1,200-pounder in Pirate’s Cove

Trey Irvine’s 1,228.5-pound blue marlin set a new North Carolina state record and won nearly $500,000 in the Pirate’s Cove Billfish Tournament.

August 11-15, Manteo, North Carolina

Trey Irvine and his team on the 99-foot Spencer Mini hooked the fish of a lifetime on the final day of the Pirate’s Cove Billfish Tournament. Fishing some 65 miles northeast of Oregon Inlet, Capt. Mike King trolled through a stretch of flat-calm water when the big fish came up behind a bowling-pin teaser and switched over to the short rigger.

“It looked like somebody dropped a car in the water,” Irvine said of the splash the fish created behind the boat.

After 2½ hours of fighting the fish, Irvine put the heat to the big marlin to get it to the boat, while Patrick Bird expertly wired the marlin and Cliff Spencer sank the last gaff. It took the entire crew to haul the 142-inch (short length) fish into the cockpit, and they headed to the scales.

At 1,228.5 pounds, the fish eclipsed the North Carolina state record, a 1,147-pounder caught by Jack Herrington in 1974.

Irvine’s fish also pushed Mini to the top of the leaderboard, taking home nearly $500,000 in prizes.

Okahna came in second place with 350 points, followed by Bi-Op-Sea, also with 350 points. The 99 boat fleet released 22 white marlin, one spearfish and 11 blues. Irvine’s state record was the only blue marlin weighed.

92-pound Whitey in Mid-Atlantic

August 17-22, Cape May, New Jersey

Susan McCarthy’s Reel Joy scooped up the majority of the $1.8 million prize purse in the Mid-Atlantic $500,000, weighing in a 92-pound white marlin on the final day of fishing. The 92-pounder tied the tournament record and garnered a $699,307 check.

Flat-calm conditions greeted the fleet on Day One, and 122 boats gave it a go. Rich Ryan’s Anarchite caught a 75-pounder to top the white marlin category. Dan Paulas on Hallibaboo sat in second with a 73-pounder, and Jim McCarthy’s Cover Mission caught a 72-pounder for third. Adam Denney’s Impulse V weighed a 71-pound blue marlin to top that category.

None of the weight categories changed on Day Two, but BiOpSea released three blues, while Pipe Dreamer released two.

On Day Three, Trust Me released three white marlin, and Endurance, Mack Attack and Super Crew each released two.

The bite kicked into gear on Day Four, and the leaderboard changed several times. Capt. Bob Watson put Frank Boggiorno’s Dealer’s Choice into the white marlin lead with an 88-pounder. The team also changed as Capt. Matt Rakestraw found a 79-pounder for Barry Westnak’s Miss Annie. Gina Lea moved into a tie for third place with a 75-pound white marlin for owner Adam Buchman.

In the blue marlin category, Joe Bernet’s Kwik Rate caught a 625-pounder for second place.

The fleet continued to rack up the catches on Day Five, and it became another moving day on the leaderboard. McCarthy’s Reel Joy trumped the competition when it showed up with its 92-pound whitey, bumping Dealer’s Choice’s 88-pounder to second place, worth $124,955.

Miss Annie’s 79-pounder finished third for $68,747. The 719-pound blue marlin caught on Impulse V held on to win the category and $193,622.

Kwik Rate finished second with a 625-pounder worth $124,955. Joe Giagaffione’s Atomic weighed in a 501-pound blue on Day Five to take third place and $62,477.

Back in Five scored nine white marlin releases on Day Five, followed by...