

Billfish Tournament

by Ed Jensen

Seventy-six teams of fishermen representing angling clubs from all over the world took part in the 11th Annual Billfish Tournament in Kailua, Kona last month. Two teams from O.C.C. were entered with team No. 2 captained by Ed Jensen aboard his 30 foot Mardi J having the lion's share of the luck.

Fishing on the team were Tom Nieman, Sam Sanford, and Larry Bortles. During the 5 day tourney the team hooked up with three Pacific Blue Marlin but were able to land only one of the long-nosed fighters.

Jensen took the Mardi J to Kona two weeks previous to the tournament and experienced a rough crossing especially in the Alenuihaha Channel. As fate would have it the Mardi J's first Kona marlin was caught by the boat's name-sake Mrs. Mardi Jensen. The fish, her first marlin, was caught on light tackle and weighed a respectable 158 pounds, but was no help to the team since it was taken two days before the tournament began.

The first day of the contest the team hooked up with a blue marlin estimated at 350 pounds late in the afternoon, however, it was lost when the line broke.

Tuesday's action was more exciting

with Sam Sanford landing a longnose that weighed in at 184 pounds. Since the fish was caught on medium tackle (80 pound strength test line) Sanford was awarded a 30 percent bonus that put the O.C.C. on the scoreboard with 239 points and 8th place overall. This position was reduced to 10th place the next day when other teams were successful bringing fish to gaff.

Friday afternoon, the last day, with the club desperately needing another billfish to get back in the top ten, grew fast paced when a marlin estimated at 200 pounds hit, but hopes were dashed when the light tackle line broke and Mr. Marlin went dancing gaily off across the Kona Sea trying to shake loose the lure he had stolen from Jensen. Shortly after this heart breaker the "stop fishing" call came over the radio and the 11th Annual Tournament was pau.

The O.C.C. team No. 2 finished in 14th position and proudly accepted a small trophy that now graces the cabin of the Mardi J.

Says Captain Jensen, "The team worked well together, but when you're using light and medium tackle in an effort to get bonus points you're bound to loose a few fish. For our first tourney we did well just to get on the scoreboard and like the man says, 'there's always next year'."



Sam Sanford and Mrs. Jensen, with Sam's 184 lb. Marlin. Photo: Bill Finch