

ANOTHER GREAT DERBY!!

The Marina del Rey Annual Halibut Derby has done it again!!! In spite of almost gale force winds on Saturday and high, turbulent seas, the Derby went on like clock-work. A record catch, 46.9 lbs., won the Burch Ford 150 truck for Phil Hildebrand of Redondo Beach. Eighty-seven halibut were weighed in. Close to \$65,000 worth of prizes were awarded, a fabulous barbecue was served to several hundred anglers and their families in Burton Chace Park. And everyone went home happy. Another great Halibut Derby!

The number of fish weighed in was the least in the last ten years, but the sea was very sloppy, making fishing difficult. The grunion were running; so the halibut were close to shore, but the heavy surf prevented boats from getting into the shallow water. The monster fish that won both a Ford Truck and a five-day fishing trip to Hotel Punta Colorada on Baja's East Cape, was caught just south of Malibu in 45 feet of water, using 20-pound fluoro-carbon leader on 15 pound line, baited with a medium size sardine. That doesn't mean that all the fish were caught north. Some of the winners came from the Malaga Cove/ Rocky Point area. The scanty halibut that were caught were spread out all over Santa Monica Bay.

The second place winner in the individual competition was also the second time winner of the Women's Trophy. Sondra McGaffin of Big Bear City won a diamond ring in 2002 and again this year. Her catch was 24.7 pounds. She also won a five-day fishing excursion to the Inn at Mazatlan in Mexico, fishing with Bill Heimpel's Star Fleet. Third place was won by Joe Haslam of Venice with a 23.8 pound flattie that entitled him to five days in Mazatlan at El Cid Resort and Marina. Another five days lodging and three days fishing in Mazatlan was awarded to Robert Pohl of Sun Valley for his 21.4 pounder. He will be staying at Las Flores Suites and fishing with Heimpel's Star Fleet. Bill Tarling of Vista brought in a 21.2 pound halibut that won him five days at Las Rocas Resort in Rosarito Beach with fishing at Sergio's Sportfishing in Ensenada, both in Baja California, Mexico.

The sixth to tenth heaviest halibut entitled the anglers to prizes which were Penn Power Stick Rods and Penn 70 3/0 Reels donated by Penn Fishing Tackle Co. The weights of their fish ranged from 20.7 to 18.6 pounds. Eleventh to fifteenth heaviest halibut won Shimano rods and Shimano TLD 15 Reels donated by Shimano America. Their catches ranged from 17.1 to 15.6 pounds.

In the Team Division some of the old regulars showed up again this year with George Castro of Valencia and Peter Brown of Culver City taking the top prize of \$2,085. In order to win the point system in the Team Division, the team anglers must each catch at least one fish per day, and to qualify for weighing in, each fish must measure 24 inches or more. The second place prize, \$1,250, was won by Alan Perry of Thousand Oaks and Tim Sheridan of Calabasas. Third place, a check for \$835, was won by Jerry McKibben of Playa del Rey and Skip O'Dell of Santa Monica. The weight of the fish entered by the second and third place teams actually exceeded that of the first place winners, but they caught only three fish, which resulted in a lesser number of points.

Winning the Youth Division this year was Brandon McKnight of Aliso Viejo with a halibut weighing 19.0 pounds. Both second and third place were won by the same youth angler, Michael Linarte of Los Angeles. No other youth caught a fish heavier than Michael's 14.7 or 9.2 pounders. The Youth Division prizes were \$375 for first, \$250 for second, and \$150 for third. In addition to the cash award, they each won a Calypso rod and reel combination, which had been donated to the Derby by West Marine.

The total number of anglers who fished in the Derby was 776 of which 337 were also signed up for teams. A team was composed of two, three, or four anglers, not necessarily fishing from the same boat. Each angler could be on as many as six teams. The team competition is keen and attracts anglers who are willing to pay an extra \$15 for each team they join. The entry fee for the individual competition was \$60 per angler, which was required before an angler qualified to join a team. The Derby has collected several hundred thousand dollars in the 29 years of its existence, all of which has been donated to various charities and conservation projects. The Derby currently supports the Marina del Rey Youth Fishing Program, which provides ocean fishing trips for over 1,000 disadvantaged, inner-city youths, in addition to other charities that benefit children. The Derby also supports the Marina del Rey Ocean Resources Enhancement Program which has reared and released 35,300 juvenile white seabass into Santa Monica Bay since its founding in 1945. The Derby is operated by volunteers from the Marina del Rey Anglers fishing club and from the community.