

THE CAIRNS PROFESSIONAL GAME FISHING ASSOCIATION (CPGFA) PRESENTS

— 60TH ANNIVERSARY —

CAIRNS BLACK MARLIN TOURNAMENT



COMMEMORATING THE FIRST 1,000LB BLACK MARLIN CAPTURE

21 - 26 SEPTEMBER 2026

ABOUT THE EVENT

The 60th Anniversary Cairns Black Marlin Tournament

To celebrate this historic milestone, The Cairns Professional Game Fishing Association Inc. will host a four day anniversary tournament and related events.

Schedule:

- **21 Sept** - Throughout the day, teams will assemble at the Cairns Marlin Marina for the skippers' briefing and an overview of tournament rules. An evening Welcome Reception will be hosted.
- **22 Sept** - Teams will take part in a sail-past through the leads of Cairns Harbour, followed immediately by the official start fishing call.
- **22-25 Sept** - Fishing (4 days).
- **25 Sept** - Compulsory return to Cairns. Informal dock party for sponsors, anglers, crew and guests with drinks and tall tales.
- **26 Sept** - Presentation Gala and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Cairns Convention Centre.

COMMEMORATING 60 YEARS OF CAIRNS BLACK MARLIN HISTORY

Captain George Bransford first visited Cairns in 1943 as an American Paratrooper, and was fascinated to hear the locals' tales of enormous billfish along the Great Barrier Reef that smashed the professional fishermen's gear and stole their catches.

He was intrigued enough to sell his Fort Lauderdale charter business and move with his family to Cairns where he had the 32ft vessel *Sea Baby* built in 1963.

After 3 years of heart-break looking for 'that one big fish' and losing many, on 25 September 1966, Bransford made world fishing history when he and deckhand Richard Obach landed a 1,064lb black marlin (pictured above right), the first grander ever landed in Australian waters.

This fish was also a new world record, eclipsing the old mark of 871lbs and the was also the first marlin ever caught on rod and reel over 1,000lbs using 80 pound line.

The capture of this first 'grander' black marlin put Cairns on the world



game fishing map.

After that the Cairns fleet grew and as many more big fish followed over the many years since, tens of thousands of anglers have enjoyed fishing in the Cairns region.

These days, Cairns remains the undisputed black marlin capital of the world where modern anglers use 1000lbs as a benchmark for an outstanding catch.

99% of these fish are now released - all thanks to the foresight and passion of Captain George Bransford.



TOURNAMENT RULES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The tournament is: Leader must be in hand at time of release. Tagging is optional, no additional points will be allotted to tagged fish. Only non-offset circle hooks may be used for ALL bait.

For competitive events, omnidirectional sonar will not be allowed during official fishing hours (including prior to official fishing hours each day), but may be used after hours for safe passage if required.

[IGFA Rules and Equipment Regulations apply.](#)
(Download at link).

Sailpast All boats must participate in the sailpast at 0700 hours on Tuesday morning, 22 September 2026, proceeding past the Cairns Marlin Marina in single file as outlined at the briefing.

Fishing Area The fishing area is east of the Great Barrier Reef, between the southern end of #6 Ribbon Reef and the southern end of Jenny Louise Shoal Reef. (Be aware of Green Zone rules/regulations.)

Line Class Heavy tackle 37kg and 60kg only, conforming to IGFA rules.

Scoring No line class point score. Leader in hand at time of release counts as one [1] fish. Most fish released wins. In the case of a tie, the team catching the most fish first on countback wins.

Registration requires downloading the official tournament app via QR code. All billfish must be released with a photograph of the release uploaded via the official app. Only marlin (blue, black, striped) count toward point score.

Anglers Maximum 4 anglers per team.

Vessels Teams to arrange their own boats and charter fees. Boats must be seaworthy and have minimum \$10,000,000.00 public liability insurance. The vessel's public liability "Certificate of Currency" must be provided at the time of registration.

In case of bad weather, the Cairns Professional Game Fishing Association tournament committee will make the decision to cancel or postpone the whole or any day of the event. The decision will be final. It will be the responsibility of the boat skipper and team to make individual decisions regarding the safety of their vessel and the people on board at any time during the tournament. Individual insurance policies must be adhered to regarding weather limits.

Compulsory Attendance Boat Skipper and Team Captain **MUST** attend the registration and welcome reception/briefing. All boats must be present at or adjacent to the Cairns Marlin Marina before the sailpast. Winning boats may have their tackle inspected by the tournament judges.

Return to Port All vessels and anglers **must** return to the Cairns Marlin Marina, Yorkey's Knob or Bluewater by 2000 Friday, 25 September to qualify for prizes.

Skippers must advise tournament base upon return before 2000 hours.

Judging & Protests Tournament judges will be appointed by the committee. Protests must be submitted in writing and in the hands of judges by 2000 hrs Friday 25 Sept. The judges' decision is final.

Fishing Times Fishing times Tuesday to Thursday will be 1030–1730 hrs. Friday will be 0930–1600 hrs. At cease fishing on Tuesday to Thursday boats that are still hooked up may continue to fight the fish until a result is confirmed. On Friday, September 25 all boats must return to port by 2000 hours. All hookups, releases and lost fish must be reported as soon as possible to Tournament Base and acknowledged.

Score sheets and tournament app photographs must be handed in/uploaded to judges at the Marlin Marina by 2000 hours, Sept 25 to qualify for prizes.

Radio Skeds Radio skeds will be conducted on VHF Channel 81 at 1205, 1405, 1705 hrs Tuesday to Thursday and on Friday at 1205, 1405, 1605 hrs. Captains must report Persons onboard (POB) and location. At the final sked of the day advise location staying overnight ie. anchorage or returning to port.

VHF channel 23 in the Cooktown area may be used for relays if required. Mobile phones and Satphones must be used if radio comms cannot be established. Any phoned in sked information will be relayed to all participants on the radio. Failure to contact base on two successive skeds will result in disqualification of the days results.

Risk Participants acknowledge that at sea events carry inherent risks. Participants acknowledge and agree that any decision to proceed to sea to participate in the tournament and the risk in that decision at all time rests with the participants. The committee or judges will not be held responsible for the actions of participants travelling to or exiting any port, or at sea, and the participants release and discharge the committee and judges from all and any liability whatsoever in this regard. Participants agree to the attached Release and Discharge by way of acknowledgment on this entry.

Cancellation of Tournament The committee and judges reserve the right to cancel the tournament for any reason including for reasons of natural disasters, inclement weather, war, pandemics or other act of god events or events beyond their control and their decision shall be final and binding on the participants.

In the event the tournament is cancelled for any reason then the committee and judges will look to provide a pro-rata refund of application fees, less administration costs and other non-revocable expenses as determined by the committee and judges in their sole discretion.

[All anglers and crew should comply with the CPGFA Code of Practice and ethical angling.](#)

AWARDS LIST

CHAMPION BOAT/ TEAM SPONSORED BY VIKING YACHTS

RUNNER-UP CHAMPION BOAT/ TEAM SPONSORED BY SHORT MARINE

3RD PLACE CHAMPION BOAT/TEAM SPONSORED BY CORAL COAST LAUNDRY

CHAMPION MALE ANGLER SPONSORED BY TACKLEWORLD COOKTOWN

CHAMPION FEMALE ANGLER SPONSORED BY CAIRNS SIM TRANS

CHAMPION JUNIOR ANGLER SPONSORED BY COOKTOWN FISHERMAN'S WHARF

DAILY MOST RELEASED DAY 1 SPONSORED BY O'BRIEN BOATS

DAILY MOST RELEASED DAY 2 SPONSORED BY WATSON MARINE

DAILY MOST RELEASED DAY 3 SPONSORED BY ICONIC CONSTRUCTIONS

DAILY MOST RELEASED DAY 4 SPONSORED BY GLI YACHT BROKERS



TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

Please contact Cairns Professional Game Fishing Association's 60th Anniversary Cairns Black Marlin Committee (Enquiries by email to: 60th@cpgfa.asn.au)

Tournament Committee: Chairman - Brad Craft, Patron - Dennis "Brazaka" Wallace, Committee - Lily Sims, Michelle Sims, Daniel McCarthy

Hall of Fame: Laurie Wright **Presentation Event:** Diane Hance, Juliet Headley

Cairns Professional Game Fishing Association Committee: President - Daniel Klein, Vice-President - Tim Dean, Secretary - Sally Morris, Committee - Darren Haydon, Kelly Dalling, Dean Ford

ENTER ONLINE AT

www.cpgfa.asn.au/60th-tournament-entry/

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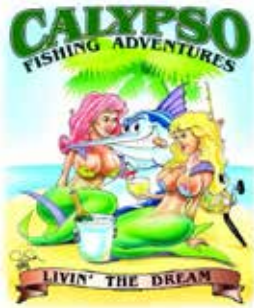


By **SHORT MARINE**



Morris Nautical

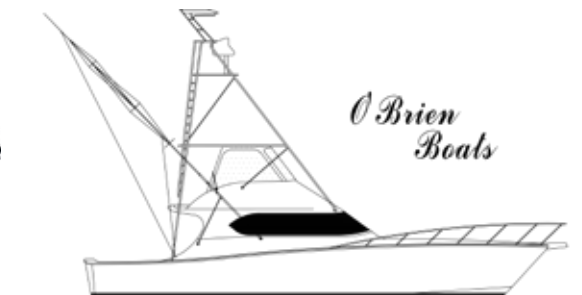
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