

COMPETITIVE SEA ANGLING

WHEN WE FISH AGAIN

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

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#WHENWEFISHAGAIN



SUPPORTED BY:



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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

- Shore and boat competitions will be permitted where they can comply with government guidance on social distancing.
- 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 and officials should follow government guidance and self isolate if they, or a member of their household, display Covid-19 symptoms.
- Government guidance for social distancing must be complied with at all times.
- Pegged Shore Matches: - Competitors must fish on allocated "pegs".
- Roving Shore Matches - Competitors must self-regulate and ensure they are compliant at all times with social distancing guidance.
- Boat Matches - Competitors must fish within their allocated area of the boat.
- It is the organiser/skipper's responsibility to ensure that pegs or boat positions are appropriately spaced to ensure that at least 2 metres distance between anglers 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 on" to a competition as required by the organiser's/skippers , usually in advance by phone, email or on-line.
- Entry fees and Pools should be paid as required by the organiser. It is strongly recommended that cash transactions are avoided and payments made by bank transfer or Paypal.

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Travel / Arrival at the venue

- Competitors must travel in accordance with current government guidelines.
- 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".
- 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, drivers should pay strict attention to signage and park under the instructions of the club/organiser/local authority.
- On leaving the vehicle, comply with social distancing guidance 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, and are in line with Government guidance.. Book and collect facilities for refreshments are advised and may be available at some venues.
- Observe strict cleaning instructions when using clubhouse or on-board 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 is allocated the angler should immediately make their way to the fishing location or boat position as normal.

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Small Boat / Charter Boat

- Boats should be large enough to provide a minimum distance of 2 metres between anglers at all times to ensure compliance with social distancing.
- If it is not possible to maintain a 2 metre distance between anglers and the second person is not from the same household, organisers shall stipulate a maximum of 1 competitor per boat
- Anglers are required to be in possession of hand sanitiser and a face mask. Face masks to be worn at angler discretion.

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Retention of fish / Weighing in

- At the end of the competition, competitors will be expected to follow the organisers instructions for weighing-in or returning score cards, ensuring that social distancing guidance is complied with at all times. Match officials should consider the use of gloves and masks as a precaution.
- To minimise gatherings boat match organisers may wish to allocate post-match time slots for owners/anglers to present their fish to match officials for weighing.
- Ensuring safety and adherence to the social distance guidelines during the weigh-in or recording of results is the responsibility of the organiser.
- **Catch & Release Matches:** Where stewards are available it is recommended that anglers place their catch in a bucket and allow the stewards to measure and record the fish on the score cards. The stewards will then release the fish. Stewards should send the score results to match organiser by text or a messaging service or place score cards into a box/container. In charter boat matches, anglers call species and angler number and the skipper verifies the catch from a safe distance and allocates fish points as per the organiser's points system and the angler returns their fish to the water.
- Where no stewards are available it is recommended that anglers take their catch to the next peg and present their catch to the angler for verification ensuring social distancing at all times. The angler records the weight/length of their catch on the card. At the end of the match the angler should immediately draw a line and sign under their last recorded catch then present their card to the angler on the next peg for verification, not using the same pen. The angler should then send their score card to the organiser or post score cards into a box/container. For small/private boat matches with 1 angler per boat, organisers may wish to run the match based fully on trust in regards to scoring/results or use technology to record photographs which can then be used to calculate results.

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Retention of fish / Weighing in (cont.)

- **Catch, Retain & Weigh Matches:** Where competition rules stipulate Catch & Keep as the method of scoring the match, an appointed official should weigh all fish to ensure social distancing is maintained. The angler would be required to place 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. Hand sanitiser should be used after each competitor's fish are weighed. Once weighed-in or score recorded, 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 within a specified period of time 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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