



REPORT ON THE 2003 LOCH STYLE INTERNATIONAL, THE 2003 TFEO INDIVIDUAL FINAL AND THE 2004 TFEO TEAM FINAL

By John Horsey

John Horsey, England's Team Captain in 2003, gives us the low-down on last year's Home International match on Chew Valley, the TFEO Individual Final, plus an insight into the TFEO Team Final to be held on both Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes.

The 2003 Loch Style International Chew Valley Lake.

Back in the Autumn of 2002, my 3rd place overall in the Loch Style National held at Chew Valley Lake, meant that I had qualified for the 2003 Spring International match – also to be held on Chew. Little did I realize then what the coming months had in store in the build-up to that Event!

We had a very strong team, consisting of several Chew Valley "regulars" and I was honoured to be appointed Captain of England for that match.

England's performances at Chew Valley both on the World and Home International stage, had been disappointing in recent years and I was determined to put this dismal run to an end. Wales would be a huge threat, as many of their team virtually fish Chew Valley Lake as their home water! Scotland have been the team to beat in recent years, having won 3 out of the last 4 International matches and winners on Chew for the previous two International matches. And if a big wind were to blow, the Irish would, as ever, be hard to beat.

The secret of success, I felt, was to ensure the entire team practiced regularly and hard. Thankfully, the entire squad were as keen as I was to secure Gold medals on Chew, so they all gave of their time with great enthusiasm. We felt that nymphs would be the key to success and during the weeks leading up to the match, these tactics produced thousands of trout. At times, we began to think that the fishing might be too easy!

We need not have worried. There were literally thousands of trout in the lake, but they all seemed to turn off the feed at the same time. In the week before the match, the entire England squad practiced hard on dead water, as well as on the more productive areas. This meant that by the time match-day arrived, we had virtually eliminated most of the 1200 acres of water in favour of 4 key areas. If we had overcast skies, then fish would rise across the middle of the lake from Wick Green to Denny Island and dry fly patterns such as Hoppers and Carrot Flies would work. We concentrated mainly on the wind lanes and scum lanes and at times, there were plenty of fish moving.

However, most of the time, the sun shone and a ripple covered the water; normally the kiss of death at Chew Valley! As soon as the sun appeared, we quickly switched to

medium sink lines and teams of flies such as a Coral Booby, an Orange mini lure and two Diawl Bach nymphs – that way we felt we had all the options covered. And it paid dividends!

Either Nunnery Point or the corner of Denny Island seemed to produce the odd fish and those were the tactics and areas we adopted for the match day.

Thankfully, our tactics proved right and we won the match, but it was a closely fought thing! England not only picked up the Gold Medals, but also took



JH with Captain's Winning Badge and the Graham Monroe Hall Trophy for top team.



England International champions

the top individual award, with Richard Cobbledick taking the coveted Brown Bowl with 4 rainbow trout for the top weight of 12lbs 6ozs.

As England Captain, the pressure was certainly "on" to get a good result and although 4 of the team "blanked", ours was the most consistent all-round team performance.

With only 16 fish weighing 43lbs 13ozs for the entire 14 man squad, things were as hard as I have ever known on Chew.

As it happened, the form book lived up to its reputation for a change, as Wales came second with 12 fish weighing 35lbs 12ozs, with Scotland third with 10 for 29lbs 5ozs and Ireland taking the Wooden Spoon with 10 fish for 27lbs 12ozs. However, Irish captain Tony Doherty did catch a 4lb 12ozs rainbow trout, which won him the trophy for the best fish of the day.

The top four English anglers; Richard Cobbledick, Frank Sumnall, myself and Andrew Gooding all carried forward to the Autumn International match fished at Loch Leven in Scotland where we won Bronze.

The 2003 TFEO Individual Final.

This year will be my 11th year as a Professional Fly Fishing Guide. Much of my time is spent afloat on Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes and I still thoroughly enjoy every minute!

However, it is fishing for my Country that really drives me, as I love the "cut and thrust" of competition fishing. I also fish plenty of club competitions, but for the last 8 years, I have organised and fronted two of the biggest fly fishing competitions in Europe.

The Todays Flyfisher European Open Individual and Team Championships



2003 TFEO Individual Champion Lee Henfrey being presented with keys to his Lexus car by John Horsey

attract over 2000 entries from anglers during the year and Qualifying Heats are held all over the UK.

Anglers travel to enter these Heats from as far afield as Italy, France, Belgium, Norway and the Czech Republic.

Last year, the Grand Final of the 2003 TFEO Individual Championship was held at Chew Valley Lake during late August. There were 100 qualifiers fishing and some of the top anglers in the World took place, including a World Champion, a European Champion, two European Silver and 2 European Bronze medal winners.

Lee Henfrey from Leicester emerged as the overall Champion for 2003, having finished as runner-up for the previous two years. Lee's prize was a fantastic Lexus RX 300 car worth over £40,000, which is his to keep for the entire year.

There are Regional Heats being held at Chew Valley again this season during May and one of the dates is designated as "Floating Line Only". Last season, the Heats were a sell-out, so book your place early this year to avoid disappointment.

Competitions are not only a great way to fish with new anglers and make new friends, but they are also a great way to learn new methods from some of the best in the business.

Although there are great prizes to be won, my main objective with the TFEO is to promote skilled fly fishing and encourage a spirit of camaraderie – that is why the event is universally hailed as "The friendly Championships".

The 2004 TFEO Team Final Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes.

For the past two years, the English National Final stages of the TFEO Team Championships have been held over 6 days at Chew Valley and regarded by all as a resounding success.

So much so, the International Final will this year be held over two days during late August on the Bristol waters. However, it will be a final with a difference, as we will be using

both Chew Valley and Blagdon Lakes. Four team members will fish at Chew and two at Blagdon each day and teams will be allowed to nominate those anglers.

We will be utilizing a points system to determine the eventual winners and this will work in a similar way to the World Championships. Here, points are awarded to individuals according to where they finish in the session i.e. 1 point for 1st place, 2 for 2nd and so on. The team with the least number of points at the end of all sessions is the winner.

As usual, there will be a Presentation Dinner in a Marquee on Woodford Bank following the final session and hopefully the interest generated by this unique Final will encourage plenty of teams to enter.

For more information on how to enter the Todays Flyfisher European Open Championships, contact John Horsey on 01761 490367 or email: tf eo@johnhorsey.co.uk
Full details of all heats and entry forms are available at www.johnhorsey.co.uk