishing, from June 9th to 14th, 20 blue marlin and six white marlin were tagged and released.

Finishing in first place and named Overall Champion was the Cuban boat Santi, they tagged and released three blue marlin and one white marlin and added to their score with five dorado. This was an historic moment for the tournament as Santi represented the fishing community of Jaimanita (adjacent to the Hemingway Marina), and it marked the first time a team of Cuban fishermen have represented a village community.

Noting Santi's achievement, José Miguel Díaz Escrich, Commodore of the Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba and IGFA representative, said his goal was to see more communities take part in the 65th tournament, especially those north of Havana, and fishermen from the Cjimar community where Ernest Hemingway used to dock Pilar and where his captain Gregorio Fuentes lived.

Tensions between the USA and Cuba have long denied American sport fishermen access to the EHIBFT, but this year a thawing of relationships between the two countries saw greater participation by US Anglers.

Dr. Moisés Hernandez, a Miami resident and the first Cuban-American to participate in a Hemingway tournament, fished aboard the boat that finished third in the Tag & Release category. At the awards ceremony, Dr. Hernandez thanked Commodore Escrich, noting that thanks to him he could now participate in the tournament. He added that, as the first to take part, he would join in the efforts of Commodore Escrich to make it possible for more Cubans living abroad to enjoy the great festival of sport fishing that will be the 65th tournament.

Again showing that restrictions on travel between the US and Cuba may be easing was the participation of a group of U.S. fishermen. They were there thanks to efforts by the Florida-Cuba Environmental Coalition, with which the

Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba has entered into a partnership. The group received permission from the US Treasury Department to travel to Cuba and be present at the event.

This is first time the US government has granted a permit to US anglers to travel to Cuba, by air, for this event. The next step is to allow fishermen to sail aboard their yachts and participate in the 2015 tournament.

Four anglers from the Lighthouse Point Saltwater Sportsman Association carried a banner of partnership to Commodore Escrich. Accepting the banner, Commodore Escrich said he will work to bring more teams to the next tournament, from fishing clubs and associations worldwide.

This year's event celebrated the life and work of the American writer Ernest Hemingway who, 60-years ago, received the Nobel Prize for Literature for his novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. The tournament also marked the 80th anniversary of Hemingway's first crossing from Key West, Florida to Havana on his yacht *Pilar*.

The 65th Ernest Hemingway Billfish Tournament will be held May 25th –30th 2015

AWARDS:**Champions Tag & Release**

Boat: Santi

Country: Cuba

Second Place

Boat: Odds and Ends

Country: USA

Third Place

Boat: Tag & Release

Country: Cuba-USA

Largest Dorado

Boat: Santi

Country: Cuba

Largest Tuna

Boat: Rebel Yell

Country: Spain
