

Rockcod Rick?: How about Mossback Maxa!?

Talk show co-host and Fisherman's Landing Tackle manager Rockcod Rick Maxa takes an almost insurmountable lead in San Diego yellowtail derby with a

45-pound, 10-ounce yellow at Mission Beach

BY BILL ROECKER

Special to Western Outdoor News

MISSION BAY — “Yes, there are big mossback yellowtail still around!” wrote John Campbell, organizer of the annual 35-day San Diego International Yellowtail Derby that started May 2 and runs to June 7.

Campbell reported that a 45-pound, 10-ounce yellowtail was landed Monday, May 11 about 4 p.m., off North Mission Beach.

“Rick Maxa, fishing off North Mission Beach for halibut and white seabass on Monday afternoon, saw birds working,” said Campbell. “He threw a jig out and landed his largest local yellowtail, which was hooked on a Salas 7X light. Rick brought the fish into Seaforth Sportfishing, where it was weighed in by RC Newton at 45 pounds, 10 ounces. This is 20 pounds over the 2015 Derby yellowtail division winner and is also 6 pounds larger than the 39-pound, 6-

ounce yellowtail caught by Tom Kues in the 2011 Yellowtail Derby.”

Maxa fished off Mission Beach where he spotted a school of big yellowtail marked by birds and splashing.

“I was casting a green sardine swirl patterned Salas 7X light jig,” said Maxa, “and he ate it five feet from the rod tip!”

Maxa added, “That fish was caught on a bird school, a little north of Mission Beach. We were fishing halibut when we saw the terns start to gather up right as we pulled up to the spot, and two or three fish started to splash on the surface. “The fish bit on my first cast, and it ate the jig about five feet off the rod tip... it was crazy! The fish got me into the kelp once, but fortunately I was fishing a kelp cutter style rig with the surface iron, with 65-pound Power Pro (Spectra), and was able to get the fish out of the weeds. I would say it was an average fight of



RICK MAXA with his huge yellowtail, one of the biggest caught this year and which will be tough to beat in the month-long San Diego Yellowtail Derby.

about 10 minutes. The rod was a 10-foot 100XH Shimano Terra-mar, and the reel was a Shimano Tranx.”

The Yellowtail Derby runs from May 2 to June 7. You can view the current standings in three divisions and can also enter the event at www.yellowtailderby.com. While it looks like the yellowtail division might be locked up, there are still the white seabass and halibut divisions.

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