

The Four Seasons Carp Cup

- Cottingham Lakes, Kent



The Lake

The match was a 48 hour pairs match which us both Wayne Rees and Luke Church fishing Alder Lake on the Cottingham complex.

We were 4th out of the bag and decided to get on the front of the fresh Easterly wind. With this end of the lake being 6 foot and the opposite end being 12 foot, the peg we chose was in the shallower water but we both felt that the fish would hold here even with a brisk wind.

Tactics

The approach was to cast onto the far bank and then to drop the rig in by hand tight to margin attaching small PVA bags to the hook for attraction. The rules of the match allowed us to do this, so we took full advantage to maximise our chances, with the best possible presentation. With placing rigs in at the far bank, there is very little disturbance from casting. When lakes are heavily pressured the minimal disturbance allows carp to feed confidently and hopefully stay in the swim for longer periods of time. This then gives us more chance of landing more fish.



Rigs

We both fished 2oz leads with a 12mm Pink Northern Special pop up hookbaits, size 8 long shank Arma point hook with Ultima 15lbs Power Link with a supple hair with a shot on the hair to create a 'wafter'. With Powercore leadcore and a flying back lead to keep everything pinned down.

Back leads are an essential part to our fishing, as small venues with a large head of carp can give false indications. This also helps to keep the carp feeding in our swim for longer periods of time.



How the match progressed

In the first 24 hours we had only banked four carp, the fish had been on the back of the wind which was a surprise to us both. As the fishing was slow for a highly stocked venue we thought that it would be worth fishing zig rigs. We used a small stubby spod and spodded Sweet nut cloud instant spod mix over the top of the rigs, to try and get some fish banked. After a couple hours of consistently spodding over the rigs and also changing the depths of the rigs with no takes this method was obviously not the way forward.

As we had checked the weather forecast prior to the match we had seen that the weather was going to warm up with the wind dying. So we hoped these conditions would be ideal for the shallower end of the lake which we had chosen. These conditions arrived as did the carp to the swim.

We were placing the rigs at the far margin and we had noticed that the carp were clouding up the water. This was from the pellets and chopped N-Gage XP which had been introduced to the far margin spots. This was great news that the carp had arrived and from here takes were instant. On several occasions we had just set the rig into the swim and half way back to the swim to see both of us on regular occasions battling with the carp.

A change of approach

We had many takes from the far margin with Luke's runs drying up while Wayne's rods were still active. We both decided that it time for a change of tactics for Luke. We had baited our left and right margins with some balls of Marine pellet powder, mixed with pellets and chopped N-Gage XP. This is where pleasure and match anglers would be fishing, the carp would visit these areas, as often match anglers at the end of their matches throw unwanted bait in at their feet. When the wind dropped we were both seeing small patches of bubbles and carp showing on the baited area. It was decided for Luke to fish flat bed method as a one bite tactic, with one in the margin and one where the attempted zig rigs were.



Using a 12mm pink Northern special popup as a visible hookbait a supple Ultima Hyper skin Braid, size 8 long shank Arma point hook, Powercore leadcore and a flying back lead.

This proved to work well with several carp falling to these tactics. We had a manic night with 12 carp in less than 10 hours, having 6 carp sacked for the morning weigh in.



Results

We ended up second with 194lbs; this was a good result. We could not compete with the winners, as we were clearly fishing for the groups of fish that were passing through our swim. However the winning pair that fished on the back of the wind consistently caught throughout the match from start to finish. We both thoroughly enjoyed the event and felt that we had made the most of our peg which is crucial when fishing in match situations.