



RED LETTER DAY

Team Hagaman and Goodwin Make History at Inaugural Redfish Series Event

By Rob Newell
Photography by Doug DuKane

In March, FLW Outdoors conducted its first-ever Wal-Mart FLW Redfish Series tournament in Sarasota, Fla. It was a new world of flats skiffs, slot limits and angling teams, and FLW Outdoors was greeted by an enthusiastic group of high-caliber contestants.

Making history in that event was the team of Jeff Hagaman of Lutz, Fla., and James Goodwin of Palm Harbor, Fla. Not only were they the first team to win an FLW Redfish Series event, they dominated it with a 2-pound, 11-ounce margin of victory.

"This is incredible," Hagaman said after winning. "I'd rather win this one than any of the others down the road. This is the first one and no one can take that away – we will always be the inaugural Redfish Series winners."

"You have to realize the competition we're up against out here," Goodwin said. "The guys in this field are the best in this

business; winning redfish tournaments is not easy."

Tournament redfishing is a difficult game primarily because of the state-imposed slot limit, which allows anglers to only keep fish between 18 and 27 inches – all other size redfish must be released immediately.

Oftentimes teams catch plenty of redfish during competition, but it's not reflected in the standings unless they are legal keepers.

Each team is allowed to bring two redfish to the scales and the combined weight counts as their score.

Therefore, the object in tournament redfishing is not necessarily to catch numbers of fish, but rather to catch two of the right size fish – which is exactly what Hagaman and Goodwin did each day of competition.

On day one, Hagaman and Goodwin were the first team to weigh-in and they set the mark to beat with two redfish weighing 13 pounds, 14 ounces. When the scales closed on day one, none of

the other 124 teams had bested their weight.

On day two, some teams had begun to mount a charge for the lead, but Hagaman and Goodwin silenced their competitors with two redfish weighing an impressive 15 pounds, 5 ounces. Their two-day winning total came to 29 pounds, 3 ounces.

With a red tide impacting Sarasota Bay, the key to Hagaman and Goodwin's win was a 63-mile run to Charlotte Harbor, where they had located a huge school of redfish during practice.

"We had found some pretty good fish down there and we knew it would be a matter of getting down there and getting back each day," Goodwin said.

On day one, the team caught two 26 1/2-inch redfish and left Charlotte Harbor by 9 a.m. to play it safe.

On the second day the team discovered a bumper crop of reds.

"We had no idea that many fish were in there," Hagaman continued. "We probably saw 500 reds sunning in the shallows. We caught 15 fish and some of them were 10-pounders that were just a hair over the (27-inch) line."

Though they could see fish, their pattern consisted of slowly working a large pothole located between two shallow flats.

"If you moved the bait too fast they wouldn't eat it," Goodwin said. "You had to really slow it down and just bump it through the mud."

Hagaman and Goodwin, who are also well-known tarpon tournament anglers, are excited about the future of FLW Outdoors involvement in saltwater tournaments.

"The saltwater flats market is booming," Hagaman noted. "And with FLW Outdoors here, it's only going to get bigger." ■

Team	Days 1&2		Earnings
	Fish	lbs-oz	
1 HAGAMAN/GOODWIN	4	29-03	\$37,500
2 GIRLE/HARRIS	4	26-08	\$11,000
3 VAN HORN/RICHARDSON	4	26-04	\$5,624
4 COX/FULLER	4	26-04	\$5,624
5 PAGE/ZYAK	4	26-03	\$4,250
6 WATTS/WATTS	4	25-13	\$3,550
7 JENKS/STOKES	4	25-03	\$3,050
8 CROSBY/MCGILL	4	25-00	\$2,550
9 GUTHRIE/MURPHY	4	24-15	\$2,300
10 MELL/SWENSSON	4	23-09	\$2,050

For complete coverage of the Sarasota series stop go to: flwoutdoors.com

WINNING PATTERN

Hagaman and Goodwin used Berkley plastics to win the Wal-Mart FLW Redfish Series in Sarasota. The two key baits were a Berkley Gulp! 3-inch shrimp and a 5-inch Berkley Jerk Shad, both in a color called new penny, rigged on 1/8-ounce jigheads. The baits were slowly worked on the bottom in a pothole that was 5-to 6-feet deep.

The line was 10-pound-test Fireline braid with 3 feet of Berkley Vanish fluorocarbon leader.

