

Doug Flutie to Perform at Gridiron Greats Billfish Bowl

Doug Flutie is the latest football great to eagerly sign up to participate in the Gridiron Greats Billfish Bowl scheduled to take place February 4-6, 2010. But unlike hosts Jimmy Johnson and Mike Ditka, Flutie will be up on stage wowing the crowd with his drumming skills.

Lots of folks don't realize that Flutie is an accomplished drummer and grew up in a musical family. His father led big bands and his brother Darren Flutie plays a mean guitar. Doug and Darren started playing together years ago and their band, The Flutie Brothers Band, has agreed to headline the Billfish Bowl. The Flutie boys will kick off the event and crank out some rock-n-roll favorites.

Twenty-five years ago Flutie's hail-mary pass beat Jimmy Johnson's University of Miami Hurricanes in the final seconds of what could possibly

be the best college football game in history. But that was a long time ago and Johnson is eager to have Flutie at the Billfish Bowl.

"I've heard Doug play and he's really good on the drums," says Johnson. "I think the crowd at the Billfish Bowl will enjoy his music and just hanging out with Doug is always a good time."

The Flutie Brothers Band has played on many stages including the half-time show at the Pro Bowl and the Howard Stern show. They've also played the VIP lounge at the past three Super Bowls. The band's gigs help Flutie raise money for the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism. The Flutie Brothers Band is excited to expand their nonprofit work with the Billfish Bowl and help raise much needed funds for Gridiron Greats, which assists retired NFL players in need of health care and

associated medical costs.

"Bringing Doug Flutie and his band on board aligns with our main goal of the Billfish Bowl, which is to raise money for a great cause while having a good time and doing some fishing," Johnson says.

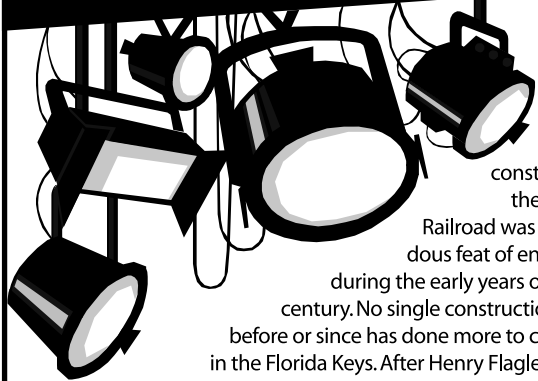
The event will take place just days before the Super Bowl at Jimmy Johnson's Fisherman's Cove, a unique private residence club in Key Largo and home of the Big Chill, a waterfront restaurant, bar and pool/cabana club. The Flutie Brothers Band will perform at the Billfish Bowl's kickoff party. From there on out it's hardcore fishing, nightly parties, fantastic food, live music, and raffles. Most importantly, anglers will have the chance to rub elbows with some of football's most notable players, coaches and owners, who will be making the most of their time in South Florida for the Pro

Bowl and the Super Bowl, scheduled to take place in Miami.

At the close of the final day of fishing, the winners will take home some of fishing's most unique trophies, as well as big bucks — the event will undoubtedly be one of the most fun and unique billfish tournaments in the Keys with big-money jackpots up for grabs. But for the overall winners, the most priceless award will be seeing their name engraved on the perpetual trophy which will be on display in the Big Chill, right next to Jimmy's Lombardi trophies and Super Bowl rings.

For anyone who loves football, fishing and the Florida Keys, the Gridiron Greats Billfish Bowl is an event that simply can't be missed. For information on fishing the event or becoming a sponsor visit www.billfishbowl.com or call 866-203-2720.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



“Flagler’s Folly” Courtesy of Marker 88

The construction of the Overseas Railroad was a tremendous feat of engineering during the early years of the 20th century. No single construction project before or since has done more to change life in the Florida Keys. After Henry Flagler brought the Florida East Coast Railway to Miami in the 1890's, he dreamed of continuing it on to Key West. Flagler wanted to establish a deepwater port as a terminus for the East Coast Railroad even closer to the newly completed Panama Canal. Shallow water in Miami limited his dreams, so he looked to Key West, the most populated city in south Florida at the time.

By the end of 1907, the railroad reached Knights Key, 83 miles from the mainland. The first train from the mainland arrived there in January, 1908, and regular passenger service began the next month. Knights Key served as the southern terminus of the railroad for four years.

Building a railroad in this remote part of the world was an almost impossible task. As if the heat, the lack of fresh water and the mosquitoes were not enough to contend with, Mother Nature threw in three hurricanes. The first, in 1906, almost brought the project to a halt. More than 130 workers lost their lives, miles of embankment and rails were washed away, barges and dredges were sunk and construction equipment was heavily damaged. Despite losses in the millions of dollars, Flagler said, "Go ahead." A second storm hit in 1909. Again there was

heavy damage, and 40 workers lost their lives, but Flagler was not to be deterred. From lessons taught by these first two storms, when a third hurricane hit in 1910, only one life was lost.

Flagler was 75 years old when construction started, and in failing health as the railroad neared Key West. On Jan. 22, 1912, just a few days after his 82nd birthday, Flagler rode the first official train into Key West as bands played, whistles blew and the entire population cheered. He said, "Now I can die fulfilled." He died less than 16 months later. Already in financial trouble, the death blow to the Key West Extension was struck by the terrible Labor Day hurricane of 1935. Driven by 200 MPH winds, a 17-ft. wall of water washed over Upper Matecumbe Key, sweeping rescue train cars off the tracks. More than 500 lives were lost, and most of the tracks and roadbeds in the Upper Keys were destroyed. Because of the Depression, and because the Key West Extension had never been profitable, railroad officials decided not to rebuild.

The right-of-way was sold for \$640,000 to become the route for a new Overseas Highway. Today, you can see remnants of the railway all over the Keys. Train bridges were widened to become vehicle bridges, with the scavenged railroad tracks being used as guard rails on these bridges. Even the road bed that you drive on today was once part of the "Flagler's Folly."

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