



## It's a Wrap!

Ding Darling Doc Ford's 6th Annual Tarpon Tournam  
Final Blog  
by  
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It's 5:30 AM, we are loading bait, rods, rain gear, beverages and food on the boat at the ramp. As predicted, the wind is blowing out of the East at about 16 mph which will limit where we can fish. Anticipation is still running high. We've got crabs, Pinfish, Threadfins, fresh Mullet and Catfish tails, so we are good to go on bait but we head to the causeway to get a few more Threads anyway. It's 6:20, we head for the starter boat, we get the thumbs up and blast off for what we think is a great location.

It's 6:50 AM we arrive at our destination. We go down to idle, drop the trolling motor and ease over to where we want to anchor, it's 7:01, a Tarpon rolls 30 feet from the bow of the boat, a crab is thrown, we wait, and we wait a little longer.....nothing. Man, if that fish had eaten that bait we would be sitting pretty. Well, at least the Tarpon are here.

It's 3:00 PM we've been to four more places trying to get hooked up. We've seen a fair amount of Tarpon and 3 other boats jump fish. The Tarpon are not actively eating. Per the hourly updates, Team YAM has released 3 fish and there have been 15 caught. We have an hour to jump and release 2 fish just to place, let alone win. Our enthusiasm is waning, desperation is setting in. Reality check.....it ain't gonna happen. I'm sure a similar scenario played out in over 40 other boats that did not release a fish, but hey that's Tarpon fishing as they say.

With the exception of a few dickweeds who came too close to anchored boats, most everyone was mindful of spacing, respectful and courteous. Not even sure the ones who weren't respectful were even in the tournament. All of the tournament boats we recognized were well behaved. The professional captains in the event provide a good example of how it's supposed to be done.

A big congratulations to first place Team YAM for releasing 3 fish under tough conditions-high winds and uncooperative fish, and to second place Team Doc Ford's with 2 Tarpon especially their last release just before the bell. Congrats also to third place Team Bait Box, fourth place Team San Carlos Marine and fifth place Team Mabry Brothers. And well done to all the other boats who managed to release a Tarpon, you should feel good even though your wallets did not enjoy an infusion of cash. You get a pat on the back and the warm glow of accomplishment.

Even though we didn't win we had a lot of fun and of course all the wonderful camaraderie on our team. Screw my team mates and their camaraderie .....I wanted to win! It was another well run tournament - great food at Doc Ford's great communication from the committee and most important of all we raised a bunch of money for wildlife.

Looking forward to the 7th Annual Ding Darling Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament which is scheduled for FRIDAY, May 11, 2018 (chosen by Team YAM).

Until then, enjoy your time on our waters and be safe.

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