

COMPETITIVE ANGLING

WHEN WE FISH AGAIN

Best Practice for the safe resumption of angling competitions in England under COVID 19 restrictions

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SUPPORTED BY:



Salmon & Trout Conservation
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Our **When We Fish Again** guidelines have been amended to reflect further guidance issued by the Government on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation in England.

1

Running Competitions

- Subject to close season, owner and fishery specific restrictions, competitions will be permitted on all waters where social distancing guidance can be adhered to. This would include commercial fisheries, canals, rivers and lakes.
- On October 14 the exceptions to the 'rule of six' were tightened and it is vital that all competitions avoid any gatherings' of more than six persons at anytime during the match - ie at the draw for swims, at the weigh in or at the prize giving. Competitive fishing has an exception under the regulations meaning that fishing matches can continue as the law continues to permit sporting events and certain outdoor activities, provided conditions are met. These include full risk assessments* and taking reasonable precautions by following the appropriate national guidelines.
- All competitors will fish on allocated "pegs". It is the organisers responsibility to ensure that these pegs are appropriately spaced to ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times. Contact details of all attendees are to be kept for 21 days to assist the NHS Test and Trace process.
- *(a pro-forma risk assessment from Angling Trust for match organisers can be [downloaded HERE](#))

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Booking in payment of Pools / Entry money

- Anglers should "book on" to a competition as per the organiser's instructions, usually in advance by phone, email or online.
- Pools and peg fees should be paid as stipulated by the organiser. It is strongly recommended that cash transactions be avoided and payments made by bank transfer or Paypal.

3

Travel / Arrival at the venue

- Competitors should travel in accordance with current Government guidelines only.
- Please note that the previous travel exemptions for those in lockdown for participation in 'elite sports' are now suspended during the COVID Firebreak period in Wales and apply just to professional sports people and Olympic and Commonwealth Games athletes in England.
- The travel guidance for Tier 3 areas states: "you should try to avoid travelling outside the very-high alert level area you are in or entering a very-high alert level area, other than for things like work, education or youth services, to meet caring responsibilities or if you are travelling through as part of a longer journey".

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Travel / Arrival at the venue (cont.)

- Whilst this is advisory we all have a responsibility to fish safely and to adhere strictly to the rules and to follow the appropriate guidance for travel in the various areas. All major Angling Trust competitions will maintain records of those attending and their postcodes to assist with Track and Trace. These will be made available to the authorities if requested. It is up to individual anglers to be aware of the guidance in force at any time in their own areas.
- On arrival at the venue motorists should pay strict attention to signage and park under the instructions of the fishery/organiser.
- On leaving the vehicle, strict social distancing measures must be adhered to at all times maintaining a minimum of 2 metres apart. No physical greetings handshaking etc. to take place.
- Cafes and shops may now open but with strict protocols and spacing designated on the floor, which are in line with Government guidance. Book and collect facilities for refreshments are advised and may be available at some venues.
- On-site tackle shops should only open in line with Government guidance. Click and collect facilities may be available.
- Observe strict cleaning instructions when using on-site toilet facilities.

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The Draw

- The draw should be held in accordance with the organiser's pre-stated process to ensure social distancing is maintained and group sizes are limited. Anglers are asked to be considerate and responsible in helping to run a safe match.
- Wherever possible the draw should take place in advance of the event and then communicated to anglers by email, text, Whats App or other appropriate means to avoid any need for a gathering.
- In line with new guidelines on gatherings over six people, all draws carried out on the morning must be rolling and not in indoor headquarters. Good examples are draws that take place from an angler's vehicle (please consider local traffic implications). Anglers are to queue in cars at a car park and one-by-one approach a checkpoint where the organiser can draw their peg and potentially take pools etc. This draw must always comply with social distancing requirements and PPE is recommended for all involved (face masks, gloves and hand sanitiser).
- When a peg is allocated the angler should immediately make their way to the fishing location as normal.

5

Use of keepnets / Weighing in

- Keepnets are permitted for use in competitions and should be used in accordance with the local fishery rules. Check fishery rules for permission to use if pleasure fishing.
- At the end of the competition competitors will be expected to remain at their pegs until the weighing official arrives. Strictly no anglers are permitted to follow the scales.

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Use of keepnets / Weighing in (cont.)

- Ensuring safety and adherence to the social distance guidelines during the weigh-in is the responsibility of the organiser. Two weighing officials will be appointed, one to weigh the fish and the other to record the weights.
- In line with the evolving Government guidelines more options are now viable for a safe weighing process:

1. Self-supporting weighing systems

The use of a self-supporting weighing sling where the angler and the weighing official maintains a two-metre distance at all times. Anglers should remove their keepnet themselves and transfer the fish into the weigh sling without breaching social distancing guidance (weigh slings of a self-supporting design achieve this). The angler must then step away to allow the weighing official to come in and weigh the fish. The weighing official then calls the weight and the anglers must agree that they are happy with it. The weighing official then returns the fish to the water. The process is then repeated if several weighs are required. Social distancing guidelines (ie. 2 metre rule) should be obeyed at all times.

2. PPE (personal protective equipment) provision

It is recommended that everyone involved in the weighing process wear a face covering (shield or mask) and gloves, and hand sanitiser is provided for use after the weighing process. A one metre socially distanced weigh can then be achieved and all weighing equipment should be sanitised after use. A more traditional weighing process can be achieved with these provisions. However, anglers should still only touch their keepnet, and weighing officials touch the weighing equipment.

- Once weighed in the angler will pack up and return directly to their vehicle.
- Results for the match should always be available digitally to avoid the necessity for a prize giving scenario at the end of the match. Again, social media, emails or texts are suitable and fast ways to get the results distributed.

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Payouts / collection of winnings

- The match organiser should consider posting results online for competitors to view.
- Match organisers should consider paying winnings directly into the angler's bank account by electronic means.
- Cash transactions should be avoided wherever possible.
- Social distancing must be observed at all times.

HELP AND SUPPORT

We're here to help you get started fishing again safely

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