



### **Gatlin and Franklin catch two to win their first IFA Redfish Tour Championship**

PANAMA CITY BEACH, Fla. (Nov. 3, 2007) – The winds were calm on the final day of the 2007 IFA Redfish Tour Championship but nerves weren't because the fish seemed to be on a different script than what the day one leaders had in mind.

In the end though, the persistence of Wayne Gatlin and Brandon Franklin, both from Tampa, FL, prevailed as the duo caught two of their only three bites today, giving them a tournament total of 27.47 pounds and just enough weight to win their first ever Redfish Tour championship. They were the only team from yesterday's top five to hold onto a top five finish.

Jumping all the way up from 12<sup>th</sup> place to finish a close second was the team of Russell Miscally, from Lawtey, FL, and Clinton Batten, from Jacksonville, FL, who caught two 7-plus pounders today to give them a total weight of 26.99 pounds. They held the lead at today's weigh-in up until Gatlin and Franklin came to the scales in the last flight.

“Yes, we were nervous wrecks today,” said Gatlin speaking for the winning team. “Whereas we started yesterday with lots of fish, the fish decided to make it more interesting today. We caught our first keeper around 8 a.m., and had one break off, then things just died. We ran across the bay to our second spot, but had nothing there.

“We returned to where we started to have a crowd of boats tell us we had just missed a big bite and that several of the teams there had caught seven pounders. It was about noon, so we had no choice but to stay. We got one more bite and it gave us our last keeper. We caught only two fish today and are thankful that was enough. We have a seven hour drive back to Tampa, but it's going to be a lot easier with the smiles on our faces,” he added.

Miscally and Batten were fishing the same area and they did get in on the “big bite” that the winners had missed. “It was something special,” said Miscally. “We had followed a little trough that connected a couple of the pond-like areas together and stumbled right on top of the big school that everyone had been looking for all morning. We probably caught 25 fish in an hour, and had the two fish over 7 pounds. The bite got tough again after that, but we didn't think we could improve upon what we had anyway.”

Gatlin and Franklin caught their fish on white soft plastic jerkbaits on Mission Fishin heads. Miscally and Batten used Berkley Gulp jerkbaits and Sure Catch Jigs.

Rounding out the top five finishers for the championship were: 3<sup>rd</sup> place – Gregg Walle and Chris Kennedy with 26.76 pounds; 4<sup>th</sup> place – Dwayne Eschete and Bruce Lindheim with 26.39 pounds; and 5<sup>th</sup> place – Scott Guthrie and Mark Sepe with 25.56 pounds.

A total of 53 two-fish limits were caught today; and 36 teams weighed limits on both days. There were 123 teams that competed in the championship, all having qualified by fishing the regional Redfish Tour events.

For the win, Gatlin and Franklin were awarded a Ranger 173 Ghost with a 115HP, 4-stroke Yamaha outboard, Ranger Trail trailer, Power-Pole, [Minn Kota](#) trolling motor and [Humminbird](#) electronics. Cash prizes were awarded for 2-25 places, ranging in amounts from \$7052 to \$634.

Also at stake was the highly coveted Cabela's Team of the Year award, and the \$5,000 check that goes with it. There were five teams in the competition, each having qualified from their respective divisions. The team of Dwayne Eschete and Bruce Lindheim, representing the Louisiana division, took first place with their 26.26 total weight.

Final TOY standings for the remaining teams were: 2<sup>nd</sup> – Scott Guthrie and Mark Sepe with 25.56 pounds representing the Florida East division; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Brady Nelson and Josh Ramsey with 25.23 pounds representing the Florida West division; 4<sup>th</sup> – Adam Loud and Cliff White with 17.74 pounds representing the Georgia division; and 5<sup>th</sup> – Jon Halker and Josh Cruz with 13.67 pounds representing the South Carolina division. The eligible Texas division team did not participate.

The championship competitors also stepped-up big time to help a fellow fishermen in need. Redfish angler Travis and his wife, Kelly, Tanner and his wife have young twin sons battling a health condition requiring significant medical expenses. Thanks to contributions and raffle prizes, nearly \$6,000 was raised during championship week and presented to the Tanner family today.

The Redfish Tour is the oldest of all redfish tournaments and consists of the six divisions. Each division holds three one-day tournaments “close to home” in their respective regions. Teams that fish in all three events qualify to compete in the two-day IFA Redfish Tour Championship. The 2008 Redfish Tour schedule has been finalized and can be found at [www.redfishtour.com](http://www.redfishtour.com).

IFA Redfish Tour sponsors include Cabela's, Ranger Boats, Yamaha Outboards, Minn Kota, Humminbird, Pioneer Beef Jerky, Loadmaster, Sebile Lures, Jax Wraps, KeelShield, Power Pole, Solar Bat, Shimano, Powertex Group, *Florida Fishing Weekly*, Palmer Conrad Consulting, Audubon Nature Institute, Choice Hotels International and Careco Multimedia. Local sponsors for this event are Edgewater Beach Resort and RiverCamps at Crooked Creek.

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