



EFSA Boat & Line Class Championships 2023 – Cobh, Co. Cork Ireland.

The 2023 EFSA Boat & Line Class Championships got underway in Cobh on Saturday 16th of September. The event had originally been scheduled for 2020 but was postponed due to Covid & rescheduled for 2021 which was also postponed for the same reason. The event was organised & run by EFSA Ireland in collaboration with Cobh Sea Angling Club.

Indicated numbers in 2020 were 80 to 100 competitors but with rising costs & a shortage of suitable accommodation due to the refugee crisis the entry number came down to 59 when the check in opened. 11 Sections had confirmed entries which were greatly appreciated.

The format for the event was 'Line Class' for the first 2 days & 'All Tackle' for the last 3 days. All 5 days results to count for the Boat Championship.

Sunday September 17th commenced with the mandatory Standing Committee meeting which was attended by delegates from 9 Sections. The Commodore Hotel was the venue for the Opening Ceremony at 16.00. A large attendance was addressed by EFSA Ireland Chairman George McCullough who welcomed all in attendance & thanked them for making the journey. He was followed by EFSA Ireland Hon. Secretary Warren Doyle who outlined the timelines & procedures for the week ahead.

EFSA President Marcus Wuest was then called upon to review the parade of National Flags after which he wished everyone well for the weeks fishing & then declared the Championships open.

Day 1 on Monday 18th September had the anglers assembled on Kennedy Pier in Cobh at 7.30am. The 9 chartered angling boats some of which travelled from Ports outside Cork Harbour – Youghal, Dungarvan, Kinsale & Union Hall - stood off while the crews were assembled. It had been intimated at the opening ceremony that fishing might possibly be confined to the large harbour for which Cork is famous. This was confirmed as conditions outside were deemed to be dangerous & would also be very uncomfortable. The area was being badly affected by the remnants of Atlantic Storm - Oliver.

Angling commenced at anchor at around 10.00am with a minimum size limit of 25 centimetres & mackerel not permitted. All anglers had to use the Tronix/HTO X8 20-pound (9kg) braid provided by the organisers. Bait supplied was mackerel & calamari squid. Bait fishing for fresh mackerel proved to be very hit & miss. As the day progressed many of the boats were seen moving around the harbour to find the fish.

Lines up after 6 hours fishing saw the boats unloaded by 18.00. Bad news greeted the anglers on return to port. The Boat Commodore in consultation with the skippers deemed it too dangerous to put to sea on Tuesday. Storm force gales were forecast with a 100% likelihood of treacherous

conditions on board. It was therefore announced that Day 1 result would be the result for the Line Class segment of the Championship.

The results' committee (Christy Cloak, George McCullough, Tommy Squires, Warren Doyle) had the results calculated & posted at 20.30 in The Commodore Hotel.

1st. Marcus Wuest (GER) 380 points, 66 fish – Gold Pin. 2nd. Petter Skudal (NOR) 263 points, 46 fish. Silver Pin. 3rd. Francis Couzinet (FRA) 238 points, 32 fish. Bronze Pin.

4th. Pat Condon (IRE) 205 points, 35 fish. 5th. Nico Opdebeeck (BEL) 174 points, 31 fish. 6th. Shay McDonnell (IRE) 164 points, 28 Fish. 7th. Paul Hart (ENG) 154 points, 24 fish. 8th. Didier Marest (FRA) 123 points, 18 fish. 9th. Wouter Van As (NED) 74 points, 11 fish. All 100% 10th Jim Presley (ENG) 159 points, 27 fish 84%.

Best Lady was Torunn Handeland (NOR).

Best Senior (over 65) was Pat Condon.

2 Person Team: 1st. Petter Skudal & Lars Hellum (NOR), 2nd. Nico Opdebeeck & Arjan Stelwage (NED), 3rd. Kevin Mackay (SCO) & Glynn Wright (SCO).

International Team: 1st. Ireland A – Pat Wright, Pat Condon, Shay McDonnell, Tommy Squires, Warren Doyle. 2nd. France A – Jean Pierre Coutauchaud, David Corday, Francis Couzinet, Simon Elgrishi, Didier Marest. 3rd. Norway A – Petter Skudal, Lars Hellum, Tor Arne Rygg, Torunn Handeland.

A total of 1,137 fish were recorded & returned alive on day 1.

Species recorded were: Lesser Spotted Dogfish, Bull Huss, Grey Gurnard, Thornback Ray, Whiting, Smoothound, Spurdog, Dab.

Longest fish was an 89-centimetre Thornback Ray for Christy Cloak (IRE).

Best Specimen was a 78-centimetre LSD for Warren Doyle (IRE)(105%)

Tuesday's weather turned out exactly as predicted & totally unfishable.

Day 3 had the anglers assembled on the pier at 8.00am. Weather conditions had not improved sufficiently to permit fishing outside the harbour, so we were once again confined. This was the start of the All-Tackle segment. The supplied bait was mackerel & ragworm. The size limit was reduced to 18 centimetres in the harbour.

Conditions were trying as the storm had not fully dissipated & the swell was variable throughout the day. At lines up many anglers were happy to be getting ashore.

Boat winners on Day 3 were: Torunn Handeland, Francis Couzinet, Shay McDonnell, Heiko Dreier (IRE), Lars Hellum, Pat Condon, Carl Julien (FRA), Petter Skudal, Simon Elgrishi (FRA).

There were 4 anglers on 200% after Day 3 (2): Petter Skudal, Francis Couzinet, Shay McDonnell, Pat Condon. Total number of fish caught & returned alive on fishing day 2 was 1,275.

Norway A had moved into pole position in the International Teams followed by Ireland & France.

Torunn Handeland was still best Lady however Shay McDonnell had risen to best Senior.

Day 4 (3) was delayed allowing the wind to dissipate further & to allow the boats to fish outside the harbour. The boats departed at 9.30 & fishing commenced at 11.00am at anchor.

Fishing was slow & the banker fish – wrasse, pollack & others did not show in their usual numbers. The storm had certainly disrupted the feeding pattern of fish in general. Fish numbers for boat winners were well down on anticipated figures.

Boat winners for Day 4 (3) were: Shay McDonnell, Jim Presley, Petter Skudal, Didier Marest, Piotrek Nowakowski (IRE), Warren Doyle, Heiko Dreier, Arjan Stelwage, Francis Couzinet.

3 anglers remained with maximum points – Petter Skudal, Francis Couzinet & Shay McDonnell.

Ladies, Seniors & International team positions remained the same as Day 3(2).

The number of fish caught & returned alive was 965.

The final day of competition saw the anglers looking forward to a better day's fishing & boats departed at 8.30am. Supplied bait was boosted by the addition of the squid left over after Day 2 was aborted. The Atlantic swell was still forecast at over 4 metres, so the boats were anchored inshore.

At days end at 16.00 anglers were happy to be making it ashore as the wind was building for the anticipated storm due in over the weekend.

Boat winners on Day 5(4) were: Carl Julien, Didier Marest, Shay McDonnell, Simon Elgrishi, Lars Hellum, Petter Skudal, Tor Arne Rygg, Francis Couzinet, Torunn Handeland.

There were 911 fish caught & released on fishing day 4.

Additional species caught since day 1 were: Conger Eel, Red Gurnard, Tub Gurnard, 3 Bearded Rockling, Red Mullet, Ballan Wrasse, Cuckoo Wrasse, Pollack, Coalfish, Pouting, Mackerel, Scad, Cod, Ling, Bass, Poor Cod, Dragonet, Plaice.

Total number of fish caught was 4,288.

The final results were posted at 18.15 & queries were answered in time for the Gala Dinner.

Anglers & guests were seated at 8pm for a superb meal which was very professionally served & enjoyed by all in attendance.

The presentation of awards took place immediately after the meal.

First up were the Line Class awards as listed at day 1. It was followed by the affixing of the highly sought after Pins which were applied by EFSA President Marcus Wuest. EFSA Ireland Chairman George McCullough applied the Gold Pin for Marcus.

The Boat Championship awards were then presented by EFSA President Marcus Wuest & EFSA Pins awarded to the top 3 individuals.

Final Results.

Individual.

1st. Petter Skudal – Gold Pin & Waterford Glass Vase.

2nd. Francis Couzinet – Silver Pin & Waterford Glass Bowl.

3rd. Shay McDonnell – Bronze Pin & Waterford Glass Bowl.

4th. Didier Marest.

5th. Torunn Handeland.

6th. Lars Hellum.

7th. Jim Presley.

8th. Carl Julien.

9th. Heiko Dreier.

10th. Warren Doyle.

Ladies.

1st Torunn Handeland. 2nd. Denise Viviers (RSA), 3rd. Wendy Strydom (RSA).

Seniors.

1st. Shay McDonnell, 2nd. Jim Presley, 3rd. Torunn Handeland.

2 Person Open Team.

1st. Petter Skudal & Lars Hellum.

2nd. Didier Marest & Carl Julien.

3rd. Torunn Handeland & Heiko Dreier.

4 Person Open Team.

1st. Didier Marest, Carl Julien, Petter Skudal, Tor Arne Rygg.

2nd. Francis Couzinet, Simon Elgrishi, Pat Condon, Heiko Dreier.

3rd. Joel Luyts, Nico Opdebeeck, Piet Buijk (NED), Arjan Stelwage.

Executive Drawn Team of 4.

1st. Andy Smith (ENG), Mark Robertson (SCO), Marcus Wuest, Francis Couzinet.

2nd. Piotrek Nowakowski, Louis Theron (RSA), Carl Julien, Shay McDonnell.

3rd. Hans De Vries (NED), Lars Hellum, Warren Doyle, Petter Skudal.

International teams.

1st. Norway A – Petter Skudal, Lars Hellum, Torunn Handeland, Tor Arne Rygg.

2nd. France A – Francis Couzinet, Simon Elgrishi, David Corday, Jean Pierre Coutauchaud, Didier Marest.

3rd. Ireland A – Pat Wright, Pat Condon, Shay McDonnell, Tommy Squires, Warren Doyle.

Species Category Medals.

Longest Ling: 56cm – Pat Wright

Longest Cod: 60cm – Thorir Sveinsson (ICE)

Longest Pollack or Coalfish: 51cm – Richard Russell (ENG)

Longest Flatfish: 89cm Ray – Christy Cloak

Most Unusual Fish: Red Mullet - Marcel Van Kolfshoten (NED)

Most Fish: Petter Skudal (162)

Best Specimen (% of National Specimen):

78cm LSD – 105% - Warren Doyle

120cm Bull Huss – 104% - Denise Viviers

48cm Ballan Wrasse – 100% - Arjan Stelwage

This was followed by the raffle. A very nice display of prizes was on display & all donors are sincerely thanked.

EFSA Chairman George McCullough then took the stage to bring proceedings to a close. He thanked everyone who had helped in any way to make the event the success that it was. He thanked the hotel staff for their hospitality during the week & the staff who had served the meal so professionally. He thanked the members of Cobh Sea Angling Club for their support & made special mention of Piotrek Nowakowski who organised the bait every day. He thanked the skippers & stewards for their professionalism during the event. He concluded by inviting a member of EFSA England to accept the Championship Flag for their running of the 2024 event at Weymouth. The flag was accepted by EFSA England representative Kim Bowden who proffered the invitation to all.

EFSA President Marcus Wuest was then called upon to bring proceedings to a close. He thanked EFSA Ireland & all competitors for making the event a memorable one. He concluded by wishing everyone safe travels home & looked forward to seeing everyone again in Weymouth in 2024. He then declared the Championships closed.

The organisers wish to offer their appreciation to the anglers who supported the Championships.

They also wish to thank their sponsors & supporters without whose help the championships could not have taken place.

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