

2018 Boat Championships Rutland Water

This year's event was again fished at Rutland Water and attracted 53 competitors from every PSUK Region and included a number of new competitors from Lancashire.

Wednesday practice day was bright and sunny with strong southerly winds making conditions a little difficult but at least it didn't rain and most members found fish in the usual 'hot spots' around the reservoir using two distinct methods; straight line buzzer fishing on floating / midge tip lines or pulling blobs and boobies on DI 5/7 lines. These methods produced fish during the course of the day but many anglers struggled during the mid – late afternoon when the fish 'switched off'.

Thursday match day was again bright and sunny but the wind had dropped and the entire reservoir was a flat calm mill pond. Temperatures at 9.30am had reached 20°C and they steadily rose to 23°C during the course of the day as did a very light breath of wind which provided a little bit of movement for the boats.

From the off, there was an even, three way split of boats heading for the two arms and main basin. The tackle set ups seen on the pontoon suggested that three different techniques were being deployed, the two previously tried and tested on the practice day and the third, buzzer fishing under the 'bung'. I understand that most of those who were using the 'bung' eventually reverted back to one of the other methods after a very poor start to the day using that method.

After a delayed start and fishing alone, I made my way to Armley Woods in the north arm where I joined another boat straight line buzzer fishing. About 6 or 7 other boats were in or around the mouth of Barnsdale Creek opposite and in the distance, 3 or 4 boats could be seen around the mouth of Dickinsons and Road End.

Fishing a static team of 4, size 10 and 12 black buzzers (with a flash of red holographic) on an 18ft leader quickly resulted in 6 fish but this activity seemed to attract other boats to the bay and after a while the fish switched off like they did the previous day.

By 1.25pm Richard Hood (Cheshire) had bagged up and this ultimately won him the event; his two fish weighing 2lb 7oz, with 12 c&r fish giving a bonus of 24lb and his finish time giving a bonus of 8lb; giving a total weight of 34lb 14oz.

Between 3pm and 3.45pm the only other three rods to bag-up finally got their last fish and patiently waited for their partners to finish. The bag limits and time bonus these anglers received ultimately provided the top 4 places. Well done to Phil Harding (Derbyshire), Mark Mathieson (Northamptonshire) & Gary Haskins (Avon & Somerset).

Perhaps if I had ventured further down to Dickinsons or across to Fantasy Island I may have increased my total but I chose otherwise and went elsewhere and missed out. Hey-Ho!

Come 5.30pm, anglers returned to the dock, hot, tired and thirsty with the usual tales of joy and frustration.

The weigh-in was a hive of activity with some good results being recorded but this was surpassed at the very end when Bob Sandford (Essex) quietly sneaked up to the scales and casually produced a bag and turned out a superb specimen, a Brown Trout which weighed-in at 6lb 12oz and a Rainbow giving a total weight of 8lb 6oz.

This Brown Trout was, to my knowledge, the biggest fish ever brought to the scales for one of our Championship events.

The top 16 rods (including 2 travelling reserves) will represent England Police in the Five Nations Championships and other organised events during the course of the year.

Thanks to everyone who supported and helped with the event including Anglian Water bailiffs, shop and restaurant staff, Greetham Valley Golf Club and of course all the members who attended.