

Enjoying competition fly fishing with Invicta



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Invicta is fortunate in having recruited a good number of new members in recent years. Quite a few of them are either new to fly fishing or have only just started loch-style fishing through our club days, but having grasped the basics they want to raise their game and competitions are a great way to do it.

Here are the thoughts of some of our members.

Tony Smith is one of our most experienced competition anglers and an England International.

“Competition fishing opens up all sorts of new ideas. When sitting in a boat for 8 hours you’ll become firm friends with someone you’d never met before, and gradually you’ll get to know an enormous number of people and look forward to meeting up with them each year”



David Moore is our Competition Secretary and organiser of our two AMFC (Association of Major Fly Fishing Clubs) teams.

“I started fishing for our B team as a relative novice and competitions have improved my fishing more than anything else I can think of. Everyone has been a pleasure to fish with, working together and combining fun with a competitive edge. With persistence I made it into the A team and now have the confidence to fish at that level.”



Pete Brewer took up fly fishing after coarse fishing for many years and is now a regular in club teams. “Fishing friendly local competitions is one of the best ways of getting to know the waters, and all the various techniques needed to fish them. All

are welcome to get involved, there is no pressure to catch 8 in an hour and I can guarantee you will enjoy the camaraderie and friendship”

Sue Potts only took up fly fishing seven years ago, but now fishes in competitions at all levels from club days right up to the fantastic achievement of winning gold in the recent Ladies International. “You will learn a lot and make many friends. And the more friends you have, the more fun you have. Being part of a team encourages you to try different methods and ideas on waters that you might otherwise not visit. The emphasis is always on making the event enjoyable, otherwise there’s no point in doing it”



Join Invicta and enjoy the fun side of fly fishing

Competition fishing basics



Hints on how to approach the day

- 1 Practice** Try and get a day on the venue before the match. But if you haven't practised, ask around, talk to the wardens and anyone who might have information. It's likely that your boat partner will have some idea anyway, and you'll see where other boats are going. Practice sessions help decide tactics, flies and likely fish holding areas. Team chats will give you a good idea what to do.
- 2 Tackle and flies** Give yourself plenty of time to get your gear on to the boat and tackle up. Don't worry if you think you don't have enough lines or flies. Just ensure you have a floater and a couple of sinkers, one slow and one fast. A simple range of flies to cover most situations would be some nymphs such as diawl bachs, buzzers, and then a few lures such as boobies and blobs. If anything more is required your team mates will help you out.
- 3 The draw** Once you see the boat draw ask your team mates about your boat partner then search them out and introduce yourself. Establish who is on the engine and who is working the drogue - usually the first name out of the hat for each pair (so on the left-hand column of the draw sheet) takes the engine. But this can be mutually agreed.
Make it clear you are a relative novice and you might want your partner to take the engine even if you've drawn it. Chat to them and try and pick their brains a bit as to areas and tactics.
Teams sometimes have ways of communicating during a match with signals and funny coloured hats - be aware of this if they have.
- 4 Drogues** You should carry a drogue if the fishery doesn't supply them, although your partner might prefer to use his own - it depends on who's handling it. You'll also need a bass bag or box. Cheap cooler boxes from supermarkets are best as they keep the fish fresher.
- 5 Tactics** Don't worry if your partner starts with a different set-up, but if they start catching regularly then copy them. Fish together as if you are a pair, rather than in opposition.
Keep an eye on what the other boats are doing and look out for your team mates' boats (it's a good idea to note down their boat numbers). You need to be in the right place, then get your depth and retrieve sorted before worrying about fly patterns too much. Learn to recognise the lines being used from their colours and casting profile.
If you haven't had any action for a while then change tactics. Be systematic rather than making dramatic changes. Work your flies at different depths by counting down in increments of five before retrieving, and by varying the retrieve. Subtle changes can make all the difference.
- 6 'Control of the boat'** Don't be afraid to suggest moving and trying different areas. The 'control of the boat' changes every two hours anyway so you can insist on going to a certain area for half the match, although usually there is no problem deciding where to go and what to try. And you do not have to physically change ends!
- 7 Be friendly** Some anglers like to chat while others want to focus on their fishing but there is usually a half-way house which helps you both enjoy the day without losing concentration.
- 8 Relax** Don't expect to be a superstar immediately. If you can catch three or four you will not have let anyone down, and even if you blank, it's only fishing!!

International Rules

These are the set of laws that are used for most competitions. They do vary for local, fishery and historical reason, but these are the basics and here is a summary of the essential ones relating to our club and interclub competitions. Please note that catch and release is now a major factor in almost all competitions, and once an angler is fishing to catch and release, flies must be debarbed or barbless, and no doubles are allowed. Here is a summary of the major points.

- 1 At all times, respect the spirit and traditions of game angling.**
- 2 Flies** Artificial fly only. No flies shall be artificially weighted. No more than 4 flies on a cast, only one of which may be dressed on a double hook (a total of maximum five hook points) and flies must be at least 20 inches apart. Tandem flies shall not be permitted. Hooks (single or double) must be a maximum of five-eighths of an inch, including the eye. The overall length of the fly, including dressing, must not exceed fifteen-sixteenths of an inch. Dressings may include beads provided they are buoyant. Attractor chemicals and the use of light emitters to flies are not allowed. The 'Bung' is allowed but must be a 'catchable' fly, and that hook counts as one of the hook points on the cast. Debarbed flies must not pull threads when pulled through material
- 3 Lines, and leaders** No additional weight allowed. Lines must be as commercially manufactured - no form of shooting head line, metal core line or metal core leader is permitted.
- 4 Rods** maximum length 12 feet. Each competitor may have a spare rod in the boat but only one to be made up. A rod is considered to be made up if any two sections are joined or if a reel or line is attached.
When working flies or retrieving casts, the rod must be hand held at all times, (the 'roly-poly' is not allowed), and must be above water level. Competitors must not stand in the boat when casting or retrieving line, except when playing a fish.
Trolling of flies behind the boat is not permitted. Side casting is permitted but flies must not be allowed to trail behind the boat.
- 5 Drogues** are permitted - attached at one or two points.
- 6 Anchoring is prohibited.** All fishing is from drifting boats
- 7 Seats** Boat seats, thwart boards and the use of tackle boxes as seats are permitted provided the height of the 'seat' is not more than five inches above the gunwale.
- 8 Safe distance** Keep 50 yards away from any bank angler and 100 yards away from the front of drifting boats
- 9 Electronic aids** No mobiles, fish finders or echo sounders.
- 10 Who drives?** Decisions regarding who takes the engine is decided at the draw or by mutual agreement, but command of the boat will change ends every two hours. But competitors need not physically change ends unless as mutually agreed.
- 11 Safety** Competitors are required to wear buoyancy aids and eye protectors.

* For the full International Rules go to

<https://te-ff.org/team-england/competition-rules/>

Enjoy the day and 'Tight lines'

*Fun fly fishing with
Invicta*