Shin Open: Loch Shin July 2013

The Shin open is normally held 2 weeks after the wild trout challenge and as the name suggests is open to all fly fishers. The competition is sponsored by Scottish Sea Farms, who have sponsored this competition since 2011. Unlike the wild trout challenge the teams are not drawn from a hat and as a consequence pairs tend to be from the same club.

The teams representing Loch Achonachie were Lewis Ross & Neil MacRitchie, Okain McLennan & Doug McLurg, Derek Ritchie & Kenny MacKintosh and last but not least Ian MacPhail & Davie MacGregor. The day could not have arrived any worse for fishing with a clear blue sky and little or no wind. As always, the Lairg boys knocked up a good breakfast and some mammoth fried breakfast rolls were enjoyed by all. The gun went off at 10:00 sharp and the boats roared off in all directions. Some of the boats continued up through the narrows with the feeling that you may as well travel until a wind gets up. Among those that went up through the narrows were Ian MacPhail and Davie MacGregor. About a mile east of Fiag a breeze got up and the pair stopped and fished the north shore. Within an hour Davie had 5 keepers and Ian had 1.

At that point the breeze died leaving them and all the other boats looking out the least puff of wind. It was nearly 2 hours before any wind got up. Ian and Davie went over to the South shore to catch the wind and Davie continued to have a field day bagging another 7 keepers, Ian still only had the one. Of the other Achonachie boats, Lewis and Neil stayed east of the narrows and for the most part fished the south shore where Lewis had 5 keepers to Neil’s 2. The other 2 Achonachie boats had a few between them but nothing to write home about. At the weigh in it was fingers crossed as Davie MacGregor felt he was in with a chance. As it turned out the boy did good with a top bag of 12 trout for 6lb 8oz. 2nd was Hamish Chisholm from Invergordon with 9 trout for 4lb 9oz and 3rd was Lewis Ross with 5 trout for 2lb 8oz.

Well done Achonachie 2 out of the first 3. Davie was delighted to lift the Shin Cup and of course the £100 first prize. Again we have that master of the booby prize, Ian MacPhail who shared the dubious honor of the lightest bag with Kenny MacDonald from Golspie; both had 1 trout for 4½oz. However, not lacking in luck, Ian won the toss and walked off with the £20 booby prize. The heaviest fish was one of 12½oz caught by James Wilson from Alness. As always the Lairg boys knocked a top notch scoff which was followed by the raffle. At last, Derek Ritchie won something in the raffle. Everybody forgot what he won, but he won so who cares. Finally I would like to pass on our thanks to the Lairg AC for their hospitality and we all look forward to Shin next year.

**Lewis Ross: Competitions Secretary**