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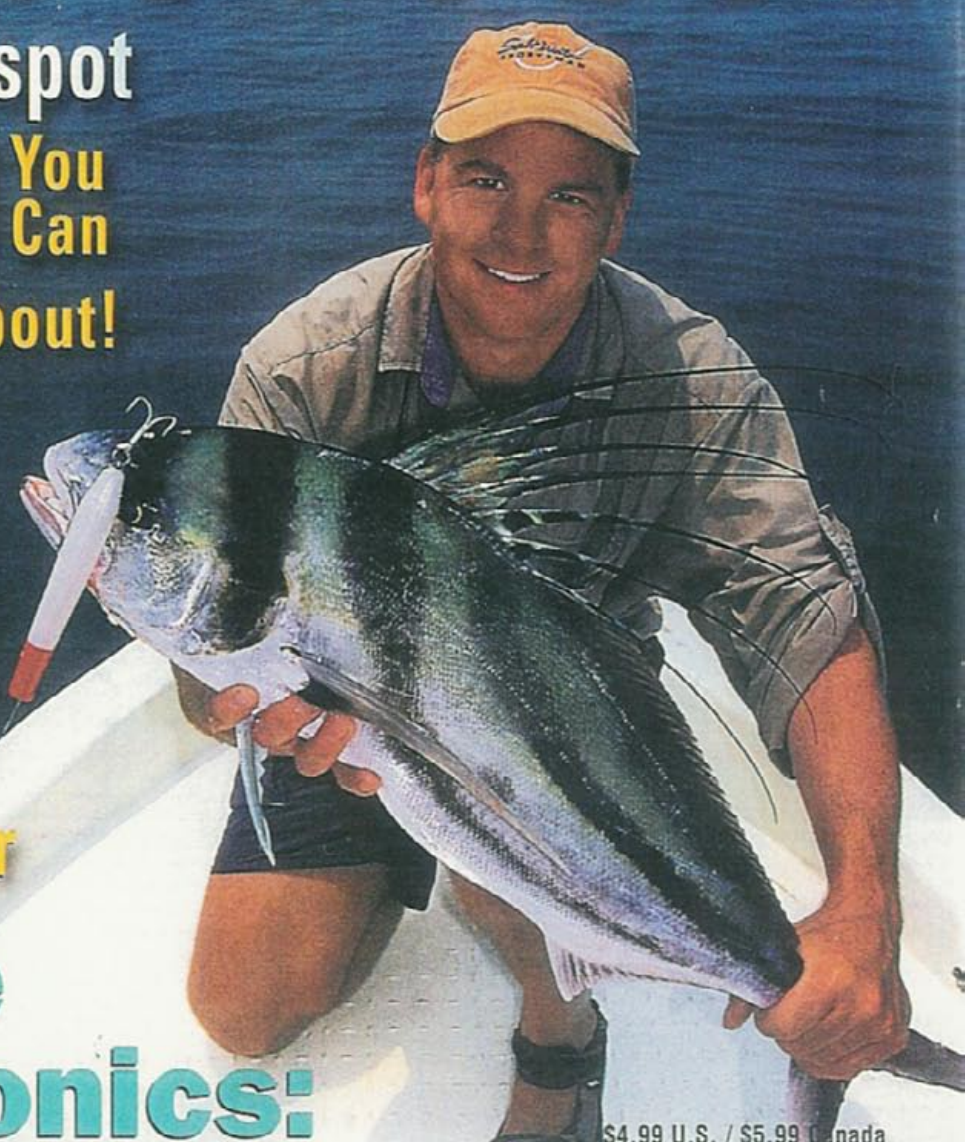
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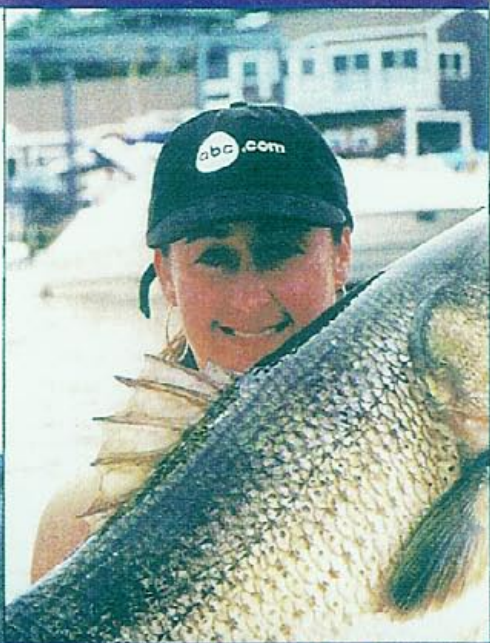
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**Bruce Bosley**



**Dave Workman**



**Jennifer Clarke**

# Ask A **WINNER** What's the secret to tournament success? Three top competitors reveal what it takes.

**I**n the world of tournament fishing, what makes a winner? Is it preparation, perseverance, experience, knowledge, skill or sheer luck? While luck always plays a part in anything associated with fishing, it certainly can't be the major factor because there are simply too many individuals whose names appear in the winner's column on a consistent basis. So it must be a combination of other factors—with a little luck thrown in for good measure—right?

One way to answer the question is to go right to the horse's mouth. Ask the top anglers who fished the most competitive tournament trails what they think are the most important attributes to finishing at the top of the field. From their comments you just might put together the formula that can help make you a winner.



**Bruce Bosley-**  
**2001 WBS World**  
**Champion of Billfishing**

Getting an invitation to fish the WBS Grand Championship is no easy feat, never mind winning this most prestigious of titles. The WBS World Tour is comprised of seven divisions, The International Open Championship (IOC) East for the Atlantic and the IOC West for the Pacific, plus five U.S. Divisional Championships (Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Gulf Coast, West Coast). An angler or team must compete and place in a number of divisional events compiling enough points to earn a berth in the Grand Championship, which was held in Neuveo Vallarta, Mexico this past December.

So how is it that an angler from the unlikely town of Yakima, Washington was crowned the

## 2001 WBS World Champion of Billfishing?

Bruce Bosley is an ardent big-game angler who has traveled far and wide to fish over the past 13 years, but he only got interested in competitive fishing two years ago. Last year he competed in the IOC West Division because his favorite places to fish are Kona and Cabo San Lucas. His performance in the World Billfishing Challenge in Hawaii, where his four blue marlin topped the field and earned enough points to be crowned the IOC West Division

Champion, also got him his first shot at the big title.

Bosley had to shift gears for the Grand Championship, switching from heavy tackle for marlin to light tackle for sailfish. After catching only one sailfish on the first day, he made some changes and tagged and released five more for an amazing come-from-behind victory on the second day for a total of 1,650 points, enough to best the second place angler, Bobby Sauls of Raleigh, North Carolina, last years Grand Champion who was on the verge of repeating!

"Tournament billfishing is coming of age with the formation of the WBS World Tour, television coverage and rapidly growing participation," said Bosley. "Winning the title this year fulfills a dream, one I'd like to repeat again next year, but if I don't, I'm satisfied."

"To compete at the international level," advised Bruce, "you have to be an experienced angler with at least a couple years of tournament fishing under your belt. You have to be proficient with both light and heavy tackle because the WBS format includes contests where you can encounter blue and black marlin as well as smaller species like striped marlin and sailfish and the lighter the line class used to subdue these fish, the more points you earn for the catch. In Hawaii, we fished heavy tackle from the chair big blues, but at the Grand Championship event in Mexico it took light tackle and sailfish to earn the points to win."

"To compete successfully you have to spend time researching each tournament local before you make the investment to enter," Bruce continued "so you understand the area, the tournament format



and the billfish species that will be available. Some areas offer a variety of species in residence and each carries a specific points value, which can be compounded by the line-class of the tackle used to catch them. That means you have to develop a strategy to get your points total as high as possible and that can mean chasing different fish. By entering the tournaments that you feel give you the best chance of doing well based on your experience, fishing style and ability you give yourself a shot at winning a divisional championship."



### Dave Workman, Jr.- 3-time SKA Angler of the Year

When it comes to stiff competition, the Southern Kingfish Association has bred some of the toughest! After ten years of tournaments in venues that stretch from North Carolina to Texas, the field of anglers is wide and encompasses some of the best in the United States. To qualify for the honor of Angler of the Year you have to perform throughout the entire season, racking up points in each event you enter. At the end of the year, the angler with the highest aggregate points total takes home this prestigious award.

In the history of the SKA, only two anglers have repeated and only one has done it an unprecedented three times. His name is Dave Workman, Jr. and he hold the added distinction of being one of the few that has won events in all seven states they are held. "There are a lot of great fishermen who are capable of winning in their home waters, but it's winning on the road that is so important,"

## Ask A Winner

Workman said. "If you can't catch fish alongside the best of the local fishermen when you're hundreds of miles away from home, you don't have much of a chance at winning the championship."

This Jacksonville, Florida, native got serious about tournaments when he started fishing the SKA tour in 1992 and he spent his first two years learning the ropes and figuring out what it took to win. He was a quick study because he won Angler of the Year honors back to back in 1994 and 1995 and repeated again in 1999. Regardless of where a tournament is being held, you never count Workman out.

"Preparation is the single most important factor in being consistent," Workman said without hesitation. "All the little things have to be taken care of so when you're on the water fishing you're not worrying about anything but fishing. Confidence in your equipment lets you get in a zone where the only thing you're thinking about is finding, hooking and boating winning fish."

Dave and his team follow a rigorous maintenance schedule between tournaments. His 32-foot Donzi and twin 300-horsepower ProMax engines are gone over with a fine-tooth comb. Ditto his tow

vehicle, trailer, rods and reels. He keeps a checklist of all the things he needs on board and as soon as a tournament is over, he replenishes his tackle supplies, re-spools his reels and makes sure the boat is loaded with everything he needs so when he gets to the next town the following weekend, he's ready to go.

"The ability to find the fish is critical," Dave continued. "I touch base with Roffers and get a current forecast for each location. I try to pre-fish each tournament location for at least a day or two before the tournament and have developed contacts in every port that can help fill me in on the current patterns. Find the bait and you find the kings. Speed is a blessing. My boat tops 65 mph so I can run up to 140 miles to get to the fish, make my catch and get back in time for weigh-in. If that's what it takes, that's what I'll do."



### Jennifer Clarke- 2001 ASA Angler of the Year

She's not your typical lady angler. In fact, she is not a typical angler by any standard. Jennifer Clarke grew up in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in a family of avid trout fly fishermen and was finessing the long

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wand at the tender age of four. She has scouted the flats for bonefish in the Seychelles, waded the rivers of Yellowstone for big trout and sport fished in any of a hundred other locations, but it wasn't until she discovered Martha's Vineyard in 1994, and the big striped bass that prowl its rock-studded waters, that she settled down in what she considered fishing's equivalent of Nirvana.

Jen learned striper fishing from the top anglers and captains on the island and is a self-confessed addict. She earned her captains license and charters a 30-foot center console during the season specializing in live-bait fishing for big bass. When asked what she likes best about her current home her response was anything but predictable. "Being in my boat, running in bad water, hunting big stripers, by myself!" she said with a smile. Told you she isn't your typical lady angler.

As the very first American Striper Association Angler of the Year, Clarke competed in tournaments from Massachusetts to Virginia taking first place in two and placing in several others. She also captured the Big Fish of the Year Award with the largest bass caught in any of the ASA tournaments, a 48.7-pound beauty taken during the Pier 37 Marine Tournament in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

"The most important things that contributed to my success," said Clarke "are the ability to locate big fish and knowing the right baits to use to single them out from the smaller ones. While it sounds simplistic, it's really not. There were times when I found schools of bass that were feeding, but they just weren't big enough to be tournament winners. It's not easy to leave a school of 20-pound plus fish to go looking for bigger ones, but that's what it took to win."

Just how does she go about locating the right fish and using the right baits?

"A lot of it is preparation before the contest begins," Jen offered. "Doing my research to find the areas most likely to hold big fish and lining up sources of bait like live bunker to tempt them. That might not be such a big deal in my home waters, but when I traveled to fish the events in New York, New Jersey and on Chesapeake Bay, making contacts well in advance of my arrival was absolutely critical. Finding sources of local knowledge—not just where they are catching fish, but where they are finding big fish—is most important. Then getting there and pre-fishing for at least a day or two. If those spots require running 50 or 60 miles during a tournament day, I'm prepared to do just that."