

Allan Bristow wins the 2016 Morgan Stanley Triple Crown Tournament

By Victor Ordija

Allan Bristow won first place in the Morgan Stanley Triple Crown Tournament (MSTCT) and a cash prize of \$450 by catching a Tarpon, Redfish and Snook during a three month period beginning on the 1st of August and ending on October 31st. The tournament which is run by the Marco Sportfishing Club (MSC) requires all three species of fish to be caught by participating anglers and the goal is to catch the largest Snook and Redfish and a Tarpon exceeding 30 inches

The annual contest which began six years ago has evolved into a challenging and competitive tournament which is geared towards the serious angler that can commit a significant amount of time and effort over a three month period. The Compass Group investment team of Morgan Stanley: David Caruso, Steve Macko and Jason Zapalski, have partnered with the Marco Sportfishing Club. The standings of participating anglers in the tournament is based on a point system that is calculated on the combined lengths of the largest Snook and Redfish caught and a Tarpon exceeding 30 inches.

In order to register a Tarpon catch, the angler needs to bring the fish to the boat, touch the leader and take a photograph of the fish in the water making sure the photograph clearly depicts the fish as being a Tarpon. The use of a gaff is prohibited so as to eliminate potential injury to both the angler and the fish. Once the angler successfully registers a Tarpon catch, he or she is automatically awarded a 5.5 foot Tarpon (66 points) regardless of the size of the fish caught. Every inch is worth one point. This rule which was implemented three years ago did not make catching a Tarpon less difficult, but increased safety for the angler and was less stressful to the fish.

Snook and Redfish that are caught and registered are required to be aligned along a ruler, measured and photographed. For all Snook and Redfish that are caught and reported, every inch is worth two points. It should be noted that while MSC encourages catch and release in the tournament, legal fish may be kept. As anglers caught and reported their catches, their combined points

would move them up or down in the standings.

Thirty Eight MSC anglers participated in this year's tournament which ended on October 31, 2016. Awards were presented to the winning anglers at the club's general meeting which was held on December 1, 2016 at Rose Hall in Marco Island. All the anglers in the top five places caught all three fish species (Tarpon, Snook and Redfish).

In addition to catching a Tarpon, first place angler Allan Bristow caught a 32" Redfish and a 39.75" Snook for a total of 209.5 points and a cash prize of \$450.00. Also, Allan had his name engraved on a perpetual plaque that hangs in the Marco Island office of Morgan Stanley.

In second place is Al Jennings with a 29.5" Redfish and a 39.25" Snook for a total of 203.5 points and a cash prize of \$400.00.

Third place went to Jim Doench with a 28.5" Redfish and a 37" Snook for a total of 197 points and a cash prize of \$350.00.

Fourth place was taken by Dick Larson with a 30.25" Redfish and a 28.5" Snook, 183.5 points and a cash prize of \$300.00.

Rounding out fifth place is Jay Jones with 163 points. Jay caught a 28.5" Redfish and an 25" Snook which earned him a cash prize of \$250.00.

It was expected that not all anglers would be able to catch all three fish species, therefore in order to maintain and improve participation, a sixth and seventh prize was awarded to the anglers that caught the largest Snook and the largest Redfish provided that those anglers were not eligible for the top five awards. Additionally, in this year's tournament Captain Guy Riordan of Adventure Fishing contributed a \$250 cash bonus award for the largest Redfish that is caught and entered in the tournament.

Jack Leonard caught a 40.5" Redfish and won the sixth award that paid \$150. Also, Jack had the largest Redfish caught during the tournament and he earned the \$250 cash bonus for an total cash award of \$400. Last but not least, Howard Laskau took the seventh award by catching a 36" Snook that paid a \$150 cash prize.

While the Morgan Stanley Triple Crown Tournament is a challenging and competitive contest, it is also very laid back from the standpoint that it allows

the individual angler to fish at his or her own pace. The angler can fish at any time; both day or night, anywhere within the backwater boundaries established by MSC and with any other angler or alone. It allows for experimentation by choosing different baits both live and artificial as well as fishing techniques, presentation, etc. The goal is to catch the largest fish with respect to Snook and Redfish and to also catch the elusive and hard to land Tarpon. At the end of the contest, the participant will be a better angler and will gain more appreciation for the unique environment that surrounds Marco Island.

Beginning in 2017, the Morgan Stanley Triple Crown Tournament may be expanded to six months beginning on May 1, 2017 in order to take advantage of the increased numbers of Tarpon that arrive in the Marco Island area and remain through August. Additionally, large Snook aggregate in deeper channels during June and July for their annual spawning period. The additional time would provide anglers a better chance to catch these elusive fish.

The Marco Sportfishing Club is a non-profit organization comprised of more than 400 fishermen, boaters and outdoor enthusiasts who live in the Marco Island, FL area. In addition to enjoying all the outdoor activities this beautiful Southwest Florida location has to offer, the Club prides itself in its ability to "give back" to the community. Members of the club are active and involved in the community and have been instrumental in organizing and staffing many events that teach local children the joys of fishing and good fishing etiquette. The events and organizations MSC has been involved with include the Marco Island Cub Scouts, Marco Island Historical Museum, National Estuaries Day at Rookery Bay, The Naples Kids Fishing Clinic, Goodland's Birthday Celebration, Naples Botanical Gardens, and the Port of the Isles Kids Fishing Clinic. To find out more about the Marco Sportfishing Club, please go to their website: www.marcosportfishingclub.com.