

Celtic Cup 2009 Lough Muckno Ireland is an outstanding Success with bumper catches.

The Celtic Cup event of 2009 was hosted by Ireland and staged at Lough Muckno in Castleblaney Co Monaghan over the Weekend 1st and 2nd August. The event was lauded as the best ever Celtic Cup in terms of fairness and bumper catches, averaging 19kgs per man over all the pegs each day on wonderful Lough Muckno facing the Ski club on White Island. Maver Prebait Team Ireland practiced for a period of 4 consecutive days with a full team attendance. This year's squad comprised seasoned Internationals Pat Bartley, Dave Mc Neice, Rory O Neill and Willie Wheeler and an able and talented group supported these, with somewhat less international experience, in Donnacha Maguire, Dave Hill, Richie Keegan, Shane Dunne, Peter Walsh Mark Davis and Ken Ince. Every squad member contributed to a hugely successful and pleasant week of tough practice ending with two days of final preparation alongside the opposing teams of Scotland and Wales when the tempo was raised and the anti was upped. On the evening of 31st of July the team to compete against the fellow Celts of Wales and Scotland was announced with Ken Ince Mark Davis and Dave Hill being the unlucky ones, asked to act as reserves and support on the first day of competition. With what was a team of unprecedented strength the Ireland squad felt a real confidence following the first day draw and this confidence was not misplaced as the weigh in on the all out on day one found Ireland winners in 5 out of the seven sections. Ireland led by three points from Scotland with Wales a further 4 points adrift. Day two saw only one change to a very gallant Ireland squad with the solid Dave Hill coming in for Donnacha Maguire who competed well on day one but conceded on an agreed principle of lowest scorer to be replaced by the top reserve. Over the course of the four-hour grueller the news from the assiduous bank runners in each section had Ireland ahead on fish count in 4 out of the seven sections and if this was borne out we should be run away winners. The heart break was palpable as the management and support group from the Ireland camp moved along the sections during the weigh in and we found ourselves on the wrong side of three defeats by ounces in three of the five sections we were expected to win and in which we were seriously ahead on fish count. The event went down to the wire and it was only on the final section weighing that it became apparent that Scotland had indeed overhauled us and we were relegated to second place two points adrift and 6 points ahead of Wales. Despite huge disappointment the squad acted with the sporting dignity that is their trademark and the guile and professionalism of a full Scotland international World Squad was praised and congratulated. Some un solicited glowing tributes from the Scotland and Wales management on the strength of the Ireland team performance was little comfort then but this was a truly magnificent effort from every single squad member and bodes well for the future cohesion and balance of our international panel. Not a flicker of dissent was displayed during the ten sessions of team practice leading up to the two-day event and the camaraderie and esprit de corp. was never bettered in any Ireland camp. The Maver Prebait Ireland team did themselves proud and surprised the visiting nations recently becoming accustomed to just turning up to beat us. The Ireland team will go forward from here and it is this event that will hone the international skills of our world championship side and prepare the up and coming new entrants for full international duty at the highest level. The final result showed Scotland as victors on 25 points with Ireland in second on 27points and Wales third on 32 points The individual winner was Ben Roberts of Wales 2points and 38 kgs in second was pat Bartley Ireland also on 2 points and 34kgs and in third was Davy Corcoran Scotland on 3 points. Ireland will take on the Celtic Cup challenge with renewed vigour in Bron Efion Wales in 2010 on a mixed commercial fishery better suited to a number of our panel with this type of angling experience.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors Phil Briscoe at Maver U.K and Fiachra mc Cluskey at Prebait.com for their much-valued support with tackle and finance for this and the World Championship squad.

To Irish bait and Tackle and Peter Nicholson for the supply of large quantities of live bait during several days of practice and during the event, circa 20 gallons, thanks again for your continued support.

Many thanks to Monaghan County Council, Castleblaney town council, Castleblaney community partnership, Declan Mc Kiernan county engineer, and to Paddy Greene Liam Murray and staff at the Eastern Region Fisheries Board for all their hard work in preparing the superb venue.

Yours in Sport.

Richard Caplice.
Irish Team Manager.