

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***Cerveza* Captures the BBC Marsh Harbour Championship****Record Participation for the BBC's 32nd Year**

A record fleet of seventy of the world's top sport fishing teams started this year's Bahamas Billfish Championship in grand style by catching eighty-eight qualified billfish during the four-day Marsh Harbour Championship. The record participation reflected the enthusiasm for changes in the release categories and the increased minimum length for boated blue marlin.

Team *Cerveza*, led by owner Tom Russell, fishing on his 62 foot Spencer, released a blue marlin on the first day of fishing. In releasing a blue marlin and white marlin on the second day, followed by another white marlin on the third and fourth days, the accumulation of 1800 points garnered the team not only the 1st Place Award Hatteras Bronze, but also the Top Release Bronze from Murray Product, High Seas Technology, and PipeWelders. The 1st Place team also received an AlgaeSep Filtration System from Walker Engineering. The top crew fishing on the *Cerveza* received trophies from Lewis Marine Supply, prizes from Alutecnos Tackle, and sunglasses courtesy of Maui Jim Sunglasses.

Finishing a close Second was the *Joanna* from Warren, New Jersey fishing on their 54-foot Viking. Led by team captain Bill Gallo, the *Joanna* achieved 1600 points by releasing a blue marlin on the first fishing day, another blue on the second day, and two white marlin on the third.

Smooth Finish, led by Brad Aery from Friendswood, Texas, finished in Third Place with 1400 points. Fishing on a 54-foot Bertram, the team released two blue marlin and one white marlin for the week. Team *Smooth Finish*, a well known BBC participant, captured the "Largest Fish of the Series" award in 2004.

The excellent fishing during the Marsh Harbour Championship resulted in forty-five qualified blue marlin caught; thirty-five qualified white marlin were released, five qualified sailfish released, and two spearfish were released. All but three of the blue marlin were released. All catches are verified using time and date stamped digital images. Affidavits signed by all participants fishing on each team further confirmed that the fish was released in accordance with tournament rules.

Rolex continues their role as Title Sponsor of the 2005 Bahamas Billfish Championship. This year's Rolex Grand Prize, in conjunction with Riviera Yachts, is an expense paid, round-trip to Queensland, Australia. The team will participate for the second year as the BBC's representative in the Riviera/Lizard Island Black Marlin Classic.

Hatteras Yachts and MarineMax Yachts and Brokerage were the principal hosts for the Marsh Harbour

Championship, presenting their trophies to the winners and hosting numerous social functions. Abaco Gold and the Sand Dollar Shoppe hosted their traditional "conch festival" on Lay Day. Additionally, the Abaco Club on Winding Bay delighted BBC participants to a golf outing at their new development near Cherokee. John Bull graciously welcomed the participants to a cocktail reception and raffle prizes held in their new store directly opposite the entrance of Abaco Beach Resort and Boat Harbour. Additional social sponsors for the week include Smith Merritt Insurance and Chubb Group of Insurance Companies, Twin Air/Calypso Airlines, Bristol Wine & Spirits, Cruzan Rum, and Bimini Island Air.

Spanning April through June, all BBC tournaments are governed by a uniform set of rules controlling minimum lengths of 105 inches for qualifying blue marlin, line class, fishing hours and entry fees. Anglers can fish any or all of the tournaments with cumulative points determining the overall Bahamas Billfish Champions.

Throughout its history, the Championship has been a consistent supporter of billfish research and, in 2000, established an endowed Scholarship Fund to enable Bahamian students the opportunity to pursue a degree in marine biology. The BBC Scholarship Fund is supported by voluntary financial contributions from anglers, BBC sponsors and the Bahamian business community.

After the Marsh Harbour Championship, the overall standings for the 2005 Bahamas Billfish Championship are: First Place – *Cerveza* – 2400 points; Second Place – *Joanna* - 2100 points; Third Place – *Smooth Finish* - 1800 points; Top Release Team – *Cerveza* .

Next the Bahamas Billfish Championship anglers and teams will head to Harbour Island in Eleuthera for Leg Two which begins May 1st and continues through May 6th. For the first time in the history of the Bahamas Billfish Series, all tournament venues are "sold out" for the remainder of the fishing season.

For the very latest information and standings, visit our Internet website at www.bahamasbillfish.com or contact the Bahamas Billfish Championship, 2 Oakwood Blvd., Suite 195, Hollywood, FL 33020. Telephone (954) 920-5577, fax (954) 925-1033 or e-mail: bbc@albehrendt.com.