



Baja's Sultan of Swing

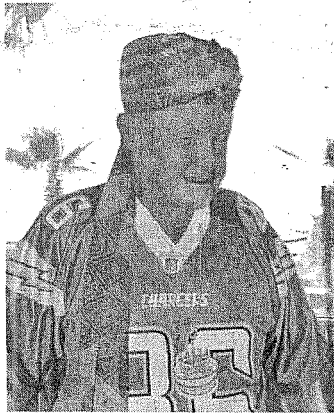
Most eighty-six-year-old men are content to enjoy a good game of Gin and a cocktail. But Togo Hazard isn't most men, and he isn't about to let a few years get in his way. In fact, he enjoys life at a pace that would be tough for a man half his age to keep up with.

Don't get me wrong. Togo likes his card games and cocktails, but his love of fishing is as natural to him as breathing; swinging on fish is something that he has to do.

I suspect, even at his age, he has 'swung' on more fish this year than most of us have in many seasons combined, and the year isn't even half finished.

First, he made his annual winter 'warm up' trip to the Tropic Star in Panama in mid-January accompanied by his friends and fishing mates, the manager of Hotel Buenavista Beach Resort, Axel Valdez, and Vincente Cosio, Captain of the *Dottie B II* (the newest boat in the Hotel Buenavista Beach Resort fleet) which was named for Togo's deceased wife, Dottie. They were married for over 51 years.

Togo began his trip by slow trolling a 10-pound skipjack in a school of porpoise. It soon disappeared in a boil the size of a small compact car. When he threw the reel into gear and swung, he found himself tight to one 'grande' tuna which was headed



SULTAN OF SWING proudly displays his new turban and special Charger jersey.

for the bottom. Hunkering down and demonstrating the same toughness that served him well for many years in his San Diego construction business, Togo stayed connected for a remarkable three hours and forty three minutes before the beast was on its side next to the boat... 314 pounds, his largest tuna so far!

Then in April, on one of his monthly trips to East Cape for a week's fishing on the *Dottie B II*, Togo and a couple of his La Jolla tennis buddies... who had never caught a billfish before... gave the East Cape fleet an object lesson of how to swing! The *Dottie B II* came in with eleven blue billfish flags a flappin'. Togo's eyes sparkled as he sprung off the boat with an exuberance that is usually associated with a kid's first Christmas. Once again, he had outfished the entire East Cape fleet for the day and he wasn't about to let it go unnoticed.

All of this was just a warm-up for his May trip which coincided with his 86th birthday. Twenty-five friends and family members gathered from far and wide to join Togo in what amounted to a seven-day party suitable for a bunch of thirty somethings. It consisted of fishing all day, gin and cocktails each afternoon, dinner overlooking the Sea of Cortez, and of course laughter all the time. Just the kind of birthday every 86-year-old would want!

The fishing stories for the week kept piling up! There was the day that Togo's granddaughters overslept and missed the boat. Togo went out alone and racked up eleven billfish for the day.

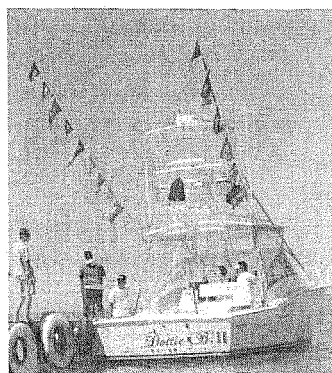
"Captain Vincente and the crew tried to kill me," Togo lamented. "If more than one fish was hooked up, they just left the rod in the holder until I could get to it."

This turned out to be a hotel record for the number of fish released by one angler in one day.

The week's total for the *Dottie B II* was 31 billfish plus an even dozen large dorado, providing enough fishing stories for everyone to tell and retell for years to come.

On the final night of the May trip, the party was a raucous affair with plenty of gifts including a Charger jersey with the number 86 emblazoned on the back and a custom rod. Then friends David and Elizabeth Copeland presented Togo with a turban brought all the way from India, declaring him the "Sultan of Swing!"

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DOTTIE B II with flags flying at the dock.