

Against the World

by Mike Flynn

Well what an experience fishing the Atlantic ocean down in Portugal with all guns blazing we finally arrived at our destination some 48hrs later after leaving Wales, upon arrival at our place of stay the bait was the first matter to be resolved this was quickly loaded and put into our cool boxes, in readiness for our practice days fishing the weather wasn't what we had hoped "gorgeous sun" instead it seemed we had bought the British rain and cold and don't forget the wind with us (grrrrrrrr) loaded with mostly t-shirts and shorts was this the start of what was to come? We met up with our neighbours and rivals from the England team whom had arrived just ahead of ourselves, in these championships it is very important to have an edge therefore the need to practice was very important and with five days prior to the start this was going to be achievable or so we thought !!!!!!! But someone forgot to tell the weather, the same the beaches we were to fish were weeded out although grin and bear practice we did the next UK team to arrive was Scotland and the rivalry banter was well underway with various awards been issued for the plank of the day, my self been awarded this for the Brown bears of Portugal, but that's another story.

Soon the official ceremonies were underway our march through the town of Grandola was something else the crowds that had gathered made ourselves feel like kings and very welcome to a place I will certainly visit if not for the fishing but the peace.

The matches consisted of one official practice day followed by 4 match days, Scotland were the first team to flex their muscles and turned out an excellent performance by winning the day. We started well by being second in this official practice, had we got it right was on our minds.

The first match morning arrived and no matter how you control your approach, them stomach nerves do play a big part, as these matches are in my opinion one of the prized events of the year and am really proud to represent my country, upon loading our cars our coach Ivor Smith noted a distinct change in the weather no wind, no rain.

We arrived at our first match destination a beach called Comporta, and to say we were taught a lesson in garfish fishing was an understatement, the Portuguese sent out shock waves by nearly winning five Zones ending up 1st on the day followed by an excellent England performance well was this to be the writing on the wall was the after match discussions time would tell Dave Morrell was our top

man at this match.

The next match was held at a private venue unfished by the travelling nations the match did not go to plan as only a sprinkling of mullet were noted in the zones and our own star Alan Price found one of these despite the capture of many weavers we could not locate these bonus fish so it was back to the drawing board with the whole team locked behind closed doors armed with information our coach had secured our new rigs were to be put to test on the third match and if we were not to win then pride was very important.

We arrived at the next venue were conditions had deteriorated and the big Atlantic swell had started to roll in were the gars going to be present and it was a clear answer no we all did fairly well with our Mr price leading the way by winning the section in the last five minutes 2mullt 1 bream to go with the previously caught gar a weaver (remembering them words its not over till the fat lady sings)

My own performance was marred by the lack of them bonus (or should I say my misfortune too loose two fish in the surf on the previous days) fish as 4 weavers a bream were easily wiped out by single mullets

The early lead by the Portuguese team was slowly being eroded by England who were now becoming clear favourites.

The final day had arrived and all we had to fish for was our pride and a mid table finish, but on arrival at the beach the waves and rollers were breaking far out and conditions seemed bleak it ended up with only my self and Colin Richards managing to catch but some how Team England continued their outstanding performance securing another day win and again must congratulate Chris Clark, Ian Gold's, Paul Stevens, Bernard Westgarth, and finally Steve Allmark for what I feel was a top class performance.

I must comment on various remarks that were made in certain magazines about the distribution of grant aid, the cost to the individual anglers of our nation is immense and the grant aid merely takes the sting out of the tail. Thanks must go to Ultima for their support which was invaluable. To be able to use the best line and to be able to replace it as necessary, without worrying about the cost, was a great bonus.

Finally it was back to using size 2 hooks that look like gaffs in comparison and the UK match scene, roll on whiting bashing.

Mike Flynn
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