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## YELAS TAKES WIRE-TO-WIRE WIN AT CLASSIC BY STAFF

Texas' pro Jay Yelas put the finishing touches on one of the most dominant victories in CITGO BASSMASTERS Classic history Saturday on Lay Lake in Birmingham.

Just how dominating was Yelas' performance? Consider that the 36-year-old pro became only the third winner to lead the Classic from wire to wire. And with his 4-pound, 13-ounce largemouth Saturday, he became the first Classic champion to take big-bass honors all three days of the Classic.

Entering Saturday's final round with a lead of nearly 10 pounds, Yelas had eliminated most of the suspense in the race for the \$200,000 top prize and the most important title in fishing. As it turned out, that bass weighing 4-13 was enough to wrap up the most prestigious victory of his career.

"This is just the thrill of a lifetime for

me," said Yelas, who joined the B.A.S.S. Millionaire Club with his \$203,000 earnings. "I can't tell you how much this means to my career and to me personally.

"Winning the Classic makes your career as a professional fisherman. The BASSMASTERS Classic is the pinnacle of bass tournament fishing."

Yelas secured a victory lap in the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Arena before a standing-room-only crowd by bringing in four bass weighing 10-11 Saturday to boost his three-day total to 45-13. That proved to be a lengthy cast away from his closest pursuer, California's Aaron Martens, who finished with 39-9.

Tennessee's David Walker finished third for the second consecutive Classic (35-13), followed by O.T. Fears of Oklahoma (31-6) and former Classic champion Larry Nixon of Arkansas (31-3).

Yelas had little reason to change tactics in the final round. Once again, he fished in the shadow of the Logan Martin Dam, spending the morning casting to schooling bass with a Berkley Popper topwater plug and

Berkley Frenzy deep-diving crankbait. When the dam's turbines came to life about 10:15 a.m. and created current in the area, he again switched to a prototype Berkley Power Jig with a Power Frog trailer tied to 25-pound Trilene XT line.

That strategy produced a mixed bag of largemouth and spotted bass, as well as the biggest bass of the tournament each day.

"I think this was a really unique Classic because I don't think anyone has ever won it fishing a tailrace," he said. "It was a struggle today before they started generating water. I only had one small fish, but once the current started, I knew I was in pretty good shape."

Martens, a 29-year-old three-time B.A.S.S. winner competing in his fourth Classic, might have sealed his fate by deciding to target spotted bass instead of the heavier largemouths.


"Yes, that probably hurt me in the end," said Martens, who relied on a hand-tied hair jig and 4-inch Robo worm. "But from what I saw in practice, I thought I could catch 18- or 19-pound stringers of spots. There are some giant spots in this lake."

Walker, 37, said this third-place showing was not as frustrating as last year's close call on the Louisiana Delta near New Orleans.

"Last year ... I lost two fish the second day that would have won the tournament," he said. "This Classic was a great deal of fun, and I'm totally satisfied with third because I know I did my best."

Walker's success came on a variety of lures, including a Lake Fork Trophy Tackle Tungsten Jig and Twitch Worm.

**OFFSHORE  
REPORT**  
by Capt.  
John Raguso



This green water phenomena (a.k.a. plague) that's enveloped us since mid-July is really starting to become a problem with New York Bight anglers, effectively putting a damper on near offshore and canyon fishing for western Long Island south shore based crews from the Rockaway's to Fire Island Inlet. However, going back over 28 years of offshore fishing

logs has taught me that we have seen these type of conditions before and it's just part of the ocean's ever-changing patterns. To get a professional diagnosis for this horrific-but-cyclical affliction, I put in a call to the "Ocean Doctor", Dr. Mitch Roffer, who is a PhD in oceanography from the University of Miami, who also heads up the very success "Roff's" Offshore Fishing Forecast service based out of Miami Beach. Having talked to Dr. Mitch regarding our dynamic ocean for countless hours over the past 20 years, I can honestly tell you that no one that I've ever met knows more about how weather patterns, ocean currents, gamefish migration patterns and Gulfstream eddies affects the sport of bluewater fishing than Dr. Mitch. He is "The Ultimate Source" for putting a scientific spin on what's really going on here. I thought that it would be valuable to get some scientific insights on our problem before we get into this week's fishing reports, which even though we had relatively benign weather that allowed many boats to head offshore, were predictably light for western NY Bight sport fishing activities. His response on Thursday 7/25 was as follows:

"The New York Bight area had a substantial amount of wind with a west component (southwest, west and northwest) at the end of May and June, which pushed Hudson River water and New Jersey bay water to the offshore area south of Long Island. This has been compounded by the lack of northeast or east wind to push it back, in addition to the lack of Gulf Stream water that would be pushed northward by any south component wind, especially the winds from the southeast. I do not expect this to change much after the conclusion of last week's northeast wind episode. Remember that there was 12-24 hours of south, and southwest winds prior to the recent northeast blow. Strong wind mixing will help after a few days of wind and a few days of calm. There are plenty of tuna now south of Nantucket and from the analyses which we sent you (on Thursday 7/25) you will see the strong water mass boundaries and sea surface temperatures (61°F-73°F) which allow the tuna to remain near the surface for easy targeting by trolling fishermen. The NJ-western NY areas have warm water and the fish that occur in this area are deep in the water column.

"Moving offshore, there has not been a substantial pool of Gulf

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Stream water moving over the 100 fathom to 1000 fathom depths over the past few weeks. While some pools of blue water

exist offshore, they have been unstable and rapidly moving westward or offshore and being pulled back into the Gulf Stream as is the case now. The eddy that was offshore of Toms Canyon (now currently at Lindenkohl Canyon and Spencer Canyon) continues to pull the coastal waters from the New York Bight (particularly west of Freeport and New Jersey coastal waters) offshore over the Hudson Canyon and Toms Canyon. We have been seeing some indications that the Hudson Canyon may start providing some action, as the water is being pulled southward over the canyon suggesting that the west wall may start producing some tuna.

"Looking at the big picture for the 2002 season, over the course of my research and experience of the wa-

ters between Cape Hatteras and Cape Cod, I have come across some years that have conditions similar to what you are seeing now. These years favor the tuna fisheries over the area between Montauk and Nantucket, for the reasons described above. Saying all of this, I will hold my breath and see what the result of the winds are over the next few weeks. I suspect that the relief that you will find for your area will be temporary. If the winds from the northeast continue, then the Montauk to Nantucket area will also suffer as well. However, the strong winds from the northeast has already had it affect. While we are only seeing the waters along the coast and out 30 miles or so, we see 69°F water moving offshore from Long Island. Cool and blended green should help the situation out. Recall the effect of the late summer tropical storm/hurricane a few years ago. This event mixed



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mass boundaries will produce some tuna. Catch rates of 6-10 per boat will probably be considered a good day. Also as there was a filament of Gulf Stream water over the deeper sections of the Hudson Canyon this past week, we feel that some action is likely over the Hudson Canyon where the flow is from deeper to shallower and where the water mass boundary is stable for 3-4 days."

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Safe and successful fishing. Mitchell A. Roffer, Ph.D.

Thank you Dr. Mitch. To show you just how much this guru is tuned in to our offshore scene, most of the winning fish in the overnight division from this past weekend's Babylon Tuna Club tournament were caught between Spencer and Lindenkohl canyons, with the top blue marlin taken from that aforementioned warm core filament deep in the Hudson. No doubt, some of these crews received the same analysis that I did via Roff's subscription service and put it to good use. I'm telling you, this guy really knows his stuff! We'll see how things progress over the next few weeks, weather and water wise.

Getting to this past weekend's fishing results, I received zero reports from anyone west of Fire Island this weekend...that's a first. One trend has developed, specifically that ocean flukers from Jones to Shinnecock are having a banner season nailing many large 5-to-10 pound flat-ties. But there is stiff competition for this fishery, as we've gotten reliable info that at least a half dozen crews over the past week have had encounters with 50-to-100 pound thresher sharks in these 65-to-80 foot depths, which have attacked hooked fish on the way up from the bottom. In fact, one angler this past weekend released an estimated 100-pound whiptail caught southwest of Fire Island after it attacked a large fluke bait. I wouldn't be too surprised to hear action from Fire Island and Hamptons surf anglers over the next few weeks that "unknown predators" are breaking off their chunks baits at night, which happens each season around this time.

Although no one from the Babylon Tuna Club I spoke with Sunday night had a complete winners list for their tournament, George Stevenson from the **Babylon Fishing Station** had some info. Capt. Bob on the "Morning Star" won the Marlin category with a 438-pound blue that was taken from

the aforementioned Gulfstream filament from the deep of the Hudson. Capt. Tony on the "Pride and Joy" took second place honors with a 344-pound blue marlin. Capt. Tom on the "Rigger" took top tuna honors in the overnight Tuna category with a huge 199-pound yellowfin that was chucked at night from the fertile depths of Carteret Canyon, situated roughly 18-miles southwest of Toms. Capt. Wayne on the "Mako Vision" took first place tuna in the dayboat category with a 56-pound yellowfin that was trolled northeast of the Hudson Canyon. According to George, most boats that made to trip to Spencer and Lindenkohl all had plenty of fish on the troll, with the majority of the yellowfins going 40-to-50 pounds, with some mahis and albacore thrown into the mix. Capt. Bob Antolini on the "Weasel" had a bunch of 40-pound yellowfins, including three white marlin hookups, with all three fish jumping off. Capt. Steve Leder of the BTC fished his boat "Game Over" in the dayboat shark category, but came in out of the money, tagging and releasing a 70-pound mako in the 25-fathom waters south of Fire Island Inlet. Capt. Bobby Tyree of the charterboat **Jay-Mar** called to report that he fished the BTC Tournament with a crew of Ray, Ed the Mad Porgy, Jerry Commack, Richie the Kid, John English and Charlie, with the boys nailing a trio of 50-pound yellowfin at the 43075 line on the West Wall of the Hudson, including 10 mahis up to 16-pounds, with all action on the troll. Capt. Bobby mentioned that the night bite was a complete shutout.

Fisherman subscriber Sal Motisi called to report that he and buddy Capt. Al Hesse went on his "Sea-Scape" to do a shark trip on Sunday near the Coimbra wreck. After losing a big mako and then a similar sized thresher in the early morning part of their trip, around 11 AM novice shark angler Kristan Rogin tried her luck on yet another mako that came calling. After a tough struggle, she was able to boat an estimated 130-pounder with some help from the crew. Nice job young lady! Capt. Artie Sommer of the "Precious Metal" called to mention that he took a crew of Mike Gallagher and Ed Trombley out on his 34-Striker over the weekend in the BTC Tournament, catching a total of eight makos in the waters south of Shinnecock Inlet. All four of Saturday's fish estimated at 50-to-100 pounds were tagged and released. On Sunday, the crew released a trio of fish

the water so much that the thermocline disappeared and early fall weather did not allow the surface water to heat again or allow the thermocline to re-establish and thus, the fishing was poor. Ah, but that is another story.

"The bottom line is that once your area gets a few days of east or south-east winds and a jolt from a warm core eddy with fresh Gulfstream water, the fishing should improve. For this coming weekend (July 27/28), there's an eddy off of Spencer Canyon and Lindenkohl Canyon pulling the Gulf Stream water (and marlin, dolphin and tuna) over the offshore Wilmington Canyon to the Spencer Canyon and Lindenkohl Canyon. Pulling the water offshore of Toms Canyon and north. Anyhow, when the surface water in the NY Bight is too warm the tuna stay deep and end up appearing between Montauk and Nantucket. Find the draggers and chunk. When this wind stops, the strong and stable water

between 70 and 100 pounds, taking a 118-pounder for the grill. That's a good weekend of fishing.

Heading east to the Shinnecock area, Capt. Frank Cappizelli reported that he took his charterboat "Jane's Grace IV" out to the Fishtails on Saturday, taking a total of seven 50-pound yellowfins and one albacore for the Westchester based crew of Tom Bredetti, Lou Zacchio, Jim Bayreuther and Ed Soto. The hot lures were Sevenstrand Green Machines, mini jets and a cedar plug/Jap Bird combination. Cord at "Oakland's Marina and Restaurant" mentioned that on Friday, Capts. Bill and Chris Williams on the "Reel Action" released four makos to 100-pounds fishing close to home on the 43700-line. On Saturday, they ventured to the Dip area, where they trolled five albies and three yellowfins in the 40-to-50 pound class, also nailing a few mahis. They also reported seeing a few white marlin on the surface, including a big hammerhead and dusky, too. On Saturday, Capt. Tred Barta of the "Makaira" worked the fishtails for a mix of mahis and green bonito, also raising at least 10-blue marlin into his trolling spread, but with no takers.

Rich from the **Montauk Marin Basin** reported that the Connecticut based boat "Dusty Sea" did a canyon overnigher over the weekend, striking out on the troll at the Fishtails on Saturday, then heading to the Dip for the night chunk and doing absolutely nothing. Sunday morning, the crew headed back to the Tails area, striking gold with three mahis, two 50-pound yellowfins, a nice wahoo, and then lost a big blue marlin after a prolonged 2.5-hour fight. On Friday, Capt. Lou Rosado on the "Dorado" trolled a pair of chunky 40-pound bluefins 32-miles southeast of the Point. Some of the area boats did very well in the Fishtails on Sunday, with many 40-to-50 pound yellowfins reported on the troll.

Joan from the **West Lake Fishing Lodge** said that Capt. Jim Fiore on the "Double Header" caught a 100-pound mako on Friday, fishing south of the Point. Capt. Al Mott of the charter boat "Little Ocean Annie" had a great weekend, taking a 107-pound mako on Thursday from his favorite spot 30-miles southeast of the Point. On Saturday, angler Kevin Ferguson took a nice 133-pound mako from the same area. On Sunday, Capt. Al put his fares onto a 106-pound mako, in

addition to trolling up a 40-pound bluefin tuna from a spot 32-miles southeast of the Point. On Saturday Capt. Al Greg of the "Al's Girl Now" put first-time angler Gail Patterson onto a feisty 150-pound mako fishing south of the Point.

Well, that's it for this week. Let's hope for better days ahead.

## OUT OF STATE REPORT

### MASSACHUSETTS REPORT

Tim Coleman

### MARSHFIELD GREEN HARBOR

**Big Fish II** Capt. Tom Depersia his daughter, Debra, guided charter Mike Miller of Hummerock to a hook up with a 612-pound bluefin tuna on Friday, July 26. He battled the giant for two-hours before bringing it to gaff. There were more tuna hook ups last week and several giants in the 500 to 750-pounds were brought into Green Harbor. The Green Harbor bluefin tuna boats are always high-liners. Capt. Tom DePersia told us some of the best codfishing he has seen in more than a decade is occurring right now out on Stellwagen. Most cod are in the 15 to 25-pound size, many are 30 to 40-pound pool winners. Pollock to 30-pounds test stamina and skill. Haddock from eight to 12-pounds please anglers and make delicious meals. Norwegian jigs with red tube teasers often take double headers.

### NEW JERSEY REPORT

J. B. Kasper

### BRIELLE

According to Captain Howard Bogan on the big 125' **Jamaica**, bluefishing was pretty good Thursday and Friday, though they were all small fish 1 to 3 pounds about 20 miles off the beach. The action was nearly all on jigs. The night bite was slow all week in choppy seas but seemed to improve Friday and Saturday night. Pool winners last week included Rich Lawler with a 3-pound bluefish and Johnny Aranciba with a 6-pounder.

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