

These anglers really cared

An English angler dropped to his knees and held his head in his hands after dropping a fish inches from his landing net.

Seconds later two Scots hooked into fish on opposite sides of the lake on their way to the gold medal. The contrast was stark.

Some of Britain's best bank anglers had toiled all day, casting long and short, trying to tempt elusive trout at Newhaylie Fishery near Largs during the Home International.

It was flat calm in the morning session with gin clear water, most unusual for Newhaylie, perched on a hill 400ft above the seaside resort. The fish could see everything.

Then the wind got up in the post-lunch session, making it difficult to cast and to find the right tactics. Rolly polly in one section of the lake, slow retrieve in others. Even fast retrieve was tried as the clock ticked down.

The fickle wind, which kept changing direction, also made it difficult. Finding the right pattern was crucial to find fish who were generally thought to be around 5ft under the surface.

Slow glass lines and floating lines were used as was the controversial bung. It brought results for some.

The Dam Wall area, the deepest part of the lake, produced and the ripple edge in the mid-point of the lake was also favoured, but even the best, and there were some famous names on the bank, found it tough going.

They had practiced at the water for several days before the hooter blew to signal the start of the one-day competition. They had tied flies in their rooms until midnight and talked tactics, meeting bankside and in their accommodation.

Such is fishing and in a tense situation like a Home International, numbers are crucial.

The records say Scotland triumphed, winning with 112 points. Ireland were second on 135 points with Wales third on 170 points and England fourth with 176 points.

Scotland's captain, Graeme Lynch, is a regular at Newhaylie and lives around ten miles away at Beith in Ayrshire. He knows how to fish the water and that helped but the six-strong Tartan team certainly upped their game on the day and the loss of a fish through a hole in the net near the end of the contest did not matter in the overall scores.

Lynch was beaten into second place by Irish angler Sean Kirwan who netted 13 fish, seven in the morning and six in the afternoon, and that was a notable achievement. Lynch also had seven in the morning and three in the pm session.

Debutant David Harrington from Uphall Station was fourth in the individual standings with eight fish during the two sessions with anglers moving around the lake to different pegs in 40-minute spells.

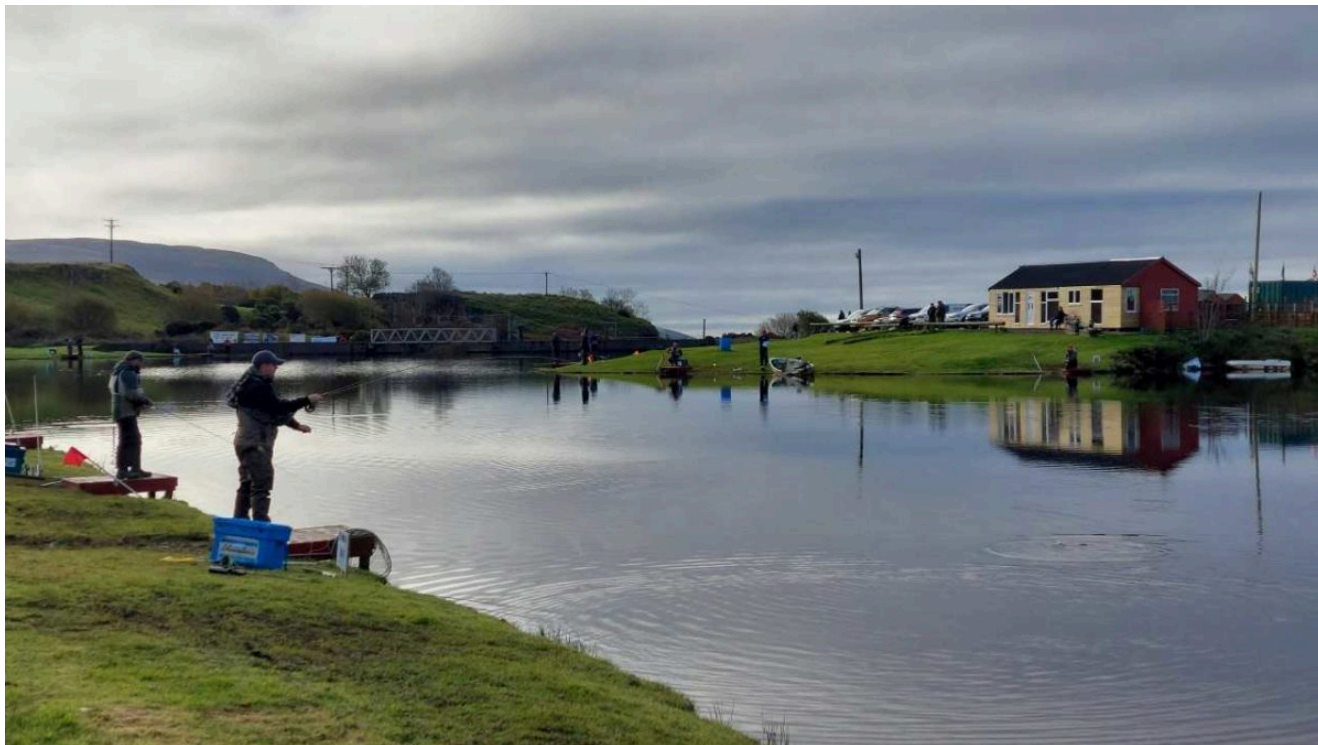
The focus was intense. The casting prodigious but one angler dropped his pattern into shallow water in a margin near one of the concrete walls in the 3.8 acre water.

He was winding in excess line when a fish took the pattern. He looked shocked and frantically tugged on his line, playing the hard-fighting trout. It escaped just before the net. He was gutted.

That's how much these anglers cared and that is why the

victory was so sweet for Scotland who fielded an inexperienced team but still won gold.

PICTURE: General view of Newhaylie. Picture *Nigel Duncan*







Scotland's top rod, Graeme Lynch, at Newhaylie. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***