

“BWANA” IS BOSS OF 2019 THE HAWAII MARLIN TOURNAMENT SERIES

Capt. Teddy Hoogs led his team on “Bwana” to win money in 6 of the 7 tourneys in the 2019 HMT Series. “Bwana” posted scorecards earning 3 First Place wins, 1 Second Place finish and day money in two other tournaments.

Craig Lindner Jr. - owner of “Bwana” - was crowned Champion Angler and “Bwana” earned the Championship Team title of the HMT Series, all the while pocketing a total of \$582,126.00.

“Marlin Magic II” earned \$515,830.00 with 3 First Place wins of their own. Keith Hilton caught the largest marlin of the 2019 Series, a coveted “grander” weighing in at 1,035.5 pounds in the 33rd Big Island Marlin Tournament. Parker and company finished the season as 2nd Place Series Team.

In 2019 there were 295 blue marlin caught, of which 9 were weighed. That’s a tag and release rate of just under 97% - a conservationist’s dream. Every tournament winner had tag and release on their score card. Even if they were one of the “lucky 9” to weigh a fish, in many categories the tag points merge with weighed fish points to contribute to a win.

Think about that for a minute. Fishermen have long been known as folks prone to stretching the truth about the one that got away and now here they are earning big checks for purposefully letting them get away!

Craig Lindner and the crew on “Bwana” caught a total of 34 blue marlin this season. Craig tagged 30 himself, and weighed one at 671.5 pounds. His crew helped with double headers. K.J. Robinson tagged two and Bobby Cherry tagged one.

Honorable mention goes to “Last Chance”. This crew went out on Day One of the BIMT and tagged 6 blue marlin and then went back out on Day Two and tagged 6 blue marlin again! Chad Beaudry and Ian Keinath were the tired but happy anglers.

Kona’s reputation for Big Fish held true this summer, after a stellar spring run of “big girls”. Edgar Artecona caught the first “qualifier” at the Firecracker Open. Ed brought a 488.5 pounder to the scale, only to be upstaged by Andy Diel who captured the win with a 517.5 pound blue the next day.

At the BIMT, Wahine angler Michelle Amador weighed her largest fish to date, tipping the scales at 579 pounds. Michelle took the lead over Chip Wagner, who weighed a 404 pounder on Day One. Michelle stole the lead from Chip, then Craig Lindner stole the lead from Michelle, only to have Keith Hilton upset the entire show when he landed his grander, all of which upset the lead set early by Beaudry and Keinath and their tag and release fest. Fishing tournament competition just doesn’t get any better than that.

Dave Anderson closed out the season with the largest marlin at the “It’s a Wrap” tournament, a 607.5 pound bruiser. This fish made a blistering run that timed out on the video of 57 straight seconds, almost emptying the spool of line.

So what does Capt. Teddy Hoogs know that the others don’t? If there is any secret at all, it might be consistency. He fished every single tournament with the same angler and the same crew. They have a team that works together like a well oiled machine. Two time Champ Rick Shedore won his 2018 crown this way, fishing the season with Capt. Rob Elly on “Lightspeed”.

Obviously, fishing with the same team has advantages and pays off. In 2019, Champion Craig Lindner outscored his nearest challenger by more than 5,000 points. Lindner posted a final total of 8,390 points

Over the years, most Series Championships have been won with about 3,000 points. In slow years, the Championship has been claimed with as little as 1,000 points, so this is very, very impressive.

The competition between Skippers and Crews was closer with 3,549 points between “Bwana” and “Marlin Magic II” - closer, but still an impressive spread.

Kona is home to one PGA golf tournament, the Mitsubishi Electric at Hualalai, and it has a total purse of \$1.8 million and a winner’s share of \$300,000.00. The Hawaii Marlin Tournament Series has now surpassed the PGA *and* the Ironman to be the richest sports property on the Big Island, and maybe all of Hawaii. Sure, there are richer big game tournaments hosted in a few other destinations around the world, but you will be hard pressed to find another one that pays out as much to teams with tag and release on their score card.