



**Northside Sportfishing Club
Annual Bastille Day Kingfish Tournament
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For Immediate Release
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JAMES WINS 35TH BASTILLE DAY KINGFISH TOURNAMENT WITH 30.35-POUND KINGFISH

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Bad luck turned into a tournament-winning catch for angler Eli James aboard *Catch and Keep* in Sunday's 35th Bastille Day Kingfish Tournament. When teammate Nate Gatcliffe's hat blew overboard, Captain Kai Holmberg circled back in a futile attempt to retrieve it. While the hat was gone, the second pass over the same stretch of water proved lucky. "The planer tripped, I started reeling, cranking in the line in nice and easy," says James. After a 10-minute fight, he caught the 30.35-pound kingfish. The whopper earned James the Largest Kingfish award, with \$2,000 in cash and many other prizes.



Photo: L to R Captain Kai Holmberg, Dante Poli, Nathan Gatcliffe, Shawn Scott, and Eli James with Largest Kingfish, on Catch and Keep. Credit: Josh Brown, Palm + Pixel

James was one of 177 anglers, including 39 junior anglers, on 42 boats who fished in this Northside Sportfishing Club-hosted tournament, which National Geographic magazine named in 2019 one of the world's '9 Bastille Day bashes that celebrate French Culture!' The tournament is part of the U.S. Virgin Islands French Heritage Week.

The Second Largest Kingfish prize went to Thomas Ledee, aboard *Lucky Strike*, who caught a 24.80-pounder.

Billy Biscoe, fishing on *Isle*, reeled in a 24.25-pounder to win the Third Largest Kingfish, while Allison Querrard caught the Fourth Largest Kingfish, a 23.75-pounder, aboard *Wiked Intentions*.

The catch of 7 kingfish earned Kai Holmberg the Best Captain award aboard *Catch and Keep*, while boating 10 total of the tournament's eligible species by count earned *Catch and Keep* the Best Boat title.

James, on *Catch and Keep*, earned Best Male Angler with a total weight of 78.15 pounds, while the Best Female prize went to Chelsea Aubain, who caught a total of 41.00 pounds of fish aboard *Kaos*.

The Best Junior Male Angler award went to Shane Berry, who caught 59.35 pounds of fish off *Two Reel*.

Tori Aubain earned Best Junior Female with her catch weighing 21.60 pounds aboard *Virgin Coast*.

Although the tournament is focused on kingfish, other species earned anglers cash and prizes. Shawn Scott, fishing from *Catch and Keep*, won the Largest Mackerel with his 8.70-pound catch. Finally, fishing from *Double Header 5*, Connor Szarmach won Largest Bonito with his 3.25-pounder.

Thousands of dollars in cash, prizes, and trophies were awarded this year.

Judges Daryl Bryan and Bobby Laplace officially weighed in the catches.

After weigh-in, the fun continued onshore at The Shack and The Hideaway at Hull Bay, with live music by Oleik – The Music Man, Klimaxx Band, and Obsession Band. Crowds gathered at 7 p.m. for the Awards Ceremony.

First organized by the Northside Sportfishing Club in 1988, the tournament has become one of the highlights of French Heritage celebrations on St. Thomas. The event benefits the Joseph Sibilly School, St. Thomas Rescue, Nana Baby Children's Home, and the St. Thomas Fisherman's Association. Over the past three-plus decades, the nonprofit Northside Sportfishing Club's annual Bastille Day Kingfish Tournament has donated over \$230,000 to community organizations and scholarships.

The Bastille Day Kingfish Tournament is sponsored by The Shack and The Hideaway at Hull Bay; Offshore Marine, the YAMAHA distributor in the Virgin Islands; Masters Insurance & Guardian Insurance; Budget Marine, the Caribbean's Leading Chandlery; Caribbean Gifts N Things/Caribbean Sol; Amalie Car Rental; Frank's Electric; Scoops & Brew; Fish Bar; Searena Properties; Neptune Fishing Supplies; Bee Green Pest Control; Anchor Title LLC; Stabilis Builders; Rock Rakers Landscaping; Cyclone Fencing; and Lime Out.

For more information, Email: nssf cvi@gmail.com. Or check us out on Facebook and Instagram @northsidesportfishingclub

2026 RESULTS

42 Boats
177 Anglers (includes 39 Jr. Anglers)
78 Fish Caught, 637.70 pounds
40 Kingfish Caught, 506.70 pounds

PLACEMENT	ANGLER	LBS	BOAT
Largest Kingfish	Eli James	30.35	Catch and Keep
2 nd Largest Kingfish	Thomas Ledee	24.80	Lucky Strike
3 rd Largest Kingfish	Billy Biscoe	24.25	Isle
4 th Largest Kingfish	Allison Querrard	23.75	Wiked Intentions
Best Captain	Kai Holmberg	7 kingfish	Catch and Keep
Best Boat	Catch and Keep	10 fish	Catch and Keep
Best Male	Eli James	30.35	Catch and Keep
Best Female	Chelsea Aubain	41.00	Kaos
Best Junior Male	Shane Berry	59.35	Two Reel
Best Junior Female	Tori Aubain	21.60	Virgin Coast
Largest Mackerel	Shawn Scott	8.70	Catch and Keep
Largest Bonito	Connor Szarmach	3.25	Double Header 5

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