

## World Cup Invitational 2007

Well, it was a great meet this year, with 25 divers coming from Australia, Guam, Canada, and the USA to attend this meet presented by 20 Fathoms, accompanied by wives and kids in some cases.

The meet was held at Palapas Ventana, in the small town of La Ventana, and the Host Tim Hatler and his staff did a brilliant job in making sure that all the divers and guests needs were met.

The tournament is over 5 days, with the middle day being a day off from comp. Some of the divers chose to hunt goats on Cerralvo island, or dive the reef in search of pargo, grouper, and snapper.

The north wind had been blowing when I arrived on the 6<sup>th</sup>, and from the airplane, I could see that the water was not flat by any means, but I hoped that it would back off and lay down in time for the meet.

Sunday was to be a day of scout for some people, but as the wind was still strong, the captains chose not to go out that day, so divers got the chance to do some beach diving from the captain's trucks, south of La Ventana.

I spoke with Tim about the chance of having to cancel due to wind, and said I wanted the divers on the water unless it was life threatening the next morning. So, he gave the captains the word, and they showed on the beach Monday morning, ready to load and go.

0630 October 8<sup>th</sup>.

The wind was still howling, and the seas were big for this area, and looking towards the channel, you could see that the swell was much bigger once offshore a bit.

At 0730 we left the beach, and the group split in half, with one going north, and the other headed east to the south end of the island. Ian and Doc headed for LaReyna, with Tim and me in hot pursuit. It was slow going, with big seas, and lots of water over the bow keeping the captain on his toes. We opted to stop at La Reynita, with a few other boats, and work the area for a bit. Peter Marley was in our boat, and he hit the water saying the place was dead. No bait fish, no game fish, pretty quiet.

I jumped in, dove down on the fad and hung for a bit, when I looked up, there was a dorado going over my head. Needless to say, Peter jumped back in, and we hunted the area for a bit.

Meanwhile, Ian's boat got to LaReyna, and he jumped in. Doc was getting ready, when the captain had the tiller handle on his 90hp Honda break off in his hand, then a big wave half filled the panga with water. This spooked the hell out of the pangero, as I don't think he could swim!!

They managed to lash it back on with some rope, and bail the boat, but that pretty much shot the hell out of Ian's first day of the comp.

James Hardesty came in with two fish, and David Shelton finished the day off with a small Wahoo.

0700 Oct the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Day 2 was a little better, with the wind backing down a bit, and the swell dropping by 30%, but still a rough, slow ride.

Ian Puckeridge started showing what he's made of, toughing out the rough seas, and finishing the day with a dorado, milkfish, and a 71.35# sailfish that turned out to be the big fish of the meet.

James came in with a big milkfish, almost 20# to make the rest of the catch for the day. Now mind you, we had 25 of some of the best divers working the hell out of this place, but the fish were down, apparently due to the rough weather.

Oct 10<sup>th</sup>

Day 3 was rest day, with some of the divers heading to Isla Cerralvo to hunt goats, that's a whole other story, but suffices to say that GR Tarr and Craig Classen set new milestones in what can be done wearing croc rubber clogs, and flip flops. Word I got from Mario is, Brad Thornbrough is half mountain goat. They did not shoot any goats, but had an exciting adventure. Mario was set to try and shoot one with his toothpick spear gun, using some kind of tag line to keep it from running off until he could finish it off. If anyone could do it, it would be him, but alas, no joy on the chivo.

Others went to town, while some spent the day diving the reefs, and some taking it easy. Mike and I took our kids out to the island, and played with the morays, and shot some parrots and what not. Mikes boy landing a nice surgeon fish, and my son Willem taking his first dive in saltwater, on my back to about 12ft riding me like a dolphin. Both our daughters were all over the place, snorkeling about and watching us chase fish and shoot them.

Oct 11<sup>th</sup>

Day 4 was Mike McGuire's day. The weather had come down, seas were 1/3 of what they had been, and wind was light in the afternoon.

Mike and Chris Wood of Perth Australia, sighted a sailfish from the surface, jumped in and worked the area for a bit until it came back. Mike was watching the fish approach Chris's flasher, and did not shoot waiting for Chris to dive and take the shot. After two approaches, he figured Chris was not going to see it, so he kicked hard on it and threw one into its shoulder, landing a 61.35# sailfish to start the day. Both of them landed dorado, and Mike finished with adding a Bonita to the list, bringing him close to Ian by the end of the day.

Alex Bristol brought a nice jack and a small rooster to the beach, along with Chris Nocera with a dorado. David Shelton got into a really nice rooster, 49#, and at La Reyna, Craig and Brad were working the fish well, with Craig boating a 53.20# sail, and Brad taking a 14.20# Wahoo. Now, I got to say, I've seen quite a few fish landed in my day, but Brad took it to a new level while playing this fish. He knew he did not have a good shot on it, so he played this thing like it was on 12lb test. After about 10 minutes or so, he took his pole spear, yeah, that's right, a

pole spear down for the kill shot.

I followed him to about 70ft, but he turned back as the fish started to run again, and he was worried about ripping it off. He worked the fish up to about 50ft, dropped down and put the pole spear into it, then wrapped it up and ascended to Craig's whooping and high fives!!

Oct 12<sup>th</sup>

Day 5. GR and David, along with more of the gang, wound up at La Reyna again, with the ocean laying down nicely, and the fish starting to show strong. They got into a lot of Wahoo, and each of them took one, watching quite a few more while looking for sails or marlin. The current was ripping out there, and if you wound up in the hydraulics, it would take you down as you were flying along on your drop. Chris Blansfield took a nice milkfish, along with Ryan Davis, while Keith Love, Chris Woods, Mike McGuire all landing dorado.

Brock Kennedy brought in a Toro, and Bernie Finnerty and Alex Bristol landed Wahoo.

BUT, the day belonged to Ian, as he watched two Wahoo approach, he took the sure shot on the small one at 22#, letting the chance at the big one, 80# go in favor of a sure thing.

After putting it on the boat, he had the 80# fish following him, hitting his flasher and then turning back on him to taunt him some more.

All the time, there's 6 other divers around him, and no one knows this fish is pestering him!!

He then goes up the island to a small sandy beach, and lays down in the bait looking for jacks or roosters. He taps his gun on the rock a few times, and this 57# rooster bolts right up in his face, and he pretty much stones it with his 120cm rail gun!

Latter in the day, looking for jacks again, he has another 50# rooster approach him. Seems he had the fish mojo going that day!!

The day finishes out with James bringing in 4 fish, all different species, but not one of them making the 24" nose to fork minimum length!! He had the smallest Wahoo I've ever seen, I don't think it weighed 3 lbs!!

But you got to give it to him for style,,,,,,, he worked hard at landing that beast!!!

That evening we had a big party, with lots of beer, tequila, rancho band, GREAT food, awards, prizes, MONEY,,,,,, trophy girls came in the way of my daughter Stella, and Mike's daughter Savanna. They were ok with handing out the trophies, but a little shy on giving out the kisses!!!!

I want to thank all the divers that came and worked hard to try and get fish on the board, toughing it out in some of the worst stuff I've seen boats go out in down there.

I also want to thank our sponsors for they're donations to the prize table.

Florida Freedivers  
Rob Allen  
Aqualung America  
Suunto  
Pelaj  
Riffe  
Thula  
Sea Sniper  
Daryl Wong and Aimrite  
Ray Powell with DiveRfins

Thanks you guys!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Everyone took home something nice, with several divers taking one fish, and hitting the jackpot at the prize table with a RA carbon rail gun, or Pelaj Kanji rail gun. It was a killer prize table.

I also want to thank Tim at Palapas Ventana, [www.palapasventana.com](http://www.palapasventana.com), for really putting on a good show there!!!!

He did an OUTSTANDING job on organizing everything, with his crew of Eric, Shannon, and his lovely fiancé Jimena, they did not miss a beat taking care of whatever was necessary to make things run smoothly. Also a BIG shout out to his mom Karon, and the entire kitchen staff for excellent service and killer grub the entire time!!

THANKS AMIGO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We donated almost 1700\$ to the local school, and Tim set up a young dance troop for Tuesday night, with these teenagers performing traditional dances in costume, it was a real treat!

Oh yeah, did I mention that 2nd place paid 1200\$ US?????????????

1st place?????????? 3000\$ cash dude.

Not bad. Where else can you have a great time, dive and party with some of the top divers in the world, and hunt pelagics?

The stories that ran around were amazing. Guys like GR Tarr, Troy " Lonefin " Williams from Guam, Chris Wood from Australia had stories that sounded like movie scripts!!!!

Everyone had a blast!!

Guess I got to come out of retirement for next year, as I can't let Ian win this thing again without putting up a fight!!!

Next years meet will probably be held in early July. It's hot there at that time, but the fish are usually more abundant, and the winds are less prone to blow like they did.

Anyone interested, please contact me at [dennis@20fathoms.com](mailto:dennis@20fathoms.com), and let me know you're interested.

Thanks again to everyone involved for helping to make this a success, and I look forward to seeing you all at next years event!!!!

Salute!

Dennis Haussler