

DIDN'T THEY DO WELL

TO FISH for your country or win a national championship is a proud moment and the pinnacle of achievement for many trout anglers — myself included.

Many competitions comply with international rules which briefly mean you must use a full fly-line, floating or sinking, in front of a broadside drifting boat.

Two international matches are held each year with England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland sharing the venues. This year it was the turn of Lough Conn to stage the Spring international — and England were clear winners.

Coinciding with the Conn match was the World Fly Fishing Championships, held on the River Tormes in central Spain. The England five-man team, chosen from the Confederation's Brenig team, were Dennis Buck, Mike Smith, Mike Childs and myself, plus Tony Pawson and David Swatland from the Salmon and Trout Association.

The river's wild brown trout had been augmented by some freshly stocked browns and we realised that the stockies were only in certain sections of the river.

Our team suffered a serious setback when Mike Childs broke his arm and ankle at a bullfight. Bulls were running the ring and members of the crowd volunteered to be charged at.

Some young men, who had visions of being matadors one day, were in the ring, so too were members of the Luxembourg and French world fly-fishing teams. One lone British

by
BOB CHURCH

spirit, Mike Childs, said: 'There's no Englishman in the ring — I'm going to have a go!' Jumping from the high wall into the ring he landed badly on his ankle and fell back, hitting his arm on the wall. David Swatland had to stand in and fish as Mike was in hospital for the rest of the week.

The draw favoured the Italians. Tony Pawson and Dennis Buck had favoured spots in the first four-hour sessions and made it pay, by taking 12 and 13 fish respectively.

David Swatland had five from a reasonable peg, but Mike Smith and I drew badly, Mike not catching, while I took one good wild fish which put me first in the poor "A" section.

We were lying second after this round. In the next session Tony and I had five each from moderate pegs, while David took one good wild fish from a poor peg. Dennis and again poor Mike had no-hoper swims.

At the start of the final round we were clinging to second place. I was happy with my draw near a bridge where I had practised and caught a few. Tony was now very confident, even though his last spot had produced two



● THE smiling England team show off their spoils. Left to right: Mike Smith, Nottingham; Dennis Buck, Southport; Tony Pawson, Winchester; Bob Church, Northampton and Mike Childs, Kenilworth.

blanks to previous competitors.

He had checked the scores and found the Italians had taken 16 from the peg downstream in the first round. Tony did very well, getting another seven fish, while I caught ten but unfortunately had to return four as they were just undersize.

Dennis was a hero, taking four wild fish from a "no-hope" area and with two more blanks this gave us a team place of runners-up with the Italians clear winners. France were third, Poland

fourth, and Spain fifth, followed by Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland.

At 62 years old, Tony Pawson was the oldest of all the competitors, but a very popular winner of the individual event. Certainly this is the best performance yet by an English team. Next year's championships will be fished in Poland hopefully in 1986 in England.

● NEXT week Bob visits a brand-new trout fishery in South Wales.

Trout match held in Spain



● CUP a load of this . . . Tony Pawson struggles to hold up the massive trophy awarded to the new world fly fishing champion. Tony, from Hampshire, won the title in Spain. The England team finished second.

● TONY Pawson became the official CIPS Fly-fishing Champion of the World and the first Englishman ever to hold the title when he won fly-fishing's World Cup on the River Tormes in Spain last week. Tony caught the most fish during the 12-hour match which was split into three four-hour sessions, bagging 23 fish in all. He defied local custom to fish a fast-sinking H-D line and took most of his fish on a Bibio fished on the top dropper. The others fell to a Dunkeld and a Black Pennell. Tony was the top English rod in the same event last year when he finished 11th. The other members of the English team were Dennis Buck (7th), Bob Church (13th), Dave Swatland (19th) and Mike Smith (41st). England finished second behind Italy in the team event to cap a fine all-round performance. Results: T. Pawson (England) 6510 pts, C. D. Guillemaud (France) 5655 pts, A. Ferrari (Italy) 5435 pts. Teams: Italy 38, England 81, France 83, Poland 87, Belgium 115.

England

Dennis Buck, Bob Church, Mike Childs, Tony Pawson, Mike Smith & David Swatland (Captain/Reserve).

1. Italy
2. England
3. France
4. Poland
5. Spain
6. Belgium
7. Luxembourg
8. Holland

Individual World Champion: Tony Pawson (England)



THIS is the team that almost gave us a taste of world glory three years ago, when we finished runners up to Italy on the River Tormes in Spain. That's our best performance to date — but we aim to go one better this time. . . . Mike Smith, Nottingham; Dennis Buck, Southport; Tony Pawson, Winchester; Bob Church, Northants; Mike Childs, Kenilworth.

Winning A World Championship: Spain 1984

By Tony Pawson

You need a lot of luck to win a World Championship and I had more than my reasonable share in Spain in 1984. The Tormes River near Salamanca is noted as a dry fly trout river in which success usually depends on using very small flies and identifying exactly those on which the fish are feeding. But that May summer came late to Spain with the area covered in snow a few days before we arrived and the Tormes running high, coloured and cold. So in practice we found that sinking lines and size 10 flies, such as Black Pennells and Bibios, were more effective than dry flies or nymphs — with the trout lying deep and no natural rise. This type of wet fly fishing for trout in a stream with a good current was the method on which I had been weaned in boyhood, fishing in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and practised for over fifty years. So I was fortunate to find conditions that suited me.

Helping the Washerwomen

Not so fortunate was one of our team of five. On the second practice day we had only a brief fishing period in the morning, taking it in so relaxed a fashion, as we had found out all we needed to know, that I spent some time helping the Spanish washerwomen who were working hard at the side of our pool. After lunch we were taken to see the running of the small bulls in a local corral — as part of the generous hospitality we enjoyed in Spain, with friendship to much the main element of these championships. There, one of our team took an unfortunate fancy to become a matador and leapt lightly into the ring to join the locals, under the impression he could not come to much harm against small bulls with shaved horns. He was carried out with a broken ankle and a broken vertebra. No credit to the bull — just a failure to notice it was ten feet down from the top of the wall to the corral floor! Captain David Swatland then had to stop telling us how to fish and do it himself — with no little success as it turned out.

A Trout taken on third cast

It is always an anxious moment getting first sight of the water on which you are drawn to fish. In the first four hour period I was on one of the higher sectors well above the beats we had fished in practice. Happily the three hundred yards of river at my disposal embraced a delightful pool with a series of small streams angled across its bed. I netted a trout which was borderline for size. As it was too difficult to measure it accurately in midstream I headed back rather too fast for the bank. My toe struck a rock and I went headfirst into the icy water. The trout



Tony Pawson, in euphoric mood, after winning the world championship in Spain in 1984. With him is Segismundo Fernandez, previous holder of the title.

meanwhile had come out of the net and was still hooked on the tail fly while the dropper was caught in the mesh of the net. Not so easy to get it in again! Still, it gave the spectators a good laugh and I did finally prove to be 'valids' and worth the effort. With eleven trout in that session it was a good start. My next draw, however, was not so promising. It was a long, featureless rush of water, which I had fished in practice without moving anything, while catching well above and below. However, another team member, Dennis Buck, had told me over lunch that he had done well with a fast sinking line. Right at the bottom of my beat there was one large, deep eddy and while the rest was still barren I coaxed five out of there (and lost a really large one I never saw) using a H-D line. My final draw for the four hours the following morning was in a sector where very few had been caught. Though I was then third, that left me with no expectation other than enjoying myself. It was my good fortune again that team mate Dennis' tip about the fast sinking line enabled me to catch seven more, some on fast sink, some on slow sink lines, which I used alternately.

An immense Trophy

Having an expectation of doing so well it was all the more pleasurable and surprising to find I had won. With Dennis coming 7th and Bob Church 13th we were also 2nd as a team. By a strange coincidence, my son John had qualified for the England team for the home international which was being fished on the same day on Lough Conn in Ireland. He phoned me that night to say he had come third out of 58 and England had won for the first time in Ireland. So my third piece of good fortune, as I had never done as well as that in home internationals myself, was to be able to maintain parental status by telling him he was talking to the world champion! Knowing my fishing too well he couldn't believe it — but I had difficulty in believing it too. I was still, were I not for a trophy so immense that it was only allowed on the plane because we strapped it into the seat reserved for our injured angler in a wheelchair at the bank.

What is he practising for? The future world champion joins in a dance display in trout waders during a break in practice day in 1982, when the event was a salmon and trout contest on Spain's Narcea river.

TALKING TROUT

FOR MY SON John and for me, May was one of those rare fishing months when everything went right — especially on the days that mattered most.

The once-in-a-lifetime experience began when we fished together in France's European Open Tournament on the Lac du Chateau in Normandy. This event is fished by 86 invited Europeans, and there was already a British success record, the first-ever competition in 1982 having been won by John Wilshaw with my son taking third prize. Last season that expert Scott, Brian Peterson, had the heaviest bag, but finished only 9th because the result is based on totting up placings in the morning and afternoon sessions.

Other unusual features of this bank-fishing contest in a pleasant 25-acre lake are that you move up ten places each half-hour to a new 30 yard area (a fairer and more interesting method than drawing one spot) and the result is assessed on the length of trout caught, not weight.

By the end of the first period of the three-hour morning session I was clear the fishing would be hard and the catch small. The Belgian next to me had taken a rainbow, but I had seen few others hooked. My next stand was at the shallow bottom end and there I soon had a good brown of 44 centimetres which settled the nerves and allowed me to relax.

On practice day we had been advised by the lake's technical expert to use floaters, but had found sunk lines more productive and white the trout's favourite colour. The rules allowed two rods to be made up and two wet flies to be used, but only one "streamer" or dry fly.

My method was to have one rod with an intermediate line and an Appetiser and one with a fast sink and a Baby Doll. I fished the intermediate line for two minutes in each period and the fast-sink for the remaining twenty. Had I been in one fixed position I would have changed flies frequently, but with the constant moves I made only one change, alternating a size 12 mini Olive Nobbler with the size 12 Baby Doll.

Next session a plump rainbow of 42 centimetres gave me a good fight before I had to scramble to get to my next position in the 3 minutes allowed. This was on an island over a narrow footbridge where the rush of competitors coming off, tangled with those hurrying on, but it was a position where I had caught well in practice and I quickly picked up two more rainbows.

That put me second in the morning and John was close behind, having a large brown of 55 cms. among his catch. By now the lake had been so hammered that blanks were the normal afternoon score. John and I tried to cover fresh water by long casting, but we both had the misfortune to lose good fish. Before I could feel too depressed about this, I netted a



Tony Pawson and son John, pose for a happy family picture.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD!

MAY has been a busy month for the Pawson family. Tony Pawson won the French Open European Tournament in Normandy and the World Cup match on Spain's Tormes River — and then blanked in the Weston Simliffe Trophy match on Rutland Water! His son, John, also tasted international honours by taking eighth place in the French Open and a memorable third placing in the home international on Lough Conn, Ireland.

rainbow which, to my surprise, put me 15th in the afternoon and elevated me to overall winner with John 8th of the 86.

That was a happy prelude to the 4th World Cup on the Tormes River in Spain. Having already fished in two previous ones I knew that it would be run in such style as to make it a memorable experience — whatever the fishing was like. No Englishman had yet come higher than 8th and 5th was still our best team placing. So we looked to improve in the 8-nation contest competing with teams of 5 from Spain, Italy, Poland, France, Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium.

The key to success was in coming out early to get two days' practice, one of them on the competition stretch itself. I returned 24 trout that day, and most of us caught well, all pooling our successful flies and methods to help the best possible team performance.

We had researched the Tormes as a classic dry-fly river best fished with tiny size 22 patterns which exactly matched the hatch, but in practice, we found Spain's worst Spring for forty years had invalidated standard methods.

The area had been carpeted by snow a few days earlier and the river ran high, coloured and freezing cold. It averaged about 60 yards wide and was normally shallow, but the trouser waders we had been advised to bring were now an essential. So too was wet fly fishing as there was little hatch of fly and few rises.

In practice too we found stock fish among the wild trout, and they were eager both for black flies, like the Bibio or Pennell, and bright ones like the Dunkeld or Cinnamon and Gold. After the last practise day we lost Mike Childs who got the worst of it when he joined some of the Luxembourg team and the locals facing the young bulls in a Corrida. A fracture to his leg and arm put a damper on our enjoyment and meant David Swatland our non-playing captain, had now to put his rod where his advice had been — and most successfully he did it to finish 19th.

It's an anxious moment, viewing your first beat, but the sight of mine gave an instant lift to my spirits. This was the sort of pool that has entranced me since boyhood fishing on the Usk, or Joyce's river in Ireland, or a variety of Scottish burns. An island above

divided the river so that the main current flowed fast under the far bank, while a series of small quiet streams ran across to join it before a long, still backwater completed the 250-yard stretch.

There was no limit to rods, so before the starting gun I prepared three, two identical with sinking line so that I could instantly change if broken or tangled, one ready for dry fly. First cast I rose a small trout, third cast I landed one — only to find it on the borderline of the 22 cms. limit.

To keep one undersized fish incurred a severe penalty, to keep two meant disqualification for that session, so we decided to return all borderline fish and, with a misgiving or two, I let this go. But the trout were rising freely to a Bibio bobbed on the surface and I was soon catching regularly.

One other trout I needed to measure gave me problems. Mostly I was wading quietly down the middle casting back to the near bank or across to the edge of the main current. Now I had to hurry to the bank to measure it. In my haste I tripped on a stone, fell flat in the water and dropped the net. When I recovered the net the dropper was caught in it, the fish swimming free again held by the tail fly. Fortunately when re-netted it was large enough to justify the effort!

Little came out of the stillwater except undersized trout, and the runs were cleaned out long before the end, but 11 trout were the best start on the top 3 sectors. When the buses arrived from "D" to "E" sectors below there were bigger bags to report. Dennis Buck arrived for the weigh-in having also caught 11 and one Italian had 20.

The second 4-hour period was from 5.30 pm to 9.30 pm. Happy to have started so well, I was not put out to be delivered to my next beat only one minute before the starting gun so that I had to waste time preparing my rods. Nor by the fact that it was a place I had fished in practice without getting a rise, and which a Spanish World Champion had fished the previous period without catching a fish.

The start was a wide rush of moving water, conditions in which we never caught a fish. Only at the bottom twenty yards was there a chance, as the current veered over to the far bank leaving a few quieter runs and a deep eddy near my bank. On the first trip down, however, I had a good wild brown trout seize the dropper almost under the bank. Then I caught two more in quick succession in the eddy, using a high density line. Next cast I hooked another and lost it.

Coming back to this spot with a changed tail fly I hooked my best fish of the competition. The others had dashed and darted. This one boded powerfully down, but headed purposefully upstream, but just as I was exulting the fly flew loose. Then for two hours nothing more stirred,

except heavy rain, until at the last I had two in quick succession to the bobbed Bibio.

Weigh-in and dinner at a hotel meant it was midnight before we were back in Salamanca. Positions were re-drawn after each period and David Swatland returned from next morning's draw to say we were lying 2nd and I was 3rd overall.

'But', he added, 'we've had a bad draw. No one's done well on 8 in the two previous periods. And as for you, Tony, no one has yet caught anything on 86 except a nice fish after ten minutes'.

In fact a very few had been caught there and in any case I was quite confident that they could be caught, because an Italian had taken 16 on the beat below, C1.

So I fished confidently from the start, had a nice fish after ten minutes and ended with 7. That was more than anyone else caught on any of the 16 "A" and "B" beats in any of the three periods. Largely it was due to Dennis Buck passing on that a high density line was effective in that it got the flies down to the trout, which then followed them up to take near the surface.

Dennis, who finished 7th, had the most impressive performance of all that period. Only 6 trout were taken by others on "A" sector throughout the whole competition, but from the worst beat there, Dennis, with both dry and wet fly, dug out 4 good wild fish, one a rainbow of nearly a pound. With Bob Church also scoring well to finish 13th) we just held on to 2nd position. The final weigh-in was at a hostelry where the congratulations started as soon as I arrived, but until the results were announced I refused to believe it.

The Italians took the team prize and very expert anglers they are. To win once may be chance, to win twice more than coincidence, to win the team cup 3 years running, as Italy has done, is clearly a triumph of skill and teamwork.

As for myself, I could appreciate only say "Over the moon," when asked to comment. The pleasure is too deep for words, the sense of fulfilment a private matter.

To add to my delight, a phone call home confirmed that I had won the 3rd out of 56 in his first home international (fished the same day on Lough Conn) and England had won for the first time in Ireland under the aegis of the Confederation of English Fly-fishers. He too had caught fish on the Bibio on the dropper and had benefited from a short-lining technique we had practised together so often on Scottish Lochs.

But fishing is a great leveller and in case I should get any ideas that luck had not played a significant part in my own successes that was soon put straight on my return to England. I had a blank in the Weston Simliffe Trophy at Rutland!