



SURFCASTERS Committee



Rich Heffernan, Chairman

RISAA Wins The Cup!

RISAA's Surfcasting Committee hosted its 15th Annual Surf Fishing Club Challenge this year between Friday night, June 8th and Sunday morning, June 10th. This spring tournament pits the area's surf fishing clubs against one another in a club-to-club competition for charity. And this year was bigger than ever as eight surf fishing and sportsman organizations entered the contest for the largest striped bass and bluefish and to try their luck for the team championship.

But the RISAA team won the cup! That's right, we are the new champions and took back the trophy from the hard-fishing Rhode Island Mobile Sportfishing Club, the 2017 champions!

No team could best **Kevin Johnson's** 35.35 pound, 46 inch whopper of a striper. Kevin set the tone early too when the winning bass took his black nine-inch Slug-Go late Friday night off the rocky coast of Newport. As most of the RISAA team were in contact through group messaging, we knew one of our own had a good chance of staying on the leaderboard. And boy, did the texts ever fly after that!

However, when you're pitted against some of the best fishermen in the Tri-state area, the best plan is to keep on fishing.

To give you a sense of the level of competition, we were up against these other experienced and storied clubs:

- Connecticut Surfcasters
- Fall River Bowling Green Fishing Club
- Hartford Surf Fishing Club
- Narragansett Pier Sportfishing Association
- Pioneer Valley Boat and Surf Club
- Rhode Island Mobile Sport Fishermen
- Weekapaug Surfcasters

Even though Kevin's entry would be tough to beat, we still had to wait until Sunday morning's Fishermen's Breakfast where the results would be compiled from the RISAA-approved weigh-in stations and announced at the gathering.

The breakfast and awards ceremony was held this year at the Andrea Hotel in Misquamicut in its comfortable beachfront pavilion. Members of seven fishing clubs - thirty five people in all - shared a great breakfast and keenly awaited the results.

Word of Kevin's 35 pounder had already spread among some of the clubs so it wasn't much of a surprise that he took the top spot for largest striped bass.

Last year's cup was won based on the three largest bluefish, but this year Rhode Island's waters didn't give up a single one! That meant that our striper was not only the biggest one but put us over the top for the team championship as no other club's combination of their



The 2018 champions (l-r) front: Dick Geldard, Dino Messina, Paul Phillips; back: Dick Cournoyer, Richie Reich, Kevin Johnson, holding the Team Trophy, Mike Roy, Rich Heffernan, and Joe Coppolla

three largest fish was enough to win it.

After the awards announcements, those in attendance were anxious for our annual charity raffle which was going to benefit the **Welcome House of South County** that does so much to help Rhode Island's stressed families. Several of the area's bait shops, tackle makers, merchants and all of the participating clubs chipped in items for the raffle table.

Club members **Dick Cournoyer, Larry Hill, and John Meserve** did a fantastic job of hawking the tickets and announcing the prize winners with the goods. And their efforts paid off with a total of \$360 that was only part of our contribution to the Welcome House. The larger share is from the \$75 entry fee that each club sends in to participate in the Challenge. That means a total of \$960 went to charity this year. Way to go RISAA! Our best donation ever! (to page 24)