

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010

The 2010 Spring international was held on Loch Conn, County Mayo on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010 fished from 10.00am until 6.00pm.

The target species were wild brown trout and the match was fished on a catch and release basis, the qualifying measurement set at 30cm. Any fish was measured was worth 20 points plus 1 point per centimetre thereafter. A fish around 10oz could be measurable making the length of the targeted fish very important on the match day, the effective method was to catch lots of smaller fish that were just in size.

The team arrived on Sunday evening the weekend before and were met with cold mainly north easterly winds. The practise sessions on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were hard and unpredictable. There were fish caught every day in various numbers ranging from 11 up to 20 plus this is all measuring fish.

Due to the unsettled weather no real feeding fish were found at the same locations on successive days. There sporadic hatches of mayfly and some fish were taking them but these real target fish were few and far between. The team fished every day from Ennisco lodge which is situated in Bog Bay and split the Loch up in to five different zones with most days 4 anglers covering a different zone, this is a difficult task as the other teams testified due to the pure size of the loch there was an awful lot of water to cover. Our main successes in practise were along the bank in front on Victoria bay fishing in around 6-10 ft of water there was a good head of fish and bags were taken in practise of 6 and 4 on consecutive days without hammering the fish. As this bay was a long and shallow there was plenty of water and it seemed that no other teams were spending much time there. This was confirmed on match day when boat partners were surprised to be taken to the bay. Infact in the end the best two bags and the biggest fish were all taken from Victoria bay confirming the practise was correct.

The team fished similar set ups on match day as the practise days had confirmed the best flies consistently, Line was either a slow glass, midge tip or ghost tip and the set up was 6lb fluorocarbon with a green headed Mayfly pattern size 10 on the top dropper, black straggle fritz dabbler size 12 next one down, gosling size 10 next dropper then a small black and silver dabbler on the point.

On match day a strong North westerly wind faced competitors and this did affect feeding fish as fly hatches were sporadic. All countries found the fishing difficult and in the end there were only seven fish dividing the four nations. In the end Scotland coming out on top with 20 fish, Ireland second with 18 fish, Wales third with 17 trout and England fourth with 13 trout.

On reflection of the match the team got most things right, the flies were capable of catching fish and the area certainly was very productive for all the teams and the best bags of fish came from the area, all teams suffered similar numbers of blanks in each team and the difference for the English team was that our top rods were coming in with 2 fish compared to the 4 and 5's the other teams had. This was no reflection on fishing skill as it was difficult to compile a bag of fish without some degree of luck. Gordon Bramwell caught 8 fish in the match from Victoria bay but all undersize fish, he had been catching all week, his boat partner on the match day was Micheal Roberts of Wales boated 9 fish and had 5 measurable fish! Mark Miles and Mark Andrews had two fish a piece and these were our top rods winning jointly the graham trophy, well done to both of you!

Other productive areas for the team were Bog Bay, Cormorant Rocks, pocheen island, Cloghans bay pump house bay and Abbey shore.

There were so many good memories from the trip and as you would expect in Ireland fishing for wild fish the fishing at times was tough, we all hoped that settled weather would bring the May fly forward a bit and we would enjoy the real fishing that this great loch can supply alas we didn't get the weather and this meant wet fly tactics were our main line of attack as the dry fly or nymph approach were not working effectively. The whole team enjoyed the trip and every body caught fish during the week, we all found the loch challenging in a fishing sense but the scenery and the beauty there is outstanding and I'm sure there are many who would return, especially if the May fly are hatching.