

For Immediate Release

So. Fla. team releases three dozen redfish in 24th Redbone; celeb tourney seeks CF cure

ISLAMORADA In-the-Florida-Keys – Literally surrounded by redfish at the first locations they came to **Capt. Dave Denkert**, Naples/Islamorada, led his team of **Wade Davis**, Palm Beach, Fla, and **Ross Reeder**, Miami, to 18 redfish each on Saturday and three bonefish on Sunday to win team grand champion honors at the 24th annual Redbone Celebrity Tournament.

“We were at the Flamingo section of Florida Bay and poled into a ‘red’ zone and for the next couple of hours released 22 fish mostly on artificial,” said Denkert. “At the next location Wade and Ross caught four more all on artificial. The reds were literally jumping out of the water in one of weirdest sights I’ve ever seen in the backcountry. We hit two more spots and finished the day with an amazing 36 redfish.”

The releases of two bonefish on Sunday also garnered Davis grand champion angler honors with Reeder first runner-up on his one bonefish. Davis also won the spin-plug division.

At the Redbone anglers score multiple points by catching the most combinations of redfish and bonefish, aka Redbones, which are all measured, photographed and quickly released alive at the boat. Both species had to be 18” in length for a legal release.

A total of 186 redfish and 11 bonefish were released among the 30 teams entered.

The Redbone has made major strides in raising funds to help researchers and scientists “to catch a cure for cystic fibrosis” with the trilogy series being one of the most rewarding and fun fishing competitions throughout the Florida Keys.

The 24th Redbone Celebrity Fishing Tournament was the finale of the Keys trilogy which began in Sept., with the 22nd SLAM in Key West for tarpon, permit and bonefish, and the 21st Baybone at Key Largo in October for bonefish and permit.

Dr. Mo Smith of Memphis, Tenn., was a triple winner guided **Capt. Mark Krowka** of Islamorada. Smith who fished all of the Redbone Trilogy events collected enough points through his finishes to take the series championship. Reeder was the runner-up series champion guided by Denkert in all three contests.

Smith, a neurosurgeon, also won the unique one-day, one-fly tournament sponsored by The Fly Shop of Ft. Lauderdale/Miami by catching four redfish and one bonefish. **Bob Rich Jr.**, of Buffalo, N.Y., author of *The Right Angle* placed second with two redfish and one bonefish guided by **Capt. Rusty Albury**, Islamorada. *SaltWater Sportsman* editor **John Brownlee** of Islamorada finished third on time over **Ken Watkins**, Tavernier.

From those accumulated points Smith also won the Superfly Series of three Keys tournaments. **Cal Collier Jr** of Atlanta was second and Rich was third.

Original artwork by nationally known marine artists like **Tim Borski, Craig Reagor, Jim Rice, Steve Whitlock** and **Jorge Martinez** were awarded to the top anglers and teams in general, spin and fly division and the largest and most fish caught and released in each target species. In other tournament results:

- Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Denver Broncos lineman **Mark Cooper**, Aurora, Colo. won celebrity grand champion with six redfish releases guided by **Capt. Mike Hutchinson**, Miami.
- With a redfish and bonefish each on fly, **Sandie Bishop** of Aspen, Colo., won both the lady grand champion and fly division champion. She was guided by **Capt. Tim Klein**, Tavernier, Fla.
- **Jon Denk**, Westmont, Ill., and **Mark Garrison**, Crownpoint, Ind., with **Capt. Richard Black**, Tavernier, were first runner up team grand champions.
- **Paul Rich, Buffalo, N.Y.**, scored the biggest bonefish guided by **Capt. Frank Ortiz**, Key Largo, Fla.. The largest redfish was caught by Smith.
- Smith had the most redfish releases and **Jeff Parrish**, Buffalo, N.Y guided by **Capt. Chris Jones**, Islamorada, had the most bonefish releases.

The Islander Resort in Islamorada served as the host hotel and the dockside host was the Lorelei Cabana Bar and Marina.

Besides Cooper, Rich and Brownlee, other celebrity anglers included former Miami Dolphins star **Jim "Crash" Jensen**, and two-time space shuttle astronaut **Bruce Melnick**.

The Redbone tournament was founded in 1988 by the Gary and Susan Ellis as a grassroots effort to help victims like their daughter, Nicole, who have CF. With help from baseball legend **Ted Williams**, \$16,000 was raised that first year and has since spawned 30 fishing events across the U.S. and internationally raising more than \$15 million for scientists and researchers at the CF Foundation.

"Medical scientists have made amazing advancements especially with gene research," said Ellis. "Not only did doctors isolate the CF gene, it in turn paved the way for the discovery of the genes for sickle cell anemia, Huntington's disease and many others. It's remarkable how far they've come, but there's still no cure and our tournaments continue in full force to help them."

Besides The Islander, the other major sponsors in The Redbone Trilogy included Rich Products, Robert James Sales, Redbone Rods, Reef Safe Suncare, Image Graphics, Double Tree Grand Key Resort, Dove Creek Lodge and DragonFly Boatworks.

For more information on the 30 tournaments in the Redbone family of events call the Redbone office at 305-664-2002. For more on the complete tournament series go online at www.redbone.org .

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