

Three lead race for Daiwa Lure League title

The race for the Daiwa Prorex Lure League title organised by The Pike Anglers Alliance of Scotland (PAAS) hots up this weekend when the next installment is held at Black Loch near Limerigg.

John Forret from Falkirk, Sean Frew from Cowdenbeath and Jaid McGhie (West of Scotland) are closely grouped according to the latest points with two rounds left. None have won the title before.

It's also close in the junior competition. Fife-based Jack Weir, son of Andrew Weir, the former co-owner of Stenhouse Trout Fishery near Burntisland, in first place, six points ahead of Tommy Renwick (Falkirk) with last year's winner, Oscar Chalmers from Edinburgh in third position but one big fish could make all the difference in both sections.

All the 20-plus boats are expected to be filled on Sunday as the Black Loch is one of the popular venues on the circuit. The fifth and final stage is at the Lake of Menteith on October 8.

The third round was fished at Linlithgow Loch in poor conditions and of the 24 anglers fishing only two caught fish and both were small and all are hoping for much better at Black Loch where the next 12 months could see a seismic shift if Falkirk Council give the nod to an ambitious plan to

build holiday chalets in the sparsely-populated area.

The industrial revolution shaped the landscape with large deposits of coal and oil being discovered and later extracted and the water lies on one of at least five mining sites which operated in the second half of the 19th century.

The water provides a “test” for even experienced anglers and Black Loch also houses a head of trout for fly fishermen and it is open five days a week – closed Monday and Tuesday – from 9am to 4.30pm.

The 124-acre reservoir is stocked regularly with trout from 2.5lb upwards and there is ample fly life to feed the hungry fish with heather all around the water plus Forestry Commission land in another area.

A massive bonus for trout anglers is that an east wind does not put Black Loch trout off. One of the volunteers, who declined to be named, said: “Anglers do get catches into double-figures with School Bay and North Reedy Bay among the most popular locations.

“One angler swears by black Shimpan buzzers which he ties himself, but a variety of patterns can prove successful including cormorant, diawl bach, orange fritz, damesl, Ally McCoist, black CDC, hopper, apps, black beetle, buzzer and yellow owl.

“The bung is popular with fishermen, fished about 2ft under the surface, and fly hatches have been noted as early as March and April.”

Floating lines plus intermediate and midge tip are among the most popular on this day ticket water which has around 600 yards of bank fishing, but a word of warning, you need waders to do this.

The water depth varies from four feet in the margins to 25ft

in the middle area and enthusiasts who hire equipment from the on-site paddle board facility are told not to go within 25m of anybody fishing.

Back to the pike fraternity and PASS members can fish at Black Loch at all times, a concession granted by loch owners, and pike of well over 20lb have been netted there in the recent past. They can be spotted in all areas of the water.

Finally, PAAS bosses have just confirmed that Italian tackle manufacturer Molix have now agreed to sponsor the club's junior section, another boost for the popular club which is happy to hear from anybody who is interested in joining them. See their Facebook page for details.

PICTURE: Brian Gerrard with a 20lb-plus pike from Linlithgow Loch on a previous visit to the West Lothian water. Supplied by PASS