Area gears for Tarpon Rodeo

by LARRY W. JONES

INTRACOASTAL CITY--The boats are ready! Commodore N. R. Broussard will release the boats to get into the bay area by early Saturday morning, when he will give the signal to start fishing.

This action will get the 26th annual Abbeville Kiwanis Tarpon Fishing Rodeo underway and will go until 5 p.m. Monday, Labor Day when the rodeo will end.

“SPORTSMAN’S PARADISE”, Louisiana’s state slogan, gets to be a reality for three days in one of the best rodeos along the entire Gulf Coast. Fishermen from all along the Gulf Coast will be fishing in the rodeo and with good weather, some of the outstanding catches of the season should make the rodeo score board.

Twenty-six years ago this rodeo opened at the old restaurant site of Maxie’s in a tent. Now the restaurant has moved down the highway a couple of miles and the rodeo headquarters has a better location on the pier behind Maxie’s restaurant.

Tarpons, or Silver Kings, head the list of fish caught in the rodeo. These fish are the best of the trophy fish. But by no means is the rodeo just a tarpon rodeo.

With watchful eyes and open ears, the fishermen are watching the weather reports. The fishing areas covered a great amount of water. There are four million acres of marsh, laced together by countless lakes, bayous, bays, and canals.

“Louisiana is a vast nursery for saltwater fish and shellfish,” stated charter boat Captain Charles Sebastian of Lake Charles, “It is also an attractive spawning area for many Gulf fish, but also as a feeding area for predatory fish.”

There will be 25-plus different species of fish listed in the rodeo program. Both saltwater and freshwater divisions, plus a scuba division.

Lafayette fishermen placed the most fish on the rodeo score board last year with 25 fish in first, second and third places. Kaplan was second with 12, Abbeville had 11, and Delcambre eight and Mamou 6. This was also a clean Acadian sweep as the big fishing teams from New Orleans placed just two on the board, first and second in the tarpon division.

Abbeville placed nine in the sweetwater division while Lake Charles had four and Kaplan three and two places went to Harrisburg, Pa.

Kaplan with nine and Abbeville, four, swept the children’s division and in the