

Wantage and Grove Aggregate Trophy Race for the title – Match 8

So far the commentaries have featured all the usual suspects on the W&G match scene but this time a new face came in and blew the competition away. You will have seen from the commentary for matches 6 & 7 that your correspondent “Super sec” was to fish Chadlington.

The gathering took place in Wantage town square at 6:45am, it was raining (it had been raining since about three o'clock), it rained all the way to Chadlington, it rained as we unpacked the gear from the cars, it rained for the draw, it rained as we tackled up, it rained for the first 5 hours of the match!

The rain caused everything to happen more slowly as people tried to keep themselves and various items dry, by the time we'd squelched through the mud to the pond side, and Bob and his pegging-elves had pegged the water, everything was running half an hour late, start was delayed to 9:30 and finish to 3:30. With the rain came a dramatic drop in temperature and the fishing was much harder than expected.

Danny brought a whole new emphasis to the meaning of “the expletive-laden sentence”, between you and me, gentle reader, I don't think fishing in the rain is to Danny's liking!

The winner (that's me – in case you didn't get the earlier reference) fished the feeder almost all day and had three grass carp with a few small skimmers and perch. The fishery rules are that grass carp can't be kept in nets, so each and every grass carp has to be acknowledged by anglers in adjacent swims and count 5lb each at the weigh-in. The smallest of the three I caught looked around 5lb, one was 7-8lb and one over 10lb, but 15lb was the weigh-in result of these 3 fish, add a few bits for a total of 16lb 1oz.

In reality, for the aggregate placings my intervention made little difference, it just meant that all the anglers in contention for the trophy got one fewer point than would otherwise have been the case.

Second was Bill Hailey with 13lb 5oz and third came Nathan Steele with 12lb 4oz, both weights consisting of a couple of small carp backed up by a few pounds of skimmers. Vicky Knowlson put in a creditable 11lb 9oz and our calamitous carp-catcher chairman Matt (managed to lose 4 carp, one hook-pull and three line-breaks) came fifth with 9lb 2oz, this was a big grass carp, one common and the obligatory skimmers.

The match-fishing brethren of W&G can breathe easy – that's the only match I'll fish this year so they won't be embarrassed by being beaten by a non-match man (using a rod and line, not a pole) again this year. For that pleasure they'll have to wait for Hordle next summer.

It was noted by all that the platforms were of plain wooden planks with no netting or anti-slip coating, this made them very slippery in the rain and unfortunately Johnny B came a cropper on peg 9, slipping over and breaking his pole in 3 places. The 8oz weighed in is no measure of his angling ability but more a reflection on the fact he spent at least 4 hours sitting in his car whilst the rest of us fished.

Watch this space for the next enthralling aggregate update, just remember, that now the best 8 from 10 results come into effect, anglers who fish 9 matches in the year can drop their worst result and anglers who fish all 10 can drop their worst 2.

