



## **Punta Gorda Brings Struggles to the Season Opener**

High winds in Punta Gorda, FL caused a hiccup in the season opening event for the Inshore Fishing Association (IFA) Redfish Tour planned for Saturday, March 8. The Captain's Meeting on Friday night, held at Hooter's in Port Charlotte, was a record turnout for the IFA with 126 tournament entries. Tournament officials postponed Saturday's event to Sunday due to 25 - 30 mile an hour winds.

It was definitely a "show and tell" morning by the two anglers who found a win, in fishing their 2<sup>nd</sup> IFA event in the 3 years of tournament fishing they have had. Travis Tucker, from Lake Wales, FL, and Scott Finnell, from Bartow, FL, took top honors with their allowed limit of two fish weighing in at 14.61 pounds, 7.42 and 7.19 pounds each.

Rounding out the top five finishers of this IFA Redfish Tour presented by Cabela's event were: second place – Jason Dill and Jason Reynoso with 13.72 pounds; third place – Bret Gamrot and Bryan Hudson with 13.55 pounds; fourth place – Jarrett Lombard and Leland Symonds with 12.56 pounds; and fifth place – Mike Davis and Brian Epperson with 12.53 pounds. There were 54 teams that weighed in and 22 of these teams had double-digit weights.

At the weigh in, Tucker and Finnell said, "We were one of the teams that were glad the tournament was rescheduled. We had planned to fish out of our bay boat if the tournament were to take place on Saturday, but since that didn't happen we went and borrowed a Ranger Banshee from a friend and fished from it on Sunday since we knew we would need to be in shallow water."

"We started out blind casting with Exude and then site fished with Gulp and caught between 12 and 15 redfish all day, with the right ones being an early bite and a late bite. We worked one area all day long and just stuck with it." Tucker explained.

For the win, the pair was awarded a fully-rigged Ranger Banshee, valued at approximately \$20,000 as equipped with a 40 HP, 4-stroke Yamaha outboard, Loadmaster trailer, Power Pole Boat Positioning System, Minn Kota trolling motor and Humminbird electronics.

Greg DeVault and Jon Turner, in 6<sup>th</sup> place, were the Ranger Cup Powered by Yamaha winners and took home the \$750 Ranger Cup check by being the top finishers qualified for the special incentive cash prize by owning and fishing from a Ranger boat (for Ranger Cup program details visit [www.rangerboats.com](http://www.rangerboats.com)).

The team mentioning and wearing their Solar Bat sunglasses across the weigh in stage received a \$100 check and that team was Tony Katsarelas and Dave Turgeon.

The Punta Gorda event's \$500 Big Fish check went to the 10th place team of Joey Palmeri and Cameron Schurlknight for a 7.77 pound redfish.

In addition to visiting the Florida West Coast, the IFA take the tournaments to Florida East Coast, Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Louisiana and Texas. All are one-day events with three tournaments in each. Teams that fish in all three events qualify to compete in the two-day, no-entry-fee IFA Redfish Tour Championship at the end of the season.

IFA Redfish Tour sponsors include Cabela's, Ranger Boats, Yamaha Outboards, Minn Kota, Humminbird, Power Pole, Loadmaster, Sebile, Solar Bat, Jax Wraps, Sperry Top-Sider, DriGrip, Charter Lakes Marine Insurance, Pioneer and CW Crab.

For more information about the IFA Redfish Tour tournaments, visit [www.redfishtour.com](http://www.redfishtour.com), call (478) 436-4266 or (478) 788-8871.

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