

# Why they call it Sport Fishing

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It's not called commercial fishing; that's too high tech and mechanized. This isn't about food. It's not called tournament fishing; that's too commercialized. This isn't about money, sponsors and greed.

Instead, it's called sport fishing because it is all about the sport of catching fish. What's so sporting about it? Well, to qualify as sport, there has to be some skill required on the part of the angler, there has to be some odds ... that favor the fish. The pursuit has to take place in an attractive environment and, lastly, the purpose of it all is to derive joy and pleasure from the endeavor.



They say there are three phases every fisherman goes through. The first phase involves the angler's desire to catch as many fish as he possibly can. The more fish, the better. The second phase entails the catching of the biggest fish possible ... the trophy phase. The third and final phase the angler realizes is the quality of the fight. It is not necessary to catch a lot of fish or even big fish to enjoy the sport but rather it is the pursuit and the fight in the fish. A sport fisherman has a reverence for his quarry. He many even spend time and money to insure the specie's survival and he, most always, returns his catch to live and fight another day. If, by chance, the true sportsman goes fish less, he still has had a magnificent, joyful day!

That's Max in the picture above fighting a tarpon. Max is 13 years old and got a little tired trying to pull in the 120 pound fish. So, Dad took over from son Max and fought the fish gallantly until 55 minutes into the fight when the tarpon went ballistic, shook his head and broke the 40 pound line. Tarpon 1, Dad and Max 0! We're they dejected? Of course not, they fought a magnificent fish for 55 minutes and would have release it anyway. It took some effort and skill to fight the fish and they did so on a beautiful morning in Pine Island Sound. Father and son shared this special moment together and the joy and pleasure it brought them will live in their memories forever. That's the beauty of sport fishing!

On another charter, I watched another young son hook a tarpon. He soon became tired from the fight and his father stepped up and said "son, give me that rod and I will show you how to land this tarpon." After the father tired from fighting the fish, the uncle stepped forward to

relieve the father and he too eventually tired and gave the rod back to the son. And so it went, round robin style for over 2 hours and 9 miles as that tarpon drug the boat, the Captain, two husky men and one lanky teenager all over Charlotte Harbor. The three were so exhausted that their time at the rod soon shrunk to about 10 minutes each, all while a building storm, threatened. Finally at 2 ½ hours, the Captain dictated that the lightening in the storm posed such a serious threat that they had to leave and find cover. One last effort was made to bring the tarpon to the boat. You guessed it, the line broke and there stood three exhausted anglers in stunned silence.

I can just imagine how the story is told and retold at every gathering of the three men and their families. Young and old alike will gather around to listen and all will envision a huge, magnificent fish that on that day, defeated two husky men and one lanky teenager. The story will get better and better with time. Such is the joy and pleasure we all get from sport fishing.



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