

The Reel Deal wins the University of Miami Sports Hall of Fame & Museum's 2025 Celebrity Fishing Tournament

The University of Miami Sports Hall of Fame & Museum proudly returned to Islamorada, Florida June 19th through the 21st for a Fan Fest and Celebrity Fishing Tournament. UM Hall of Famer Gary Dunn, kicked off the festivities with a party at his establishment, the Ocean View Inn and Sports Pub, known to locals as the O.V. Over 100 people including Hall of Famers and Celebrity Athletes, Sebastian, the UM mascot who was recently inducted into the Mascot Hall of Fame, and Islamorada's own Coach Jimmy Johnson enjoyed steak night on the beach. This star-studded event sponsored by Spencer "CaneDoc" Kellogg and Tito's Handmade Vodka, provided a unique meet-and-greet opportunity for fans and anglers alike.

The festivities continued Friday at the Islamorada Resort Collection's Three Waters Resort and Marina welcomed over 350 fans and anglers alongside UM Hall of Famers. The beach was abuzz with raffles, auctions, vendors, and gifts tossed to the crowd by Canes' mascot Sebastian the Ibis, marking the official start of the fishing tournament. Despite the windy conditions, everyone enjoyed beverages sponsored by the UM Sports Hall of Fame & Museum's President-Elect Mark Drobiarz's ABC Bartending School and Islamorada Brewery and Distillery, along with delicious food sponsored by Coastal Metal Roofing.

Anglers were greeted with moderate winds and up to 6-foot seas on Saturday, as they set out to catch Dolphin (Mahi), Blackfin Tuna, Kingfish, and Wahoo, with the combined weight of three Dolphin determining the winners. While the anglers were out at sea, their families enjoyed a free kids and family fun day at the Theater of the Sea, sponsored by Judy Pantoja-McCabe of Morgan Stanley.

Everyone joined in at the weigh-in at Three Waters Marina starting at 2:30 PM. The stories were all the same. We saw hundreds of fish but no big ones. It was The Reel Deal's junior angler Marina Daniel from Key Largo, FL that weighed the biggest Mahi, a 21.1 pounder. Captain Luis Jimenez led anglers Patrick DelVecchio also from Key Largo along with Yovany Alcala and James Daniel from Miami and Richard Williams of Plantation Florida to victory with two more fish weighing in at 12.5 and 4.6 pounds for a total of 38.2 pounds. The team took home beautiful trophies and winnings that totaled \$11,591.00.

Six minutes later team Nuff Said with Captain Cecil Everett at the helm weighed in the second and third largest fish of the tournament. Angler Travis Phelps from Citrus Springs, FL weighed in a 16.3 pounder winning the Top Male Angler award. His teammates Brandon Kaskie and James Moore from Inverness FL along with Bobby Everett of Key Largo, FL weighed two more fish, 15.2- and 6.4-pound mahi, for a total of 37.9 pounds. The team took home the Bean Automotive Group Second Place trophy and a check for \$5,620.00.

Team Three Little Birds won the Marine Max sponsored third place trophy with a total of 23.7 pounds. Anglers Paul Abiri, Noah Gaudet, Gabriel Rammos, Sam Netkin, Drew Gaudet and Dylan Wheel from Miami, FL weighed in three fish at 13.2, 5.5 and 5.0 pounds taking home a check for \$1,969.00. Fourth place went to El Capitan anglers Manny Lemus from Tavernier fishing Miami anglers Nicholas Coto, Andre Perex, Steve Fajardo, and Gabriel Camarero with fish of 11.4, 5.3 and 4.9 pounds totaling 21.6. Fifth place awards went to anglers Ken, John, and Chris Lancaster from Miami fishing with Larry Koenig and Mike Tomlin from Key Largo, Florida aboard the Coral Seas. The team weighed three fish totaling 19.7 pounds. Female angler Anais Pozo from Miami, FL won the Top Lady Angler award fishing aboard the Aleta Amarilla, sponsored by Gil and Associates Insurance Consultants. Her fish weighed 7.1 pounds.

Angler Justin Matson would win the King of Fish award sponsored by M Gaylord Trust with a 24.2 pound blackfin tuna. He was fishing with local Captain Brian Cone aboard his charter boat Contagious. Contagious would also win the Masters of the Ocean a special award for the combined weight of three of each of the following species – Dolphin, Blackfin Tuna, Kingfish and/or Wahoo. Justin's tuna along with two more at 17.2 and 14.6 pounds and three dolphin totaling 16.0 pounds would land the team total of 72.0 pounds. Justin and his friends Don DeLeon from Miami, along with Tavernier FL residents Travis Bennett and Andy Cone would take home winnings totaling \$6,450.00.

Anglers and celebrities with their families and friends gathered for a fabulous awards ceremony on the beach at Three Waters Resort with food, drinks, and boat loads of fun. Hurricane's legendary announcer Jay Rokeach announced the winners as the UM Sports Hall of Fame & Museum's President Mark Drobiarz along with Hall of Famer Mike Ward presented the awards. The UM Sports Hall of Fame & Museum looks forward to returning to Islamorada next June 25th through the 27th for the 2026 Fan Fest and Fishing Tournament. For more information visit CanesFish.com.