

Bass emerges from surf to kick-start Reid title chase

It was fair but dull leaving Edinburgh. Crossing the River Forth at Queensferry you could see darker clouds over to the right. The twisty coast road is never appealing, and worse when you think there may be rain in the dark clouds at the end of the journey.

Nearing Kirkcaldy, the mist emerged, shrouding the floodlights at Starks Park, home of Raith Rovers FC. Dropping down to the Promenade through the traffic lights at Morrisons the fog lifted, but the drizzle started.

It was that wetting drizzle and so we drove into the car park at the Promenade and dived straight into the boot for the wet weather gear. A dreich day in Kirkcaldy.

More than 50 anglers, some of them seasoned competition fishermen and international competitors, were already spread along the beach from near the car park to the harbour. The Iain Reid Memorial fishing competition had returned.

Twelve months ago organisers had to find another venue as storms lashed the Kirkcaldy prom. Not this time. This week's high winds had left their mark, with debris at the foot of the breakwater, but there was hardly a breath of wind and the sea conditions were considered good by experts with light waves.

However, there was that drizzle. Camera gear had to be shielded from the wet and from one angler who objected to my taking pictures on the beach. We moved on.

Towards the town, chilled, soaked fingers had to wrestle with lugworm and mackerel bait for the three hook flapper rigs which many anglers seemed to have adopted.

The first lines entered the surf at 10am and not long after, at the end of the beach near Morrisons supermarket, Steve Sergbine, originally from Sunderland but now a resident of Dunfermline, saw his rod tip jerk. Seconds later pulled a beautiful bass of around 3lb through the waves.

Alan Brown, chairman of the East Lothian-based Bass Rock Shore Angling League, marked Steven's card and the Tyneside-born angler had another rig ready to cast. Back it went along with hopes of more.

Steve won last weekend's Arbroath Winter Cod open, fished in "horrible" conditions, and was obviously keen to add another title to his CV. He certainly started this competition well, winning his zone on Day One.

Along the beach the tom-tom drums were beating. Steve's fish was a talking point and there were reports of a "sizeable" flounder being landed.

Scottish international, Buffy McAvoy, Aberdeen-born but now living in Edinburgh, later confirmed she had hooked into another flounder, measuring 30cm. Things were hotting up, particularly at the Morrisons end of the beach.

Thankfully, the rain relented and the strong field, which included Mike Horn, president of the Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers (SFSA) and Alan Combe, another member of the gold medal winning team in the Home Internationals held in Wales in the summer, kept plugging away, looking for fish.

Dog walkers and cyclists were curious to know why so many anglers had suddenly appeared on the beach. Yes, locals do fish the area regularly, but not in such big numbers.

One elderly gentleman was, however, uninterested. He was more concerned with keeping his home fire burning, collecting wood and coal washed up on the beach by the recent strong winds.

He asked: "Could you do me a favour and take that bucket of coal up to the path?" No problem. As for the anglers, the results arrived late on Saturday from Day One.

Overall, it was a hard day fishing but some good bass and a flounder of 40cm leads the longest flat fish prize. Midlothian-based Mike Kyle had nine fish for 227cm to lead one one with Tyneside-based Neil Cutler second with 101cm from four fish and Gordon Hunter third with three for 76cm.

Mike Horn was fourth with two fish for 66cm and his son Chris fifth with two fish for 53cm.

In another zone, Steve Sergbine leads the way with 178cm from five fish with David Cargill second with five fish for 178cm, the anglers were split by the longest fish.

Les Carrington was third with 122cm and three fish with Buffy McAvoy fourth with three fish for 92cm. Thomas Slow from Portobello firth with three fish for 82cm.

In the third zone, Stuart Cresswell was top with 107cm from three fish, with Isaac Muir second on 103cm from three fish, Sandy Lawson third with two fish for 70cm and Scott McCartney fourth with two fish for 65cm.

The anglers have decamped to Leven for Day Two. First prize is £360, second £150 and third £150 with the winner of Zone winner receiving £90, runner-up £60 and third £40. The longest fish over two days prize is £100.



Mike Horn looking at his rod tip on Kirkcaldy beach during the Iain Reid Memorial. Picture Nigel Duncan



View along the crowded beach at Kirkcaldy. Picture **Nigel**

Duncan



Stevie Burns from Prestonpans measures a fish with James Ogilvie from Haddington ready to jot down the length. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***



Steve Sergbine looks at his rod tip on the way to his section

win at Kirkcaldy. Picture **Nigel Duncan**



Steve Sergbine checks his measure with marker Alan Brown of West Barns in East Lothian looking on. Picture **Nigel Duncan**