

COMPETITIVE GAME ANGLING

WHEN WE FISH AGAIN

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

Updated: 21/10/2020



#WHENWEFISHAGAIN



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Our **When We Fish Again** guidelines have been amended to reflect the latest Government guidelines 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, reservoirs, lakes and small stillwaters.
- On October 14 the exceptions to the 'rule of six' were tightened and it is vital that all competitions to 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.
- *(a pro-forma risk assessment from Angling Trust for match organisers can be [downloaded HERE](#))
- Competitors will fish on allocated "pegs" or designated boats. It is the organisers responsibility to ensure that these pegs are appropriately spaced and boats large enough 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.

2

Booking in payment of Pools / Entry money

- Anglers should "book" their place for a competition as per the organiser's instructions, usually in advance by phone, email or online.
- Permit and entry 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 anytime in their own areas.
- On arrival at the venue vehicles 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 the new guidelines on gatherings of 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 or boat is allocated the angler should immediately make their way to the fishing location as normal.

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Loch Style Fishing

- Organisers to allocate additional time to the event to facilitate a staged/phased start and end to the match to ensure social distancing on the jetty.
- Boats should be large enough to ensure the distance between anglers is a minimum of 2 metres.
- Organisers are advised to use a marked holding area around the jetty where boats can await instruction to dock and disembark.
- Anglers are required to be in possession of hand sanitizer and a face mask. Face masks should be considered by competitors/organisers and worn in accordance with organisers guidance.
- In the event of an issue with the engine, anglers should disembark to allow fishery staff to tend to the problem. All surfaces should be cleaned before the boat is handed over.

6

Scoring / Weighing in

- Anglers should not exchange score cards during the match.
- Measure & Release matches should be avoided to ensure social distancing and competition integrity is maintained.
- At the end of the competition, competitors will be expected to follow the organiser's instructions for weighing in or returning score cards ensuring that social distancing guidance is adhered to at all times. Weighing officials should consider the use of gloves and masks as a precaution and maintain social distancing measures at all times. Hand sanitiser should be used after each competitor's fish are weighed.
- Where competition rules stipulate Catch & Keep as the method of scoring, an appointed match official should weigh all fish to ensure social distancing is maintained. The angler would be required to place the fish into a vessel and step back to allow the match official to collect and weigh the catch. The match official should then step away to allow the angler to collect the fish from the vessel and immediately vacate the weigh area. The angler is responsible for the removal of the fish.
- Once weighed in or having returned score cards the angler will 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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