

Lahaina Seawatch

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Lahaina Jackpot

The *HOKU* #3, from O'ahu, won the **35th Annual Lahaina Jackpot Fishing Tournament** with a 265.3-lb blue marlin captured by Makani Christensen. Makani was fishing with Capt. Mike Sur.

Mike headed to the North Shore of Moloka'i, working an area about 10 miles outside, between Kalaupapa and Papalaua Valley, most of the morning. They were looking for birds, bait, anything, but there were no signs of life. Mike headed back in toward Halawa Valley.

Because there is no fighting chair on the boat, Makani had the corner lines rubber banded to the reels in the gunwale. Out of the blue, the long-corner rubber band snapped. The marlin took off on a freight-train run, taking half a spool of 130-test line before it started jumping.

It went crazy, jumping all over the place and taking another quarter-spool during its surface display. Makani got two lines cleared before he got to work. Mike reversed the boat around the remaining line and headed after the fish.

Mike didn't want to back after the marlin. He wanted to keep tension on the line, so he let Makani crank from the gunwale. Mike turned the boat downswell with the marlin and ran downsea, with one engine "slow ahead."

Makani dropped the reel into low gear and started cranking. He said there was a lot of "Portugue pull" used during the fight. The marlin came in about 30 minutes later, swimming along with the boat.

The marlin came up jumping again about 25 feet from the boat. The big fish headed for the boat and then turned away, taking a little line. It must have gotten tail-wrapped at that point, because when Makani cranked it back in five minutes later, it came up backward.

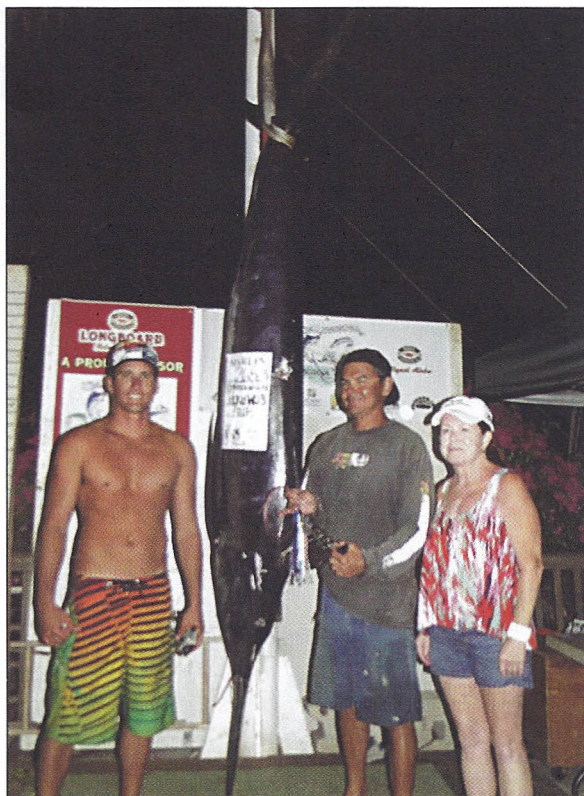
Mike kept the boat "slow ahead," left the helm and grabbed the leader. Makani picked up the gaff and secured his fish. They used a come-along to pull the marlin into the boat.

Both Mike and Makani said this winner-take-all \$20,000 marlin was "redemption" for their 2009 Halloween Shootout marlin, which was disqualified because of shark bites.

This marlin must have been inside feeding on the reefline earlier in the day because it had two big papio and a small aku in its stomach.

Wahine Jackpot Tournament

The *PUALELE*, out of Ma'alaea Harbor, took first place in the **34th Annual Wahine Jackpot Tournament** with a 246.1-lb blue marlin captured by Janice Walin. She was fishing with Capt. Kalei Luuwai and crewman Kalani Tom.



Makani Christensen's 265.3-lb marlin on the *HOKU* #3 captained by Mike Sur took top honors in the Jackpot.

Kalei headed to the North Shore of Moloka'i and worked an area outside Halawa Valley, near the N-buoy. They took a blind strike on the short-rigger position. The marlin pulled out 500 yards of 130-lb test line before they could stop it.

The reel was smoking. Kalei thought it was a very big fish from the way it ripped off line.

Once Janice got into the chair, she cranked the fish right in. Kalei backed the boat in slow reverse, keeping the line tight. He thought something was wrong because this fish was coming in so easily. The tip of the rod was bouncing and jerking steadily as Janice hauled in her fish.

The marlin popped up about 50 feet behind the boat. At first glance, Kalei thought the bill was sticking up, but what he saw was the tail of the marlin. This fish was coming in backward.

Kalei shouted, "Tail-wrap! Tail-wrap!"

Kalei made sure to keep the line tight as Janice kept cranking. He didn't want it to come loose so close to the boat. The marlin was already dead.

Kalani grabbed the leader and carefully pulled. Kalei took the flying gaff and secured the fish. They pulled the marlin up on the swimstep, tied it down and continued to fish.

The marlin must have missed the lure at the strike and hooked itself in the tail on the turn. It likely drowned after not being able to get enough water through its gills to breathe correctly.

Their winner-take-all marlin was worth \$5,700.

The only other winning fish was brought in aboard the *START ME UP DAS IT*. Juanita Linal tagged and released an estimated 125-lb Pacific blue marlin. She was fishing with Capt. Denny Putnam and Capt. Randy Evans. Their fish was worth \$1,000.

... **Donnell**