

Fish failed to come out to play

The sun split the clear blue sky and there was a light breeze, chilly, yes, but ideal for cycling, running, walking the dog or pushing a pram around an open space. It was a wonderful October day for most of the visitors to Strathclyde Park and there were a lot.

The only unhappy people, until lunchtime, were anglers. The overnight cold snap and a clear sky is normally bad news for the angling fraternity, and it was, despite copious amounts of groundbait and thousands of maggots, many of them red, being thrown into the water on the end of hooks.

This was Day One of two in practice for the Celtic Cup coarse fishing event at the popular park. Ireland are the holders and Wales are as determined as Scotland to claim the silverware in this development competition.

The idea is to give those who have never fished for their country an opportunity to experience the pressure difference between pleasure angling and top end competition. Gus Brindle is Scotland's manager assisted by Dave Corcoran from Edinburgh. Both are seasoned campaigners.

They patrolled the bank providing hints and tips to Scotland's squad which fished a mixture of waggler and pole techniques in

practice and it has been split into two teams for the event. The intention had been to field an all-ladies team, but Scotland were one short of achieving that. For the future, perhaps.

However, on this occasion the Tartan Team will be mixed captained by James Dornom from Currie, Midlothian and Josh Trueman who used to live in Edinburgh but has recently relocated to Dumfries and Galloway.

Two members of the Edinburgh and Lothians Coarse Angling Club feature, Heather Lauriston and Rosalind Cassidy, and the other members are Emily Mather, a student teacher who lives in Manchester, international angler and busy blogger, Derek Brady, Peter Dick, Scott Laird, Mark Lyons, Ewan Weed and Barry Young.

Brindle said: "We had a heavy frost overnight, the first one of the year probably, and bright sunshine and the frost has knocked the colour out of the water and it will take a little time for the fish to come back again.

"Fish will be caught but it a challenge for the teams to work out how to do it."

Dunfermline-based Brindle confirmed that pressure also has an impact on the fish and he said: "The forecast said pressure is going to be all over the place this weekend and the wind swings round 360 degrees when we are fishing practice and the match but these are challenging conditions. However, it is the same for everybody and that is the challenge of international fishing."

The manager has been encouraged by the interest shown by the general public in the match. One commented to me that the guys on the bank looked "really professional" and Brindle added: "In the last four or five months, when we have seen more people fishing on the banks here, we have got a lot more people coming over and asking us what we are doing. Many have

said that they either used to fish or their parents used to fish and they fancied having a go.”

That is why the Scottish Federation for Coarse Angling are hosting a Lets Fish! Initiative at Car Park 2 at Strathclyde – just past the watersports centre on the right hand side – when youngsters and adults can have a go on Saturday and Sunday. They may even catch a fish.

The event is free and managed by experienced coaches who have all equipment and bait on hand. Parents can sit with their children during instruction, if they wish. People can book online for places but walk-ups are welcome.

Brindle said: “We are obviously looking for the next generation of anglers, and that is where kids come in, but if you are a person who wants to have a try at fishing or are a fisherman coming back to the sport, or even somebody seeking some hints or guidance then come and see us.”

Moving back to the match, Brindle underlined that this is a development event, and added: “For most of the Scottish anglers this will probably be the first time they have fished for Scotland and what we are trying to do is to give more people the opportunity to step-up to this level.

“It is float only and, yes we would love to win it on home soil, but it is also giving me an opportunity to watch the guys and see how they perform and give them the best chance of getting into the senior squad for world and European championships.

Fishing for your country, he agreed, is a totally different ball game from fishing for recreation. Even if you are fishing domestic competitions you are fishing with your mates.

When you step-up you really feel the pressure and it is easy, said Brindle, for that pressure to get into your head and he added: “Club competition, national competition, is completely

different when you put a Scotland hat or bib on to represent your country.”

The competition starts on Saturday with pre-baiting at 10.50am with all in at 11am until 3pm. The times also operate on Sunday and the pegs are on the same side of the lake as the watersport centre, parallel with the motorway.

PICTURE: Rosalind Cassidy preparing her groundbait in the Strathclyde Park sunshine on Thursday morning. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***



WAITING GAME: Peter Dick focused on Day 1 of practice. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***



BAITING UP: Ewan Weed prepares for action. Picture *Nigel Duncan*



POLE PREPARATION: Emily Mather deep in thought as she prepares to cast into the water at Strathclyde Park. Pictue *Nigel Duncan*



BUSY: Scottish international Derek Brady ready to load his bait box at Strathclyde Park. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***











IRELAND: their team working out tactics at Strathclyde Park. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***



WALES: members preparing equipment ahead of the practice session. Picture ***Nigel Duncan***