

Your chance to fish for Scotland youths

Scotland's youth fly fishing team came within one small fish of winning gold in the recent Home International event and you could be part of next year's team which will cast a line at the Lake of Menteith near Stirling in 12 months time.

Heats for selection for 2025 are on Saturday, September 7 at Harelaw (fishing from 9am to 16.30pm) and the second on Sunday, October 13 at Lake of Menteith (9am to 16.30pm).

Forms can be downloaded from the Scottish Youth Fly Fishing website which is www.scotlandyouthflyfishing.co.uk. Entry is £70 which covers both heats.

This year, Scotland's rising fly fishing stars defied soaring temperatures to put huge pressure on winners Ireland in the Home Internationals at Grafham Water near Huntingdon in England.

The 16-strong team, with four debutants, were last just two years ago, but they pushed a quality team all the way and several Irish anglers are due to cast in the world championships.

Ireland have now won the prestige event for four years in a row, a feat never achieved before, and James Litster,

Scotland's team manager, eagerly looks forward to next year.

Looking back, Litster said: "We were last and absolutely nowhere two years ago, but we won silver in Wales last year and we were so close this time.

"We are a team on the rise. Make no mistake, this was a massive achievement and Ireland actually believed we had won the competition due to the quality fish in our bags. Sadly, we fell just short."

And he added: "What a turnaround this was for us from two years ago and it was achieved in really trying conditions."

Scotland bosses actually called the youngsters off the water during training as the thermometer was reaching 34c.

On match day, there was, thankfully, a 10mph to 15mph wind providing some relief for competitors in the seven-hour event fished in a wind of between 10mph and 15mph.

The youngsters, aged between 12 and 18 and including one girl, Eilidh Craik from Errol, who fishes at Kinross, dug deep after two days of training to land 21 fish totalling 45lb 10oz. Ireland hooked into 24 fish for 48lb 4oz with England on 15 fish for 32lb 10oz and Wales with nine trout for 19lb 7oz.

Litster said: "What a performance this was. Our team stuck to the tactics, defied the conditions and did so, so well."

They also made an impression off the water, piping the team into battle with tunes including Highland Cathedral.

Scotland last won the title in 2018 on Draycote Water in England and he said: "We'll be doing everything we can to take gold next year."

For the record, the team (pictured courtesy of the Scottish Youth Fly Fishing team management) was Rory Stewart (Kilmacolm), James Coull and Jake Gilchrist (both Dundee), Sam

Harrison (Kinross), Eilidh Craik (Errol), Jake Humes (Assynt), Fergus Murray, Aaron Kennedy, Jamie Walker (all Stirling), James Miller (Glasgow), Ryan Taylor, Arran Thain, Kian Riley (all Aberdeen), Beck Lyon (Ayrshire), Ruaraidh Fowler (Doone), Dylan McRobert (Dumfries).