

McKenzie's Tiger Shark Shatters Poor Boy Tourney Record

BY DOUG RUTTER

Robert McKenzie, a perennial bridesmaid in the Poor Boy Shark Tournament out of Shallotte Point, finally has a reason to kick up his heels and celebrate.

The Fayetteville man, who has placed in the tournament at least half a dozen times, finally won all the marbles last week with a tournament-record-shattering tiger shark that tipped the scales at an unbelievable 937 pounds.

"I'd say he did it with a bang," said his son, Ron McKenzie of Linden, who fished on the winning boat. "Not only did he win the tournament, but he set a new record. We're all pretty thrilled with it."

The 937-pound female tiger highlighted an otherwise uneventful 12th Annual Poor Boy, held out of Hughes' Marina. Thirteen boats entered the tournament, and fishermen brought just 12 sharks to the docks.

For the second straight year, Mother Nature dealt fishermen a nasty hand. Anglers battled rough seas all three days of the tournament that started last Thursday. Severe thunderstorms threatened throughout the weekend.

"They didn't get to fish where they want-

ed to and as long as they wanted to because of the weather," said tournament chairman John Watkins.

The lousy weather was a repeat of last year, when fishermen landed just 27 sharks. "Two years in a row," Watkins said. "Hopefully we'll return to the good weather of a few years ago next year."

Despite the conditions, the winning fish made this year's tournament a memorable one. The pregnant shark was 12 feet, 8 inches, long and estimated at nine to 10 years old.

Fishing with Robert and Ron McKenzie on the *Honey I* was Lonnie Stone of Narrows, Va. Ron McKenzie said the boat left shore around noon Thursday and anchored about 8 to 10 miles offshore.

It wasn't long before a large shark took one of the baits. The fishermen battled the fish for about 90 minutes before the line became tangled and snapped.

"We were very disheartened at this time," McKenzie said. The boat returned to the spot where the shark had been hooked, and the crew immediately hooked up with the huge, female tiger.

The shark and fishermen battled for 2 1/2

hours, with the fish pulling the boat 2.7 miles before it could be tied to the side of the craft and brought ashore.

"She put up quite a fight and she was smart," McKenzie said. "She acted like she had been around the block once or twice and been hooked."

Catching the tiger might have been the easiest part of the day for the crew of the *Honey I*.

"Our boat ran into all kinds of problems," McKenzie explained. "We had everything go wrong that could go wrong."

Among other things, the boat wouldn't steer to the left and the engine overheated. "It took us about four hours to get back in with that much shark," McKenzie said.

As it turned out, the boat sustained so much damage that the crew couldn't fish Friday or Saturday. "I felt like we'd really outdone ourselves," McKenzie said. "I wouldn't trade the experience for nothing in the world."

McKenzie and his fishing buddies thought the shark weighed between 450 and 500 pounds until it was actually on shore. "Once we got her in and saw how big the

belly was it amazed us."

Tournament biologist Dr. Frank Schwartz, a shark expert with the N.C. Institute of Marine Sciences at Morehead City, said a 937-pound shark is "highly unusual."

Sharks weighing between 400 and 600 pounds are considered large for this area. The state record is 1,150 pounds and the world record is 1,400 pounds.

Schwartz found 55 fetuses inside the female shark, which was about two to three weeks from delivery. They weighed 140 pounds, which accounted for 15 percent of the mother's body weight.

How big was the shark? When tournament officials tried to lift the fish from the water with a crane, the 5/8-inch stainless steel hook in its mouth straightened out and the shark fell to the ground.

McKenzie said his father, Robert, hooked an even bigger shark about three years ago but it got away after snapping a wooden-handled gaff with its powerful jaws.

That shark was well over 1,000 pounds. "This is the biggest thing we've ever caught and landed," McKenzie said of the tourney winner.

C.W. "Junior" Hughes of Shallotte Point,

who owns the marina where the tournament is based, held the old tournament record with a 648-pound tiger landed two years ago.

McKenzie ran away with the tournament this year and took home \$910 in prize money. His monster outweighed every other fish by at least 855 pounds.

"It was a tournament record," Watkins said. "We were excited about that, but we were disappointed with the weather."

Finishing second and winning \$650 was Adam Sanders of Ocean Isle Beach with an 82-pound blacktip.

Landing a 71-pound blacktip and earning \$520 for third place was Charles Maxwell of Hope Mills.

Everett Kendall of Simpsonville, S.C., placed fourth and won \$260 for a 26-pound brown shark.

The Poor Boy usually gives out six awards, but Watkins said only four boats brought sharks to the weigh station this year. The top four places shared 90 percent of the entry fees.

The 13th Annual Poor Boy Shark Tournament has tentatively been scheduled for July 21-23, 1994.

FISHING REPORT

Local Piers Reporting Steady Catches

BY DOUG RUTTER

Local pier fishermen continued to catch an assortment of fish last week while anglers in pursuit of large king mackerel offshore were slowed by rough seas.

Pier fishing, which was excellent in early July, is still better than usual for the second week in August. Hot weather typically ruins pier fishing, but record heat last month didn't hurt a bit.

Anglers caught spots, pompano, whiting, trout, flounder and black drum last week at the South Brunswick Islands' three ocean fishing piers.

Gil Bass of Holden Beach Pier said fishing was better last week than it was the previous week.

"I think maybe this cooler weather has helped a little bit," Bass said Monday morning, referring to a cool front and showers that moved through the area over the weekend.

Ed Kayler of Sunset Beach Fishing Pier said anglers were catching fish in the rain on Sunday, when six to eight flounder were landed.

Fishermen also pulled in some nice black drum last week at Sunset Pier weighing 4 to 5 pound each.

"We haven't been skunked one day all week," Kayler said. "There's not a lot of spots, but they're catching fish."

Anglers at Ocean Isle Beach Fishing Pier caught mostly spots and speckled trout last week, according to manager Curtis Williamson.

"It's been pretty fair. It could be better but they're catching fish every day," Williamson said. Fishermen caught a few sheepshead last week.

"I'm pretty sure it's going to get even better when this weather cools off," he added. "After Labor Day I'm pretty sure everything's going to get in full swing."

Tripp's Fishing Center
Joyce Land of Tripp's Fishing Center at Shallotte Point said fishermen started catching some big, yellow

low spots in gill nets Monday morning.

Anglers continued to catch smaller spots on the hook and line last week. Other inshore catches included flounder, spottailed drum and big black drum.

Offshore, the crew of the *Rockin' Robin* landed three king mackerel and one amberjack last Saturday.

Fishermen also caught dolphin and yellowfin tuna in the ocean. "Overall it's good, all things considered," Land said.

Sheffield's
John Sheffield of Sheffield's store at Ocean Isle Beach said rough seas spoiled the offshore fishing most of last week.

"The wind was blowing so hard," he said. "It was kind of poor fishing for four or five days there."

Sheffield said last week was "probably about the worst week we've had this summer. A lot of people trying but not much catching."

This Week's Tide Table

Day	Date	HIGH		LOW	
		A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Thursday	12	3:13	4:03	9:40	10:34
Friday	13	4:19	5:03	10:41	11:33
Saturday	14	5:22	5:59	11:40	-----
Sunday	15	6:20	6:52	12:27	12:36
Monday	16	7:16	7:43	1:18	1:27
Tuesday	17	8:09	8:32	2:05	2:18
Wednesday	18	9:01	9:21	2:52	3:09

ADJUSTMENTS
SHALLOTTE INLET—add 17 min. high tide, add 32 min. low tide.
LOCKWOOD FOLLY—subtract 22 min. high tide, subtract 8 min. low tide.
BALD HEAD ISLAND—subtract 10 min. high tide, subtract 7 min. low tide.
SOUTHPORT—add 7 min. high tide, add 15 min. low tide.
LITTLE RIVER—subtract 11 min. high tide, add 18 min. low tide.



PHIL BRINSFIELD of Ocean Isle Beach caught this 36-pound king mackerel July 31 aboard his boat, *Getaway*.



JOHN SUTTON of Ocean Isle Beach landed this 40-pound wahoo during a recent fishing trip on the *Job Site*.



GORDON HAYES of Newport Street, Ocean Isle Beach, caught this 30-pound-plus king mackerel aboard the *Old Sarge* 12 miles out from Ocean Isle Beach on July 22.

It's Hard To Believe, But Fall Fishing Lies Ahead

BY JAMIE MILLIKEN

Rough weather kept most boats at the docks this past week. Strong southwest winds and daily thundershowers teamed to turn the ocean into one large washing machine.

The bad weather days made it tough on this year's Poor Boy Shark Tournament, held annually at Hughes Marina at Shallotte Point.

For complete results (and one amazing fish) see Doug's article also in this week's *Beacon*.

Our weather is changing. The nights are beginning to cool a bit, and this always serves as a reminder that the good old fall fishing is just around the corner. But, I ask you, how can it get any better? Those of you who have been directly involved in this year's offshore fishing will agree—it has been an exceptional year. It is just hard for me to believe that our best fishing is still ahead of us.

Fall fishing is a magical time in the South Brunswick Islands. We are famous for our runs of spot and those great North Carolina mullet. It will not be long before our area piers are lined (shoulder-to-shoulder) with anglers catching spots two at the time.

As you know, when we start seeing large runs of fish moving along our beaches, the king mackerel trips suddenly turn from running 20 miles offshore to some fantastic fishing in 30 feet of water or "in the suds," as we like to say.

What's best about fall fishing in the South Brunswick Islands? For me it's enjoying the fishing stories of that day's fishing trip around an open campfire roasting some of our world-famous oysters. Between Missy's combread and Larry Holden's oysters and Chip Maree's storytelling, it's like the television commercial—"it don't get no better than this!"

So that about covers us this week. This unstable weather won't last much longer, so I hope to see you soon on the water.

Until next time, good fishin' and good luck, "Jolly Mon."

Safe Boating Course Set

Flotilla 1005, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, will sponsor a boating safety and seamanship course beginning Sept. 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Oak Island Coast Guard Station. For information, contact M. Fullwood, 457-4512; H. Sweeney, 278-5200; or J. Mulder, 845-2115.

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