

Low top rod as Scotland claim golden treble

Scotland had previously won gold at the Autumn International at the Lake of Menteith in September 2023 and at the Spring match at Lough Ennell in the Republic of Ireland in May 2024 and the pressure was on to achieve a glory treble at Llyn Clywedog in Wales, *writes Tom MacTaggart*. Scotland delivered.

The winning squad are pictured above and Scotland produced despite poor weather during the practice days. At times, the sun appeared for long periods sending the fish deeper only to be followed by torrential rain and hailstones which reduced the temperature to single figures.

The wind blew up at times, producing difficult, squall conditions and, on the day before the match, the wind strength made it difficult to fish some areas.

Derek Keenan, the team manager, and Midlothian-based captain, Kevin McCabe, orchestrated the Scotland practice sessions and debriefs and, by match day, it was apparent that all four countries had identified the same areas and methods.

A close match was expected and the Tartan Team got off to a perfect start when Joseph Wood was seen to be into a fish straight away off of the pier area while most boats were only

just heading to their chosen start points.

Joseph caught steadily through the session and finished with 17 fish which eventually placed him tenth overall in the individual standings.

Tension mounted as competitors returned to the harbour and reported their catches. Scotland's management heard through the grapevine that Robert Reilly of Ireland had 26 fish and that Richard Denney of England had 22 fish. Confidence ebbed away in the Scotland camp.

However, the mood soon changed when Tyler Hay confirmed he hooked into 27 fish, closely followed by Thomas McMillan with 21 fish. Ronnie Gilbert and Ben Robertson from Whitburn both had 20 each but Michael Low confirmed he had 35 fish.

Michael was drawn with Richard Slater (England) who won the toss and opted to head for the northern end of the reservoir. The Scot started with two boobies and a cormorant pattern on a Di7 line and took a fish on his third cast. He picked away steadily and had 14 in the morning before it quietened down.

The pair stayed in the same area for the rest of the day and in the afternoon Michael changed to a bung and picked up a further 21 fish to finish on 35. Richard finished on nine.

England were first to the scales and recorded 159 fish for 326lb 13oz which eventually put them in second place. Ireland were next and had 127 fish for 263lb 9oz which put them in third. Scotland weighed-in the gold medal score with 236 fish for 484lb 11oz with hosts Wales in fourth place with 105 fish for 219lb 7oz.

Records show that the winning margin of 77 fish and 157lbs 14ozs are the largest ever in the history of the internationals and the Scotland catch is the also the largest ever.

SCOTLAND: back row: Tyler Hay (Lintrathen), Derek Keenan (manager, Greenock IBM Freshwater), Peter Auchterlonie (Menteith Ospreys), Grant Sutherland Perth RASC), Martin McCafferty (Future FF), Chris Mcallister (Lintrathen), Derek Pozzi (Thalassa AC), Ben Robertson Phoenix FF), Michael Low (Menteith Ospreys) and Paul Angell (IFFA President). Front row: Scott Aitken (Tartan Tyers FF), Kevin Neri (Lintrathen), Thomas McMillan (Dalry Garnock AC), Kevin McCabe (captain, Change FFAC), Ronnie Gilbert (Menteith Ospreys), Joseph Wood (Bridge of Weir Loch AC) and George Mackenzie (International Secretary).



Kevin McCabe accepts the silverware from Paul Angell, IFFA president



Michael Low receives the Brown Bowl from Paul Angell, IFFA president, for the top individual performance in the Autumn International