

Scots world carp teams learned a lot in France

Scotland's men's – including Ewan Roberts from Uphall Station – and women's carp fishing teams both said they learned a huge amount from their appearance in the world championships in France.

They both fished the same lake, the men first, and they passed on information to the women and Joanne Barlow, Scotland's women's captain, said the last few days have been a massive roller coaster ride both physically and mentally for herself and the team.

She added: "To present Scotland's first ever ladies fishing team at International level was a true honour and the team were warmly welcomed by all eight nations competing at the third ladies world carp championships at Lac de Pannecierre in France.

"The opening ceremony was a proud moment for us to fly the flag for Scotland in the parade through Chateau de Chinnon with 100's of locals out to cheer on all the nations and the start of the competition was surreal.

"Entering our boxes for the first time and knowing we were there for the next 72 hours was both exciting and nerve racking. The terrain we were all fishing on was like nothing any of us have experienced or could have trained for.

“Steep slopes of rock and debris and water that dropped from 25ft to 60ft off a sheer cliff face made for very challenging fishing conditions. The pairings all adapted quickly with one pairing having to quickly learn to cast 40ft zigs and fish in 60ft of water.

“We had to be quick on the rods when we got a take and head straight up the bank to get the fish over the cliff drop off. It was brutal and we lost many a fish and tackle in the process.

“However, we persevered and all pairings not only managed to catch but also gave some of the big, more experienced teams a fright as we sat hot on their tails throughout the match.

“In two of the sections in the final hooter our pairs were only one kilo behind England who had a fish on the hooter and four kilos behind Italy who had a late flurry of fish. A fish from either pairing would have made a massive difference so it really was a tight match for us.”

She revealed that Scotland caught 72 fish, more fish than The Netherlands, but their carp were bigger and, looking back, she added: “ The team have grown so much over this week.

“We have also learnt an incredible amount and, although exhausted, are excited for the future. Next year sees the event head to Latvia. With more support and funding this team plan to be there.

“The closing ceremony was truly incredible with eight nations coming together to celebrate women in sport. Overcoming language barriers to party together and celebrate a fabulous event is a memory we will treasure for life.

“Finally, a massive shout out to our management team of Dave Barlow, Emily Barlow and Arron Gore who worked so hard for us throughout the competition keeping us on track, supporting when needed and invaluable advice throughout. We couldn't have

done it without them. Also, our team sponsors Nutrabaits without them supplying all our bait for free we would not have been able to go.”

Scotland finished eighth but Niki Wildman, who sometimes fishes at Drumtassie near Blackridge, and her partner, Ruth McCormack were lying tenth until the final minutes but ended 13th as fish were landed on the hooter.

They were Scotland's top rods with 59. Joanne and Margo Robinson were 23rd and they landed 13 fish and Catherine Roberson and Eleanor Mitchell were 24th with two fish. Hosts France won with Ukraine second.

The draw, said Joanne, was critical and Scotland lost more than 25 fish, many in an underwater forest area full of snags.

Meanwhile, the men's carp team which finished a disappointing 30th out of 33 at the same lake in France. Just like the ladies, the men found it physically tough and they were twice hit by storms, soaking their gear and forcing them to re-build their bankside camp.

Roberts and his partner Ralph Reddy topped the Scottish rods and finished 57th with 15 fish, but peg draws were crucial and Scotland failed to land lucky and they also lost fish in the underwater snags. Scotland are self-funded and competed against teams who had reported budgets of 120,000E. Ukraine won with France second, losing out on penalty points.

PICTURE: Scotland's ladies carp team with six-year-old Efron at the parade in France. Contributed