

## 2013 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP, LIPTOVSKY MICULAS, SLOVAKIA.

Using the new points ranking system as a guide, selection for this year's team included two new European Caps. Initially the squad consisted of Iain Barr, John Tyzack, Baz Reece, Andrew Gooding, Andrew Scott and Andy Croucher; however Andy Croucher had to drop out and was substituted by Terry Phillips.

We took an early morning flight on 9<sup>th</sup> September from Stansted to Bratislava and made the long journey across Slovakia to Liptovsky Miculas basing ourselves at the Penzion Una at Liptovsky Jan (a small village with close access to all practice and Championship beats).



Liptovsky Miculas



Team England

The outline plans were to practice and train during Championship timings, and view the championship beats and pegs between sessions. 6 days were set aside for this which allowed us to practice on waters similar to each of the 5 Championship sectors and leave 1 day to practice our river craft skills. 1 further day was set aside for a squad fly tying day.

Our fishing guide Peter Durisik stayed with us at the Penzion and used his knowledge of the Championship beats, fly fishing skills and fly tying expertise to help us prepare for the competition. Peter became a good benchmark for the squad to measure their performances.



Peter Durisik with yet another fish



Squad fly tying session

The first practice session took us to the River Poprad. Peter was asked to start the session off with a brief master class; he took 2 steps into the river and proceeded to catch 10 fish in 10 casts. It's difficult to conceive or explain how it's possible to catch 100+ fish each in 2 . 3 hours from a river that's knee deep and 3 rod lengths wide but that's what happened. We soon realised that cricket scores on some pegs would dominate the Championship.

The following days saw the squad practicing on the River Bela and various stretches of the River Vah.



John Tyzack pushing water



Terry Phillips lifting into a fish River Vah

Whilst reasonable numbers of fish were caught, they were less than on the Poprad but they tended to be larger. However it did allow the team to develop a range of fly patterns that would work on all beats.

From the experiences of the 5 practice days it was obvious that some pegs would produce 50+ fish in a 3 hour session and that is was one thing to stand in a river and catch and release 50+ fish but to have to do that in a competitive situation; getting back to your controller; measuring and signing for each fish etc. would be something else.

So the 6<sup>th</sup> day saw us back at the River Poprad for a private Team England 20:20:20 competition. 20 minutes fishing; 20 minutes controlling; 3 times; rotating over 3 pegs; all 6 squad members.

27 fish in 20 minutes was the best; mostly 15 . 20 fish in 20 minutes even after an hour's fishing on a peg. Fantastic to watch (wish we had videoed it), knacker for the team but it certainly sorted out the tackle weaknesses, netting techniques and fitness requirements.



Baz Reece concentrating on a Dry



Andrew Scott looking for his next 50

After 7 days practice and fly tying we moved into the Championship hotel for the opening ceremony and the Championship commenced.

All 5 team members fished the 1<sup>st</sup> session, then in rotation they were each rested over the following 5 sessions.

1<sup>st</sup> session saw the team settling in with both John Tyzack and Terry Phillips delivering a target 5<sup>th</sup> place and the team 41 placing points and 8<sup>th</sup> place.

2<sup>nd</sup> session a much stronger performance with the team hitting the 25 placing point target; Andrew Scott getting his first 50 fish and a welcome 1<sup>st</sup> place; and John another 5<sup>th</sup> place; the team moving up into 6<sup>th</sup> place.

3<sup>rd</sup> session (day 2) saw Andrew Scott continuing his surge with 39 fish and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place however the rest of the team were unable to keep up with him and England dropped back to 8<sup>th</sup> place with another 41 placing points.



4<sup>th</sup> session England drew 3 out of 4 pegs which failed to deliver a 5<sup>th</sup> or better placing potential. This manifested in our worst session result of 56 placing points pulling the teams overall placing down to 11<sup>th</sup>.

5<sup>th</sup> session (day 3) produced a good recovery for the team with a better than target 24 placing points bringing us up to 9<sup>th</sup> place. Andrew Scott produced another 52 fish for a 2<sup>nd</sup> place and again John Tyzack can with yet another target 5<sup>th</sup> place.

6<sup>th</sup> and final session was another tough one, John Tyzack picking up a poor peg to break his good run, however Terry Phillips delivered a target 5<sup>th</sup> place and with a team 40 placing points for the session moved us up one place overall.

7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> would have been a truer result of the team's performance but due to the unusual peggyness of 3 of the sectors 10<sup>th</sup> was the final result.



Andrew Gooding frog's fannyng a dry fly



Iain Barr airborne netting on River Poprad

In summary:-

Examination of the peg statistics does indicate a unhealthy variability in the quality of a lot of the pegs which this year has unfortunately meant that the luck of the draw has effected both Team and Individuals. Whilst the analysis shows that both the Czech Republic and England had the same number of pegs which failed to deliver a 5<sup>th</sup> or better placing potential, the pegs drawn for the 2 teams on Sectors 4 (Poprad) & 5 (Vah Ruzomberok) grossly favoured the Czech's. Individually the Czech's Tomas Cieslar and England's Iain Barr both drew 4 pegs each which failed to deliver a 5<sup>th</sup> or better placing potential.

Generally England's exploitation of their pegs was average and the Czech's etc. made above average performance of theirs.

The lack of UK waters that are similar to those available in Eastern Europe for our teams to practice on is the most significant factor that has affected England's performance over the last few years.

Our top rod was Andrew Scott 12<sup>th</sup> (4.8 av. Placing points); John Tyzack 36<sup>th</sup> (7.6 av. Placing points); Terry Phillips 42<sup>nd</sup> (8.6 av. Placing points); Iain Barr 59<sup>th</sup> (11.2 av. Placing points) and Andrew Gooding 76<sup>th</sup> (13.8 av. Placing points). Average placing points indicate the individual's contribution to the team result with the smaller the average being best.

1<sup>st</sup> Czech Republic, 97 placing points; 2<sup>nd</sup> Spain, 102 placing points; 3<sup>rd</sup> France, 141 placing points.  
10<sup>th</sup> England, 227 placing points

1<sup>st</sup> Fabio Castro, 7 placing points (Spain); 2<sup>nd</sup> Martin Bachleda, 8 placing points (Slovakia A); 3<sup>rd</sup> David Chlumsky, 12 placing points (Czech Republic).

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