

## "Cabo 35 Flybridge "MAGELLAN" Wins 2008 Churchmouse Tournament"

Owner Robert Webster sent this to Stan Miller Yachts: "Thought you might enjoy this given we created this boat together. Magellen is a special boat. One thing is for sure - The boat raises fish!!!"

Posted on Marlinnut.com:

Put this one in the category of "on any given day..." Or in the category of "score one for the little guys".

For the second year in a row, I entered my boat Magellan (35 Cabo Flybridge) in the Churchmouse Invitational Marlin Tournament based out of Avalon on Catalina Island. For those that don't know, the Churchmouse is a non-cash release tourney where all the entry/sponsorship net proceeds go to benefit Avalon-related causes and charities. Over the past 17 years, several hundred thousand dollars has been raised to benefit the youth of Avalon. It typically has the largest field of any of the non-money tourneys in So Cal. In our first event last year, we were lucky enough to finish 4th out of 88 boats. Frankly, I was thrilled with that.

This year my crew included my 3 good friends Rob Espinosa (with whom I fish most of the tournaments), Mark Wisch and John King. They always say to work with people better than you and this crew qualifies. Both John and Mark are highly experienced captains with many many marlin caught.

After a cancellation by Rob E (who is now officially on suicide watch), the rest of us attended the kickoff dinner in Avalon which was a blast. The Churchmouse is a highly social event and it's great to see all the usual suspects there. I got a very key call late Sunday evening from a buddy who had caught fish for a few days before and that finalized the plan for us.

I pulled out of Avalon around 3 AM and took us up to an area just below Santa Barbara Island. At that point, the jigs went in and I gave Wisch the wheel (it's too painful to watch him squirm when he's not on the wheel so he drives most of the time in these events...plus he's just WAY better than me). I put out a spread that included my 2 favorite Coggins including the jig that got the first fish on Magellan in the Cabo Hatteras Shootout a few years ago (and would be the first jig to land a fish for us this day).

Tons of life on the spot but no fish so we made a short move after we heard a couple of early hookups - to the Osborne. It was us and about 8 or 9 other boats in the area. At around 10 AM we got our first jig strike right on the high spot. It didn't stick but we got another one shortly thereafter and that put us on the board with one.

Around mid-day we had another jig bite on the starboard corner. I dropped back and then switched to the jig fish. After we were tight to the fish, I started to clear the starboard rigger with my left hand. John was holding a dropback and clearing the port corner with his right hand when a fish greyhounded straight up our wake with a Coggins hanging out of its mouth. John and I could not process what we were seeing...I'm thinking "that's not my fish??" Well, it was the port rigger which basically had gotten bit on the sink and the fish just impaled itself. Its last jump was about 10 feet off of the starboard corner (under my line). Mark had the wit to make the best comment when he told John and I to "just grab the leader as he goes by" LMAO.

I ended up on the bow and John in the stern with the fish split. After plenty of "loud talking" we chased one fish and then the other. After some back and forth, Mark was able to jump down and leader John's fish and then John leadered mine. A double with 3 guys on board with pics taken on the tourney camera and both fish released strong. Good stuff.

Mark then proceeded to rib John and I about getting a bit animated when we were both close to getting spooled. "You guys just need to stay calm; I had it all well in hand etc." I then told Mark he was pulling on the next one. Of course, he says "I've pulled on too many marlin...no way blah blah blah". I told him BS and that's how it was. So, we got a bite on the stinger a while later. Mark took it and this fish just TOOK OFF. John's clearing lines when Mark starts saying we've got to get after it. But John's still clearing lines...and Mark starts saying "WE'VE GOT TO GO". And I'm looking at my prized Coggins in the wake and start yelling back "we will - I'm on it". Some more "loud talking" ensued before I could finally do some very quick backing down and then spun the boat so we could go chase. We released that fish a short while later and we now had #4 on the board. I then proceeded to rib the \$%# out of Mark about his "animated behavior" while on the fish. Very good fun.

We finally got a bait fish late in the day. We had gotten a few shots during the day but nothing very ideal. This time we ran on a jumper and 2 nice spots of feeders popped up right in front of us. I threw to the spot to starboard and John threw to port. My bait was half dead and I started to retrieve to change it out and had a follow to 10 feet from the boat. Lit up like a Christmas tree - beautiful. He passed on my belly up bait and I think he turned up and ate John's although it could have easily been another one. In any event, John got bit and we spent the next hour chasing that one down for #5.

An amazing day for us. 4 jig fish and 1 bait - the Coggins were ON FIRE and gave us 3 out of the 4 jig fish and most of the follows. We had fish up on those all day. We didn't get a drop back fish but the stiff rig that Espinosa taught me continued to give me a good conversion ratio and so I will continue with that. We pulled into Cat Harbor and I BBQ'd steaks while the guys made some bait and we just decompressed from an incredible day of fishing.

Day #2 it slowed down. A lot more boat pressure and we all had to be in Avalon by 4 pm to turn in cameras so we all had to leave early. After Midnight got another fish to get to #4 but fortunately our lead held up. CG Miller on Ruckus got a double late and released both fish but the time deadline and some boat issues made it impossible for them to get to Avalon in time. Too bad as that would have been 3rd place. CG made a last minute run last year to cross the harbor mouth for 2nd place with 5 minutes to spare and I was looking forward to the same drama this year but no go. Still - a great tourney for Ruckus.

The awards dinner was great. The Casino Ballroom was full with a few hundred people. I have to admit it was fun to go up there and collect first prize with our 3 man crew and our little 35'.

A tremendous memory for John, Mark and I. As good as the finish was the fun we had while doing it was even better. Very thrilling for me personally.

We were shorthanded (ROB E!!!) so we only got action pics with the tourney camera which I'm trying to get copies from. Here are some pics of Magellan entering Avalon. Note that we didn't even have enough release flags (I honestly didn't think I'd EVER need 5 in So Cal). We had Karen King go and buy us what we needed and the second pic is Magellan on her mooring with a very full port rigger.

In fact, I don't think I will take her out of my harbor for the rest of the season LMAO!!

Congrats to Keith on Por Vida for getting his 11 year old son Kirk his first 2 marlin during the tournament. Keith had an "all-kid" crew with his boys plus Zane Stotesbury (although he's hardly a kid at this point and outfishes most of us). And congrats to all the other boats that released fish this year in the tourney.



Owner of Magellan, Rob Webster

