

Maver Garda Angling Squad breakthrough in European Police Championships.

The six man Maver backed angling squad of An Garda Síochána travelled to Rome Italy on the 28th of August to prepare for the European championships with real resolve on this occasion and determined to get on the medal table for the first time in three years. With Richard Caplice Carrickmacross as competing manager and Kieran Roche Carrickmacross in charge of travel and logistics the team comprised Donnacha Maguire Dublin, Keith Coleman Mayo, Peter O Connor Dublin, Eamonn Bracken Athlone, and Ernie Henderson also Dublin. Following arduous practice in searing hot conditions on Monday Tuesday and Wednesday the team on Thursday set their sights on a credible and yet realistic outcome given that teams such as host nation Italy, Belgium, Holland, Hungary and others had spent some 15 to 20 days in practice. Two disciplines would be fought out over two days and on the first day Friday 5th Sept it was that of Pole fishing under Cips rules. The Maver Garda Ireland team members felt that a good result was on the cards with an agreed approach of fishing the 11 and a half metre line with ground bait and sticky mag laying on six inches and fishing for Bream, Roach, Tench and chub. The all out signal on Day one saw a result of mixed fortunes with Ireland standing of 5th place in the nations equalling our best one day result in the past 3 yrs. The result belied the fact however that our youngest member Ernie Henderson making his debut had scored a magnificent result with a close second in his section leaving him with a wonderful chance entering day two of capturing the individual title or in any event a massive individual ranking. Richard Caplice was the next in 11th place followed by Keith Coleman in 16th next came Peter O Connor and disastrously pegged in a difficult area Donnacha failed to register on the scales. Of the 125 anglers competing now all hopes of individual glory rested with the youngest member of our team Ernie Henderson who would carry the pressure well into day two on the 6th September when the discipline of The Feeder fishing championship would be

waged under gruelling sun and fierce competitive strain. All of our anglers had reasonable draws except Keith Coleman drawn in a very difficult area between the Belgian and Dutch feeder favourites. Bank runners throughout this five hour gruelling five hour session had Henderson competing fish for fish with the U.K angler drawn on his right and it was also emerging as the match progressed that Richard Caplice the Ireland manager could also be the eventual winner in this one. A tense hour followed the all out at 3pm following an exhausting five hours of fishing while all the 125 anglers had their fish weighed. The rumours from the bank runners and stewards proved to be remarkably accurate with Ernie Henderson failing just, to stay in front of the U.K Competitor but gaining an outstanding second place in section for the second consecutive day weighing in 51lbs of fish. Some anxious minutes passed before it became clear that the catch of 83 lbs and 6 ounces of Richard Caplice was enough to win the day and he would become the feeder-fishing champion of the European Police. Donnacha Maguire raced through the field on this occasion gaining a very credible 6th place and in doing so the points tally of Ireland looked likely to be boosted into a team third place. This was unfortunately was not to be, with Peter O Connor achieving 16th place in the most difficult section and Keith Coleman struggling as expected in a very unfavourable location. Ireland held onto its 5th place, only a solitary point behind host nation Italy, with Germany making a move from behind Ireland on day one, to third place. England gained a very credible second place and the team event was won by Belgium who had put their two weeks practice to good effect. We all waited anxiously while the tedious and nerve wracking procedure of determining results went on behind closed doors to see if Ernie Henderson was the overall champion and when the results were revealed some 4 hours later Ernie had tied on points for first place and was awarded third place and the bronze medal on a weight count-back with Daems Gustaf from Belgium in the silver medal position and Martin Barret of England taking the Gold, helped by his great second day weight of 79 lbs of fish.

Wesley Vander linden from Belgium took the gold medal as the Pole champion with 46 lbs and Richard Caplice from Maver Garda Ireland was declared the European Feeder Fishing Champion with a great catch of 83lbs and 6 ounces. Well done to all of the Ireland Garda squad, Veteran campaigner Richard Caplice becoming European Police Feeder fishing champion but especially to the Rising star that is Ernie Henderson who was unlucky not to scoop the gold, finishing instead in a tremendous bronze medal position and he also drew the only shouts of “Barbello Barbello “ from the watching crowd, on day two, as Ernie was the only angler to successfully land a handsome 5lb Barbel from the 250 angling positions over the two days. The remaining squad of Donnacha Maguire, Peter O Connor Eamonn Bracken and Keith Coleman assisted by James Gargan, our top junior civilian in the Maver Garda club, performed exceptionally well but were just unlucky on this occasion. A special word of thanks to Kieran Roche of Carrickmacross Monaghan, our seasoned logistics manager who succeeded in getting a mountain of Maver kit and tackle and personnel safely to the venue in Rome over land, to the sections each day and back safely to Ireland in draining weather conditions over a 12 day period. The entire squad once again conducted their business with efficiency and a remarkable Esprit De Corp bringing credit to Ireland, the Garda force, themselves and our much valued tackle and clothing sponsor Maver U.K.

Richard Caplice
Team Manager