

Competitive Shark-Fishing: Not For The Faint Of Heart

(Continued From Page 6)

from years of practice, the three men dragged bloody baitfish out of the cooler, secured them to the massive steel hooks and attached sinkers and brightly colored balloons to each line. These would act as floats to keep the bait at the proper depth.

Hypnotized by *Wavedancer's* steady rise and fall, I stared at the four pairs of balloons bobbing on the waves and tried to imagine what the next 10 hours might be like if we actually hooked a shark big enough to win this tournament. I shuddered at the thought of being dragged for 14 miles across those tumbling swells.

As we spent the next few hours rising and falling with the sea, the three tournament veterans had endless stories to tell of past encounters with the king of sea—the fish Australians respectfully call “the man in the gray suit.”

They talked about the big shark that got away last year. About how they actually saw it only briefly—but long enough to know that it weighed over 1,000 pounds and might have set a new state record.

But mostly, they talked nervously about the barge. They wondered how the tug boat could have gotten so close to the edge of the river channel. Why its captain failed to alter course as it approached a

brightly lit boat that should have been visible for miles.

They recalled their surprise when the tug passed by so close; the shock of seeing a thick steel cable inches above their heads; the horror of realizing that a towering wall of metal was about to smash into *Wavedancer's* bow; the relief when it pushed the boat aside instead of rolling them underneath.

It was a chilling account of an experience that would prompt most folks to leave their boat ashore with a “for sale” sign on it.

But not these guys. They were already talking about returning to the same spot that night!

With that in mind, the *Wave-*

dancer crew agreed it was pointless trying to hook something that you probably couldn't land in 5-foot waves and 25 knot winds.

They decided to head home, get a bite to eat, shower off, grab their first sleep in 36 hours and head to the calmer waters of the lower Cape Fear at sunset.

As the older Dave wrestled *Wavedancer* through the surf breaking in the inlet channel, young Dave said he was sorry that I didn't get a chance to see what shark fish-

ing was all about.

Insisting that no apology was necessary, I thanked the Smiths for the opportunity and assured them that even though we didn't catch a shark, I had indeed learned a great deal about fishing for them.

“That's why they call it fishing,” said his dad as he adjusted the frayed bandage clinging to his forehead. “If you brought something back every time, they'd have to call it catching!”




TWO GENERATIONS of shark hunters, David Smith Jr. (right) and David Smith III, discuss their strategy as *Wavedancer* begins its second day of tournament fishing.




BOB EDWARDS rigs another rod as a pair of red balloons carries the weighted shark bait away from *Wavedancer's* stern.



JAYNE SMITH talks with her husband and son aboard *Wavedancer*. The crushed bow shows evidence of the boat's 3 a.m. encounter with a barge near the mouth of the Cape Fear River the previous night.



Recipient of
1ST PLACE
FOOD
DIVISION
at the 1992 & 1993
BLUE CRAB
FESTIVAL



RESTAURANT & RAW BAR
ON THE LAKE AT CYPRESS BAY

In
Little River, South Carolina

Early Dinner Menu—4:00 to 6:00 P.M.
 Pasta of the Day \$11.95 • Chicken Angelica \$9.95 • Steak Diane \$12.95
 Crabcake Chesapeake \$12.95 • Fried Jumbo Shrimp \$11.95 • Broiled Flounder \$9.95
 Sea Catch (Black Grouper, Yellow Fin Tuna, American Red Snapper, Norwegian Salmon) when available \$11.95 to \$13.95
 Entrees served with house salad, fresh baked bread and sauteed vegetables or rice.

We serve food Mon-Fri till 1 AM, Sat. till 12 PM, Sun. til 10 PM

HAPPY HOUR IN THE BAR 4 TO 7 PM—FREE WINGS
Bar Specials All Nite

35¢	15¢	\$2.25
Fresh Shucked Oysters	Steamed Spiced Shrimp	Alaskan Snow Clusters

OFF PREMISE CATERING AVAILABLE

Hwy. 17, Little River, SC • Open 7 Days a Week, RESERVATIONS PREFERRED (803) 249-2624