

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release  
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Caption DOCFORDS: Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille is again title sponsor for the 2018 tournament.

Logo attached

### **Doc Ford's co-sponsors eighth annual tarpon tournament**

A 100-percent purse and the new allure of winning a coveted tarpon jacket promise to make the seventh annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament on Friday, May 3, 2019, the hottest competition on the water.

Doc Ford's -- with locations on Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, and Fort Myers Beach -- has again committed to being the title sponsor for the 2019 tournament, along with the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). Proceeds will benefit wildlife and conservation education at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

The tournament pays out 100 percent of the entry fees, which could amount to \$25,000 or more, as tournament awards to the top five teams. This year, 55 spots in the tournament were filled shortly after opening registration online late last year. Interested parties can contact DDWS executive director Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org) to add their names to a waiting list.

In 2017, Marty Harrity, co-owner of Doc Ford's, added a new incentive for taking first place in the tournament. He introduced the exclusive "tarpon jacket," a pink sports jacket swimming with tarpon.

"It's kind of like the green Masters tournament jacket in golf," said Harrity. "The winning captain gets the honor of wearing the pink 'tarpon jacket.'"

“Doc Ford’s has been a faithful supporter of our efforts at ‘Ding’ Darling, helping greatly to bolster refuge programs and research to balance federal budget shortfalls,” said Miller. “Last year we raised \$120,000 for the refuge as a result of sponsorships, donations, and auction proceeds. In its seven years of existence, the tourney has raised nearly \$450,000. We’re so grateful to Doc Ford’s for this huge effort in our behalf.”

For more information on the tournament, visit [www.dingdarlingtarpontourney.org](http://www.dingdarlingtarpontourney.org). Anyone interested in becoming a tournament sponsor should contact Dot Vorhees at 239-472-1100 ext. 239 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

Tournament sponsors for 2019 include: **Title Sponsor:** Doc Ford’s Rum Bar & Grille; **Starting Position:** Nimrod; **Champion Sponsor:** Raiser’s Edge; **Premier Sponsors:** Mark & Gretchen Banks, Diversified Yacht Services Inc.; **Presenting Sponsors:** Captiva Diva, Custom Tees Now, Joseph M. Kelley Plumbing & Heating, Stockyards Brick & Timber; **Platinum Sponsors:** J.J. Taylor Distributing Florida Inc., Law Office of Christopher G. Hill PC, Mabry Brothers Inc., “Let’s Take It Outside,” Organized Chaos, Suncoast Beverage Sales; **Gold Sponsors:** Congress Jewelers, Fort Myers Marine, Gulf Star Marina, The Historic Bait Box, Jensen’s Twin Palm Cottages & Marina, Law Office of Janet M. Strickland PA, Lee County Sports Development, Nautical Mile Magazine, On Island, R.S. Walsh Landscaping, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Whitney’s Bait & Tackle; **Silver Sponsors:** Anisa Stewart Jewelry, Bailey’s General Store, Florida Weekly, Bonita Bill’s Waterfront Café, Fort Myers Brewing Company, Freedom Boat Club, Island Inn, Island Sand Paper, Island Sun & River Weekly News, Semmer Electric, Tarpon Bay Explorers, Trophy Case of Fort Myers.

#### ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

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