

Celtic Cup 2010: Prebait Team Ireland.

On the 27th July 2010 the 8-man Prebait squad representing Ireland travelled from Dublin Port to Holyhead Wales in our quest for a really competitive contest against development squads from Scotland and host team Wales.

Travel was by means of two vans and two other vehicles carrying the total of 8 squad members and their kit along with team support in the form of Oliver Doyle, Rory O Neill, James Gargan and Manager Richard Caplice.

The 8-man squad had prepared hard on Galmoylstown Lough over the preceding two months with the support of Fisheries boss Niall Purcell most generously allowing free admission to all of our anglers over that period.

We arrived in Wales late on the evening of the 27th July and the arduous task of preparation commenced immediately with an 80-mile round trip for worms and other bait. Early on Wednesday morning it became apparent that we had a mountain to climb with the moody and difficult water posing a serious challenge even to our most experienced anglers.

The host manager Eric Humphries was most helpful with many issues we encountered and broadly advised on methods and tactics.

The challenge abated little over the course of the next three days while we worked tirelessly to come to grips with a very difficult and technically demanding variation of methods covering the use of corn, maggots, castor worm and hemp in varying amounts at varying levels and in a variety of ways from 4 inches under the surface to on the deck fishing. It became clear to all that feeding with its pattern variety was to become a critical factor and while we mastered this, we soon found that the two teams pitted against us replete with full International Squads were supreme in their execution and would cause us major headaches.

Issues surrounding water tapping and surface whipping with rigs were resolved by the start of competition on day one but some difficulties arose when these bans were disregarded as pressure was brought to bear on some of the leading commercial experts representing one of the teams by one or two of our squad members.

The outcome of day one was a foregone conclusion with Wales the host nation winning heavily from Scotland and Ireland with Ireland's Dave Hill the best of our anglers gaining second section place.

Day two saw a definite improvement in the Ireland position with all of our anglers putting in stirring performances. The result while not in any way affecting the final team positions showed that we could compete given a reasonably level playing field. On this day Dave Hill again turned in a great second section place along with Shane Dunne also in second narrowly beaten by the local Welsh angler. It was left to Mark Davis to bring the Irish some cheer with his super first in section place and whilst doing so landing the best carp of the entire event a splendid 13 lb carp caught in the margins in three ft of water. The full team of Richie Keegan, Peter Walsh, Shane Dunne, Gary Doyle, Donnacha Maguire, Ken Ince, Mark Davis and Dave Hill were a credit on and off the bank.

No effort was spared by any man and a huge amount was learned over the course of the week resulting in a truly competitive event on the second day as our squad improved and adapted to the method specific fishery and the massive challenge from two fully commercial, expert laden squads pitted against them.

The after match post mortem of necessity from an Irish point of view covered the focus and meaning of this Celtic Cup event, not seen by Ireland as a win at any cost event on a venue unsuitable for one of the participating nations and ultimately of no value in the preparation of International teams in a Cips international match framework.

The Ireland side voiced some considerable concern over the make up of the teams and the direction this event is taking and it was agreed that all of these issues would be discussed thoroughly in all their dimensions before the hosting of the event in Scotland in 2011.

I would like to congratulate Wales on a very fine performance and a strong win over a star studded Scotland Team but I would especially like to congratulate the Ireland 8-man squad for the massive unselfish effort put in by every man. We lacked some experience and specific knowledge on this unique water but soon got to grips with methods alien to us, enabling us to compete well by the end of the event. Well done to all of our guys who not alone made lasting friends but left lasting impressions by their competitive sporting spirit, genuine ability and impeccable turnout and behaviour away from the competition grounds. To Oliver Doyle, James Gargan and Senior International Rory O Neill who worked tirelessly above and beyond the call, with advice, bait, tackle and logistics I thank you most sincerely.

This is a young team with limited international experience and it genuinely has some serious emerging talented Cips style anglers amongst its ranks.

A report on the value going forward of this event as it is currently structured will follow in course following an anticipated meeting of or discussions by the managers of all three nations.

Prebait was the main sponsor yet again and for this I thank Fiachra Mc Closkey most sincerely. We would all like to take this opportunity to wish Fiachra well and congratulate him on his recent marriage.

Thanks to Niall Purcell Galmoylstown for all his help and support and for his copious quantities of hemp, free of charge.

Peter Nicholson once again supported us with a huge amount of bait as ever in brilliant condition and of super quality.

Richard Caplice.
Team Manager.