

Buffy 'the wrasse slayer' helps Scots to silver medal

Scotland's ladies sea fishing team collected silver medals after surging up the leader board on the second day of the Home International at Weymouth, and Edinburgh-based angler Buffy McAvoy (cor), who has only been fishing for a year, ended as the Tartan team's top rod after being second in her zone on day one and winning her zone 24-hours later.

McAvoy, head of financial operations at Heriot-Watt University, hooked into four fish for 98cm on day one and 11 fish for 255cm on day two and

The 48-year-old, who lost a wrasse of between 40cm and 50cms on day one, which would have been a personal best and would also have won her the zone, said: "I've only been fishing for a year and I was both nervous and excited going into the event as there was stiff competition, but I am so happy to have won silver.

"I only got into fishing post-lockdown. My boyfriend fishes and I went along and enjoyed it. They I saw a plea for anglers in a local paper and made a call.

"To be here representing Scotland, coming second in my zone and then first and also collecting a silver medal, as well as catching a personal best wrasse on day two of 28cm and being part of an amazing group of girls, is special. I'm over the moon."

She was given the nickname of Buffy the wrasse slayer by fellow competitors and she added: "We practiced for two days on an area of Preston Beach designated for the event and we blanked.

"So did anglers from England, Wales and Ireland so our team

manager requested a move up the beach to a reef area. The organisers agreed. That meant we had to change all our rigs overnight. The caravans were like a wee factory, and it worked."

Kevin Lewis, the team manager from Broughty Ferry near Dundee, said this was an amazing result for the new-look, five-strong team which consisted of two previous Scottish internationals and three new caps.

The team won four of the five zones on day two, an achievement complemented by one of the other team managers, and Lewis said: "My assistant, Philip Pape, and I walked the beaches for two days, giving advice, and the ladies listened.

"They were so determined to do well and we are so proud of them and the hard work they have put in plus the determination they have shown throughout. This result augurs well for the future of Scottish ladies sea angling."

Scotland totalled 27 points in the two-day event, seven behind a strong England squad, with 17 points coming on the second day. Third were Wales with 20 and fourth Ireland on 18.

Debutant Joanne Barlow from Brighton, who is captain of Scotland's ladies carp team, and who only took up the sport in the Spring, having to buy all her equipment, also performed well.

Barlow, who suffered sternum injuries in a car crash in Dundee as she was heading home after a training session seven weeks ago, only returned to fishing last week and was second in her zone on day one. She caught six fish on day two but they were under size.

Lewis added: "England were out of reach after day one with 18 points, but our girls stuck with it and smashed it on day two. They were rewarded and Buffy was amazing for someone who has only fished in three competitions before. Overall, this was a

team effort. Everybody contributed and the girls are so happy.

“It was even more difficult for them as the reef was was narrow and you had to be so accurate with your casting, you had to hit the spot. The girls managed to adapt and we got a fantastic result.”

The other members of the team were Gill Coutts from Largs plus Lesley Maby and Karena Duffy from Cumbria.

PICTURE: Philip Pape (assistant manager), Gill Coutts, Joanne Barlow, Buffy McAvoy, Karena Duffy, Lesly Maby, Kevin Lewis (manager)