

HUGH THOMAS
14 YEAR OLD JUNIOR

On Friday the 26th of April I travelled down to Port Hacking from Kurri Kurri to compete in the 2024 Port Hacking 100. I was privileged enough to be one of the 4 boys to be selected in the NSWGFA Junior Team that would compete in the tournament.

Mum and Dad drove me to the motel where we were staying, where I met the 3 boys I was fishing alongside, Taj, Issac, and Hunter. Grahame our chaperone, then took us down to the yacht club where we waited for Karen and Glenn to arrive with Tantrum. At 5 o'clock Karen and Glenn, the owners of Tantrum, came into port. We went down and met them and their deckie Giles. We had a talk and then went up for the briefing. We all had dinner when the briefing was finished, then went back down to the boat to watch some of Tantrum's best highlights of big blue marlin fishing. We were then collected by Grahame to go back to the motel to get some rest before heading out in the morning.

I set my alarm for 5:30 am and went to sleep. At 6 o'clock Grahame took us to the yacht club and we hopped on board the boat. We had some breakfast and left the Marina about 6:45, we arrived at the shelf ready to start fishing. We put the lures in at 8 o'clock to start fishing, our aim was to get a blue Marlin, so the plans were to head to the never lands, around 8.30 I was the only one on the deck and the shotgun went off. I grabbed it as we thought it was a tuna but it was a dolphin fish. We put it back into the water and kept on heading out. At around 11.20 the shotgun went off again, this time it was a blue marlin. Hunter grabbed the rod, Isaac and I grabbed the tag pole and we started to chase the marlin. We soon put the tag poles down and grabbed the gaffs. We were set for a long fight on 15kg line. The marlin went deep and that's where we stayed for the next 6 and a half hours.

Glenn and I were sitting up in the tower talking about the fish, I looked down at the line and the angle of the line changed, Isaac got the tag pole and Taj and Karen got the gaffs then Giles grabbed the leader and the marlin got sucked under the boat near the right motor. Glenn put the boat in neutral and then the fish shot out about 2 meters from the boat. Giles got the trace again and Isaac tagged it, soon after the gaffs were in. The Marlin was then dragged through the transom door and we all celebrated. We then smoked it home to the weigh station where Mum and Dad were waiting, we strung the marlin up and it weighed 174.5kgs. What a great 7 hour fight by Hunter. We went back to where we had the boat moored and cleaned the boat up. All of us then had dinner and went back to the motel.

Day 2 I woke up to my alarm buzzing, Hunter and I got up and went to see Isaac and Taj then down to the boat. We left the yacht club around 6.45am and headed to where we went the day before. At around 8 o'clock we put lures in the water and off we went. I was sitting on the gunnel and I saw a bill come out of the water. The right rigger cracked out but no run. We kept on trolling and headed in a bit to around 500 fathoms, we had 3 rods go off but we had no hook ups, we circled for another hour before stop fishing was called. We went back into port with high hopes that we may have won.

When we got back to port we had a shower and went to the yacht club for the presentation. That night we won champion junior capture, heaviest blue marlin over 150kg and champion boat capture. Taj and I won a lucky angler draw. I would like to thank Karen, Glenn, Grahame and Giles for this opportunity of a lifetime. I learnt a lot of new skills and I would encourage all junior anglers to nominate for next year's team.