Wild Trout Challenge: Loch Shin July 2013

The wild trout challenge is a two day competition held on Loch Shin and hosted by the Lairg Angling club. This year there were 13 teams of 2 anglers per boat. The competition is sponsored by Clynlish distillery who, tend to be very generous with their free samples. Representing the club were Steve Dowds, Derek Ritchie, Brian Scobie and Davie MacGregor. All the teams were drawn with anglers from another area and a team that caught the eye was the pairing of Donnie MacBeth and Davie MacGregor.

Donnie, from Lochaber, has one this competition on 4 previous occasions and this pair looked strong. Another boat had the current European champion, Ali MacGillvery paired with the Tiger Woods of loch fishing, Billy Neil. A fried breakfast roll and a good dram of 14 year old Clynlish had the teams ready for the off. The starting gun was fired at 10:00 sharp and the boats roared up the loch. There was a strong southerly breeze blowing and the teams had to hug the south shore in order to get some calm water. Most of the boats peeled off early but all of the Fort William boys including Donnie and Davie pressed on up through the narrows to fish up at MacLeod’s bay or around the Fiag islands. Back at the club house both Ali MacGillvery and Donnie MacBeth had 11 keepers each with Donnie being 4 ounces ahead on 6lb 11oz. The rest were nowhere. Davie MacGregor weighed in another 5 which saw him and Donnie just in front of Ali and Billy for the best boat. There was a fair scoff of soup followed by stew and tatties and for sweet, custard and fruit. To end the day most of the gang headed for that famous Lairg pub, the Nip Inn, the excuse being that lubrication or comfort was in dire need. Day two arrived with cloudless skies but there was at least a westerly breeze.

Again, after more Clynlish and breakfast rolls the teams sped off at the sound off the gun. Donnie went back to Fiag but the pair soon realised that the whole area had been flogged during the previous day. They decided to move back down the north shore, picking up the odd keeper here and there. There were other boats on the South shore and there was a boat up in mid bay, maybe they were doing the business. With only 20 minutes left Donnie MacBeth had 4 keepers which he was sure was not enough for top rod but he would have the last cast just on the clubhouse side of Tirry bay. What a choice as he caught the best trout of the whole competition at 13½ oz. Davie MacGregor had 6 keepers for the day and hoped that his bag would help keep their snouts in front for the best boat. Back at the club house, the weigh in showed it to be a 2 horse race. Ali MacGillvery had 18 trout in total to Donnie MacBeths 16. Donnie however had better quality fish and his total weight of 9lb 11oz just pipped Ali who had a total aggregate of 9lb 6½oz. Third was Arthur MacDonald with 14 tout to 7lb 15oz. Davie MacGregor came 5th with 11 trout for 5lb 4½oz. The rest of the Achonachie team failed to trouble the judge. As Tiger Woods had a poor day Donnie MacBeth & our own Davie MacGregor easily won best boat with 27 trout, half an ounce short of 15lb.

There is always room for a booby prize and Brian Scobie was the clear winner with 1 trout that barely weighed in at 4oz. Well done Brian your miniature hip flask and dram of Clynlish was well deserved. Another good scoff finished off the weekend with all the Achonachie team, apart from Derek, winning prizes at the raffle. Finally our thanks go to all at Lairg AC for organising the event

**Lewis Ross Competitions Secretary**