

Ireland Triumph at 57th World Championships in Merida, Spain.

On the 16th June 2010 the six man Maver backed Ireland Team to compete in the 57th Freshwater angling Championships set off for Merida in Spain with a new grim determination, bolstered on this occasion by substantial support from The Loughs Agency the Central Fisheries Board and Prebait.com the largest social Fisheries website in these islands. Following a review of tactics and approach, a management and team member group decided early, on a more professional approach than was ever employed in the past. This resulted in a commitment from everybody on this occasion of close to two full weeks of travel, practice and competition with the resultant cost factor an issue of grave concern. The manager and support staffs contacted and met regularly with senior members from a number of agencies including Dr Ciaran Byrne and Mark Corp from The Central Board and Mr Gerry Mills from the Loughs Agency and were delighted to find that the Loughs Agency and the Central Fisheries Board especially understood the need for this new professional approach. These two bodies committed to substantial help with travel airfares accommodation etc and for this we are extremely grateful. It might have been anticipated that this infusion of help might be reflected in a best ever result for a best ever prepared Ireland side and so it turned out to be.

A very strong and venue suited group of six, finally made the River Guadiana bankside 300 miles south of Madrid on the 19th June with the late arrival by air of super reserve Jason Ward who had to stand in at late notice for one of our top notch anglers Mark Lichtenberg forced unfortunately through ill health to withdraw. Three days were spent practicing off venue and the Ireland squad appeared on the bankside without breakfast at 5.30am every morning in buoyant mood. No surprise then that some luminaries such as Hungary Italy and the Netherlands struggling with the method laid on video cameras and personnel with binoculars to record the progress of the Ireland squad which was being talked about in the pre match commentaries in the U.K and European Angling Media as well as all along the 3,500 metre stretch. With only two days to competition left, the Ireland squad had fixed on a method and the team was truly brimming with confidence that a breakthrough was on the cards for our team against the professional greats amongst the nations like England France Italy Belgium Russia and a formidable Spanish team on home water. The die was cast and a confident and determined 5 lined up against the best that the rest of the world had to offer at 10.30am on Saturday 26th June 2010 to compete in the world's biggest angling event. 1.30pm on that date saw a close of competition for day one and we waited anxiously but with some confidence to see if our usual ranking of mid twenties amongst the nations had been bettered. The first day figures emerged at 4pm and Ireland stood 6th amongst the nations with Pat Bartley our most experienced international holding 1st section place and best from Florence some years ago Cathal Hughes in 2nd Section place. Our task now facing day two was to show clearly and convincingly that this brilliant first day result was not a fluke of any kind and the squad now changed minimally with Rory O Neill coming in for a gallant Bob Hulme had to put it all on the line.

Could Ireland break the mould and force our way into the top five or better, this day would tell, there was no hiding place at this stage. Early news from splendid bank runners on day two told us that youngest of our squad 25 yr old Rory Dunne was performing brilliantly in Section B and might pull in a 3rd place. Rory O neill was faring similarly in Section A and one of our individual medal hopes Cathal Hughes was battling in the front of Section D with world renowned Steve Gardner from England who Irelands pat Bartley had beaten comprehensively off the next peg on day one. On this day however Pat had drawn the wrong end of the section and his chance of individual glory was slipping away. Jason Ward battled gamely in the most difficult section and would acquit himself well by the all out at 1.30pm. A string of good results flowed from our bank runners to the manager as the end was called and with Rory Dunne improving his section place to a wonderful 2nd Rory O neill holding on grimly to section 3rd and star performer Cathal Hughes holding off a late challenge from England's Steve Gardener to record a staggering section win, it looked as if the Ireland team could force their way into the top elite group of 5. Anxious minutes extended to one hour before unofficial communication

from the technical centre to the manager of Ireland confirmed that we had indeed broken the mould, narrowly missing the bronze medal but moving from a wonderful 6th place to an elite 4th. The icing on the cake for a buoyant and still crestfallen Ireland Squad was the news that Cathal Hughes by his spectacular performance had captured the individual Silver medal for Ireland.

This is a truly great day for international angling in Ireland and with team and individual results taken into consideration is the best ever achieved by any Ireland Squad in all its years of participation in the world premier event.

The esprit de corp sense of union and team spirit shown by this squad was unprecedented and that aligned with our new more professional approach is what has brought us to the top table of international angling.

This would not have of course not have been possible without the encouragement and considerable help of the Loughs Agency, The Central fisheries Board soon to be Inland fisheries Ireland and Prebait.com. A huge thank you goes out to Mr Gerry Mills, Dr Ciaran Byrne Mr Mark Corp and to Mr Fiachra Mc Cluskey.

Our tackle sponsor Mr Phil Briscoe from Maver U.K attended the event over the two days in Merida and in an after match review of the event with the manager and team he was loud in his praise of the entire Maver Ireland team performance and its unique results in the face of such massive opposition and is firmly committed to supporting us into the future.

The final 4.
1st England.
2nd Italy.
3rd. Netherlands.
4th Ireland.

Scotland 5th
Wales 6th.
Hungary 7th
Finland 8th
Germany 9th.
Poland 10th.
France 13th.
Belgium 16th.
Spain 23rd.
Russia 24th.
South Africa 31st.

Well done and thank you to all the team members and to our brilliant supporters who made it all possible.

To our support staff of Shane Dunne Peter Walsh Pat Heeney Geoff Quinn to Peter Nicholson for his excellent bait services and to all of our supporters who offered kind words of encouragement beforehand and congratulations after the event I thank you one and all.

Richard Caplice.
International Team Manager