



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
World Cup/Big Game Classic Marlin Tournament

by

The Hon. Shawn Crockwell, JP, MP
Minister of Tourism Development & Transport

12th July 2013

Mr. Speaker,

I rise to offer my congratulations and support to the organizers and participants of the four major fishing tournaments being held this month.

Perhaps the most well-known is The World Cup - an annual tournament held on the Fourth of July every year that is fished everywhere in the world where blue marlin are found. Teams compete for a winner takes all prize that is often hundreds of thousands of dollars. Quite simply, the boat with the largest blue marlin exceeding 500 pounds wins. For the 2013 tournament there were 130 teams in 18 countries competing for the prize.

Mr. Speaker,

This year Bermuda proved, once again, why we are the top spot. By 10:30 a.m. visiting boat Sea Toy from North Carolina had weighed a fish at 547 pounds. Shortly after another visiting boat the Blank Check, also from North Carolina weighed a fish at 668 pounds.

Excitement started to build when local Captain Peter Rans on board his boat the Overproof reported he was hooked up to a large Marlin that could exceed 700 pounds. Calculations based on the size of the fish certainly indicated it could be the largest fish caught in Bermuda. But unfortunately - heartbreak for Captain Rans – it weighed in at 641 pounds - only good enough for second place.

Once the clock ran out in Hawaii at the end of the day's fishing it was the Blank Check fishing in Bermuda who claimed the honours with the biggest Marlin for the day and a substantial check for more than \$300,000.

Mr. Speaker,

Bermuda is now clearly the leading location for big blue marlin fishing in the world. The World Cup was first held in 1985 and Bermuda has now won a record eight times. We are followed closely by Hawaii with seven wins and the other marlin fishing areas such as Madeira, Angola, Bahamas, the Canary Islands and the Cape Verde Islands.

As Bermuda's now well established reputation as the top fishing spot in the world grows, we see more boats every year coming to compete.

These boats bring visitors and revenue to our shores. They stay in our hotels, shop in our stores, eat in our restaurants, purchase supplies including fuel and food and require the services of our local marinas and yacht service companies.

Many of these boats come every year to Bermuda and have made many good friends locally. I welcome these men and women to our shores and trust that they truly see why Bermuda is so much more.

Mr. Speaker,

The excitement continues however, as the Bermuda Triple Crown is still very much underway. The tournaments that make up the Triple Crown include the Bermuda Billfish Blast, fished from July 3rd to 7th, the Bermuda Big Game Classic which started on Wednesday, July 10th to the 14th and the Sea Horse Anglers Club Billfish Tournament which is fished from July 17th to 21st.

These tournaments attract foreign and local vessels as well as visitors who charter local boats. In short, these events provide jobs and foreign income to Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker,

As members of this honourable House will know, the tourism plan is broken down into five hubs - one of which is our offshore environment. This includes our reef platform, diving, water sports and of course fishing. According to figures from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - or NOAA - there are an estimated 12 million US citizens who enjoy salt water fishing every year and spend an estimated \$31Billion on their pastime. That is certainly a target market we intend to pursue as we seek to reinvent and reinvigorate our tourism product.

Mr. Speaker,

Finally, let me congratulate all those involved in this summer's fishing tournaments - from the organizers and participants to the sponsors and spectators. We have come a long way in the past few years in promoting our world class fishing - and yet there is clearly so much more we can and will do to ensure Bermuda is known around the world as a fisherman's paradise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.