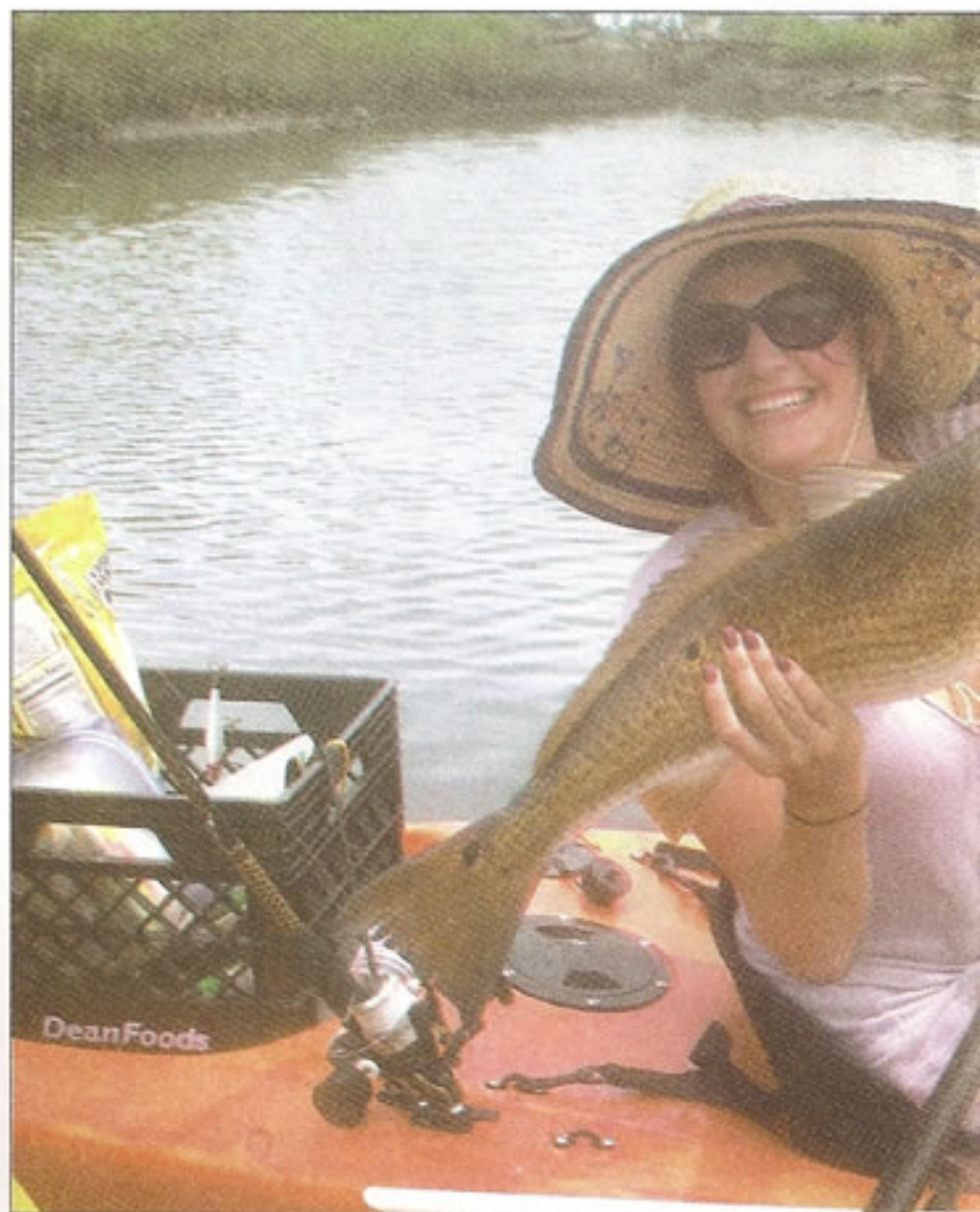


behind the scenes:

a closer look at the Jax Kayakfishing Classic

Justin Loudermilk, third in the slam division. with a nice redfish.



In the wake of subtropical storm Andrea, great fishing weather prevailed on May 12 as 282 kayak fisherman took to the inshore waters of North Florida in the fourth annual Jacksonville Kayak Fishing Classic. With over \$60,000 in prizes, 100 sponsors, and 282 paddlers, the Classic is once again the largest kayak fishing event in the world to date.

The catch-photo-release tournament is run by JaxKayakFishing.com and is for the benefit of Daniel's Kids, Florida's oldest children's services organization. In an incredible showing of support from the kayak fishing community the Classic raised over \$22,000 for the children of Daniel.

"We are thrilled to be associated with such a world-class event, and want to thank the kayak anglers of North Florida for their generous support," said Jim Clark, President of Daniel.

First place honors in the redfish-trout-flounder slam with 63.4 inches went to Todd Derringer of St. Augustine, Fla. Derringer was closely followed by Charles Ganoe with 62.2 inches, Justin Loudermilk with 61.9 inches, and Blake Beltz with 59.5 inches. Bradford Lydick of Yulee, Fla. won biggest red honors with a 37.5-inch fish. Jacksonville's "Outback" Bill Smith won top trout honors with a 23.5-inch trout. Iko Carrasco won biggest flounder with an 18.1-inch fish. Rich Santos led the biggest red-on-fly division with a 32.2-inch red, and Rusty Fissette won biggest trout-on-fly with a 15-inch fish. The Temple Fork Outfitters Jr. Angler award went to 13-year old Chris Morrill, and the Lady Angler honors went to Anne Smith.

For more results and information about this year's and next year's Classic visit www.jaxkayakfishing.com.

-Mike Kogan



Karina Garcia (top) with a 28-inch redfish. Vince Console of Hobie (above right) with the third place 29.5-inch redfish. Jerry Bryan (above) of No Bananas Fish Team holding up a flounder. Rich Santos (right) with his winning 32.25-inch redfish taken on fly. Photos courtesy Jaxkayakfishing.com.





For the last three years, I have been a sponsor of the Jax Kayak fishing Classic, and have watched it grow and grow. This year I flew over to Jacksonville, Fla. and fished the Fly Division of the tournament. I contacted Mike Kogan and told him that I might be coming, but didn't have a clue where to go or what fly to use, because I have never been to Florida.

Mike told me to make a post on the General Forum of Jaxkaykfishing.com. Well to my surprise and two pages of post later, tons of offers to loan me their kayaks, show me places to go, and just plain Southern hospitality, I decided to enter the tournament. The gentleman that won the Fly Division Slam last year, Andy Stafford, and his counter part, Pastor Dany Hernandez, were the men that really helped me get going in Jacksonville. What a blessing for someone who has not been to Florida to be welcome like this. Being that I was staying in Mayport, Brad, HP on the board, loaned me his kayak and got up at 5 a.m. to make sure that I got to his house okay.

Because of the Sub-Tropical Storm Andrea the winds blew Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, so pre-fishing with the fly rod was somewhat out in 40 mph winds. Come Saturday, Andy made sure I wasn't by my self and hooked me up with Scott Brown, a local avid fly fisherman that was also in the tournament. It was great to fish with a veteran.

Being from Texas, our tides are about 1- to 1.5-feet, but in the Jacksonville area they are at least 6 feet. It was quite an experience to fish with some of the best kayak fisherman in the country, and especially to be mentored by a pastor and the Fly Division Slam winner last year.

At the Captains Meeting I met another wonderful man, Jerry Bryan, Islandspeed2001 on the board. Jerry is involved in the Big Brother program in Florida and he brought his little brother Gage Waters with him, I believe Gage is 10 years old. This kid is so excited about kayak fishing, his whole face just lights up when he was around all those guys at the captains meeting. I was really taken by this love that Jerry gave his Little brother Gage. Each time Jerry would win a door prize, he gave it to Gage, and man, this kid was in kayak heaven.

Jerry wrote me today and told me that Gage had called yesterday and is all excited about getting out in the kayaks and to start fishing.

"Hopefully," Jerry said, "we will get out this weekend."

This would be a great thing for other kayakers to become involved with. It is very rewarding. Guess the tell-all is when he gives me a big hug when we say goodbye for the day. This falls in perfect with the Daniels Kid Foundation that was one of the charities for the tournament.

All I can say is that I have never been to a place for the first time and been welcome and treated like visiting royalty as I was in Jacksonville. Thank you all and I have already made plans to return for next year.

Connie Mack Moran