



BRITISH CARP ANGLING CHAMPIONSHIPS (BCAC) RULES – AS OF MARCH 2026

DEFINITIONS

Organisers: The British Carp Angling Championships (BCAC) are organised as a partnership between the Angling Trust, David and Jo Barlow, and with support of Carp Team England. The Organisers have absolute control and discretion over the competition, the rules, and any amendments to those rules. Any changes made will be published and promoted on the BCAC pages on the Angling Trust website and via Angling Trust Competitions Facebook page.

Officials: Any person appointed as such by the organisers such as the BCAC National Organiser, Head Marshals, and Marshals.

Competitor: Any angler accepted for entry into the tournament by the organisers.

Pair: Two anglers fishing together and registered as a pair.

Qualifiers, Semi-Finals, and Final: The three stages of the BCAC competition.

1. ENTRY

1.1 Entry to the BCAC competition will be by way of ticket purchases through the Angling Trust website – anglingtrust.net

1.2 Entry to each Qualifier is £500 per Pair, or £400 per Pair if BOTH anglers in the Pair are Angling Trust Members. There will be two separate tickets available for each Qualifier – one each for Members (£400) and Non-Members (£500).

1.3 Competitors may buy tickets for as many of the Qualifiers as they wish with payment in full securing their entry. Successful applicants will receive a confirmation email once their purchase has been completed.

1.4 Should the Pair qualify, they will not be able to fish further Qualifiers, and any remaining tickets they possess will be refunded in full.

1.5 Refunded tickets will be put back on general sale on the Angling Trust website on a first-come-first served basis. The availability of tickets will be highlighted on the Monday following a Qualifier.

1.6 Tickets are not transferable between anglers. All ticketing must be done through the Angling Trust website.

1.7 The organisers reserve the right to refuse entry, cancel or change the dates of any event at their discretion and will share any changes via the Angling Trust Competitions website and Facebook pages.

1.8 Anglers between 16 and 18 years old on the day of the Qualifier will be able to take part in the BCAC but must fish with a parent or guardian as part of their Pair. Anglers under 16 will need to apply for a Young Angler Exemption certificate via the Angling Trust Competitions website and, if the Exemption is granted, must also fish as part of a Pair with a Parent or Guardian.

2. EVENT FORMAT - QUALIFIERS

2.1 There will be nine BCAC Qualifiers run in 2026, running from March to July.

2.2 Each Qualifier will be of 48 hours duration. Draw and fishing times will be dependent on the host fishery and will be advertised on the tickets for each Qualifier.

2.3 Qualifiers will consist of either 12, 16, or 24 Pairs, depending on the host venue.

2.4 Each qualifier will be split into sections of four Pairs. The sections will be based on the first four best pegs as Section A, the second best four peg as Section B, and the third best four pegs as Section C etc.

The Qualifier/number of sections breakdown is as follows:

- Qualifiers of 12 Pairs = 3 sections = 3 Pairs go through to Semi Finals
- Qualifiers of 16 Pairs = 4 sections = 4 Pairs go through to Semi Finals
- Qualifiers of 24 Pairs = 6 sections = 6 Pairs go through to Semi Finals
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The winner of each Section will qualify for one of three semi-finals; therefore 36 Pairs will win through to the semi-final stage.

3. EVENT FORMAT - SEMI-FINALS

3.1 There will be three BCAC Semi-Finals in July 2026.

3.2 Each Semi-Final will be of 48 hours duration. Draw and fishing times will be dependent on the host fishery and will be advertised on the invite tickets for each Semi-Final.

3.3 Semi-Finals will consist of 12 Pairs and will be split into sections of four Pairs. The sections will be based on the first four best pegs as Section A, the second best four peg as Section B, and the third best four pegs as Section C etc.

3.4 The winner of each Section will qualify for the AT-BCAC Final; therefore a total of nine section-winning Pairs in the Final.

3.5 There will also be three Wild Card Pairs in the final. These will be made up of the three Pairs with the highest aggregate weights – excluding the section winners – from each Semi-Final. Therefore, 12 Pairs will compete in the BCAC Grand Final.

3.6 In 2026, we will stage Semi-Final 'A' on Turner's Lake at Embryo Norton Disney and two Semi-Finals (B and C) on the same weekend at Barston Lakes. At Barston, the lake will be split with Semi-Final 'B' on the Golf Course Bank and Semi-Final 'C' on the River Bank.

4. EVENT FORMAT - FINAL

4.1 There will be 12 Pairs in the Final – nine section-winning Pairs and the three Pairs with the highest, non-section winning aggregate weights from each semi earning a Wild Card invite each.

4.2 The draw for the final will be an out of the bag draw. The draw format will be the following: The Head Marshall will place 12 canisters with the names of the 12 Pairs into a draw order bag/box.

The Head Marshall or appointed Official will draw out one canister at random, open it, and read out the names – this will be the first Pair to draw a swim.

One of the anglers from the Pair will come forward and select a ball from the swim draw bag/box.

Once that Pair's swim has been drawn and recorded by the Head Marshall, the angler who has just drawn will be asked to pick a canister from the draw order bag/box and hand it to the Head Marshall/Draw Official who will open it and read out the names. This will be the next Pair to draw from the swim bag/box. The process will be repeated until all the Pairs and swims have been drawn.

4.3 There will not be any sections on the final. The Pair with the highest winning weight will be the Champions, second best weight will be second, and third best weight takes third.

4.4 Based on a full sell out of 144 Qualifier tickets, the prize fund will comprise £16,000 in the final - £10,000 to the winners, £3,000 to second and £2,000 to third. There will also be prizes of £500 each to the biggest common and biggest mirror caught during the Qualifiers, Semi-Finals, or Final.

5. TIMINGS AND DRAWS

5.1 Competitors must arrive at the fishery and register themselves no later than 08.30am on the morning of the draw (unless stated otherwise prior to the event).

5.2 Competitors must attend the draw in person, which will take place in the event HQ at 09.00am on the morning of the competition (unless stated otherwise prior to the event).

5.3 Any pair not having at least one member present at the start of the draw will be excluded from the draw and may be excluded from the competition and will only be allowed to take up a remaining swim. No refunds will be given for exclusion for any reason.

5.4 When all Pairs have registered, their names will go into an individual canister and put into a draw box. A draw official/Head Marshal will draw out the canisters to determine the order of drawing swims.

The allocation of swims for Qualifiers will be by way of a watercraft draw whereby the first Pair to be drawn shall have first choice of swim, the second Pair drawn shall have the second choice and the draw will continue until the last Pair and the last remaining swim has been chosen. Once a swim number has been stated to the organisers by the competitors the choice is deemed final.

The allocation of swims for the Semi-Finals and Final will be via a traditional 'out of the bag' draw where anglers will come up in their draw order to pick a random swim from the draw box. The decision of the Head Marshal conducting the draw is final.

5.5 All competitors must be in possession of an Environment Agency Rod Licence which will be checked at registration and may be requested during the competition by Environment Agency officers. Anyone not producing evidence of a valid rod licence upon request will be excluded from the competition.

6. FISHING

6.1 Anglers can only fish from the confines of the swim they have drawn, and each competitor must set up their rods and accommodation within the boundaries authorised by the officials. All angling activities - apart from the use of distance sticks - must be done within this area.

6.2 Competitors must not cast outside the limits of their swim. The limits of each swim will be marked on the lake map provided before the draw. Any disputes as to the competitors casting outside the area must be reported immediately to the Marshals. Marshals have the discretion to request that competitors re-cast their rods as and when directed and such request must be complied with.

6.3 At the sound of the first horn, competitors may commence plumbing and baiting of the swims. One hour later upon hearing the horn sound a second time, anglers may cast in their baited hook (changes to this will be decided upon at the draw).

6.4 All baiting up is from the swim only. There will be no baiting up by any means other than hand, throwing stick, bait rocket, spoon, or catapult. Free baits may be attached by PVA to the rig.

6.5 Wading or swimming to bait up will not be permitted. Bait boats and long handle baiting spoons are not allowed.

6.6 Competitors will be permitted to use a maximum of four rods per pair unless otherwise stated by the organisers and must cast and bait their own rods, and play/land their own fish. No assistance shall be allowed from any person other than a member of that competitors Pair.

In the event that an angler is fishing the event on their own, they will only be permitted to use the usual number of rods permitted for that venue.

6.7 All fish caught must be reported as soon as possible to the Marshals. Each fish must be witnessed by at least one marshal or one marshal and one competitor in the event that the

parties are known to each other or work for the competition as an owner, organiser or Marshal (other than the captor or their team mate).

6.8 Each fish must be weighed on the official equipment of the Marshals, or it may be excluded from the results. Please do not return fish to the water before they have been photographed. Any photographs must be taken by the side of the peg marker and include the peg number, fish and captor.

6.9 In the unlikely event of a Marshal being unable to immediately weigh and witness a captured fish it MAY be placed in a retention sling or net for holding until such a time as a Marshal is available. Retained fish must be secured as fish lost prior to the weighing are the responsibility of the competitor and will not count towards the final results.

6.10 Competitors are required to possess their own retainers. In the event of multiple captures, retainers will be required to hold fish until weighing. They will not be provided by the organisers.

6.11 The official weight will be that which is recorded by the Marshal following the weighing procedure by the officials using the official equipment.

6.12 Hooked fish should be landed without interfering with other competitor's lines or they may be omitted from the final result. Any competitor who is aggrieved by another competitor's hooked fish moving his lines or disturbing his presentation must make a formal complaint to the Marshals as soon as is reasonably practical, ideally within 30 minutes of the incident.

The complaint will be heard by the Head Marshal who will make a decision as to whether to allow that fish to count in the final results. The Head Marshal's decision will be final.

6.13 Only event officials, competitors, registered runners, accredited press members, and Marshals are permitted to be within the boundaries of the swim, to bivvy up on the banks, or stay in the competition area after the hours of darkness unless authorised by the organisers.

Visitors must stay outside of the swim boundaries at all times. Runners are permitted within the bivvy areas but cannot touch any of the fishing equipment. A runner can only assist with drinks, food, and helping a Marshal with weighing the fish. Any runner witnessed engaging in fishing activity will be asked to leave the competition venue and the Pair will be disqualified.

6.14 Should any competitor wish to leave their swim for any reason whatsoever they must ensure that their team mate holds the appropriate number of rod licences to allow the use of four rods. If the team mate does not hold such licence the competitor leaving the swim must reel their rods in and their baited hooks must be removed from the water.

6.15 If a venue allows wading you will be permitted to enter water to a maximum distance of 4 metres from the bank. If the host venue rules state no wading then you will not be allowed into the water. No swimming is allowed.

6.16 Boats, remote control bait boats, drones or other unmanned aerial vehicles, castable echo sounders or fish finders of any kind or similar items are prohibited.

6.17 All lines must be cast into the water from the bank using a fishing rod and reel. Each line may only have one hook attached. Fishery rules will apply for hook types and sizes allowed.

6.18 Each team shall be permitted to use up to four rods and baited hooks in the water at any time and have a further two rods per person in reserve set up and ready to use. Two plumbing and two spod rods per pair are allowed in addition to the baited rods. Any Pair using more than

the authorised number of baited rods will be immediately disqualified from the competition. Broken down rods (without hooks) can be stored at the back of the swim.

6.19 Once used, plumbing and spod rod lines must be removed from the water. Unethical use of the spod/marker line may result in disqualification.

6.20 Fish must be played and landed within 4 metres along the bank of their peg marker. Competitors are not permitted to wade or walk down the bank to land fish unless authorised to do so by an official.

6.21 If a fish is deemed snagged, a boat, if available, may be launched into the water from the competitors swim and the line retrieved without harm to the fish. Only fishery officials/BCAC officials are allowed to enter the boat and may take such items with them as they feel will assist in the job.

The rod and competitors must stay on the bank and the fish, if freed, must be played and landed from the bank. The boat rule may only be applied twice per pair per event. In the event of it being required to be used more than twice, any additional fish will not count towards scores under any circumstances, and the competitors will be advised to alter their angling practices.

In the event of a fish becoming irretrievably snagged the boat rule may, where practical, be applied. This will be at the discretion of the event organiser.

If you wade out more than 4 metres to land a fish the 'boat rule' will be applied, after the 2nd fish any further fish needed to be landed by wading will be disqualified from the results.

6.22 Only Leather, Common, Mirror, Ghost Carp, Koi, Grass Carp, and F1 carp over 5lb in weight will count in the competition.

6.23 For a fish to count in the competition it must have been hooked squarely in the mouth or within 2 cm of the mouth. Foul hooked fish will be excluded and shall be returned to the water unregistered.

6.24 The sounding of a horn will signify the end of each competition whereupon competitors must immediately withdraw their lines from the water. Any fish hooked before the final horn sounds must be landed within 10 minutes of the end of the competition or it will be excluded from the final results.

6.25 The competition shall be decided on total weight with the Pair having the greatest weight in each section being declared the winners. In the event of a tie, the pair with the most fish will be declared the winners. If the result is still tied, the pair catching the biggest fish will be declared the winner. If there is still a tied position then the 'fastest fish' rule applies and the angler that landed the fish first will be declared the winner.

6.26 In the unlikely event that an insufficient number of fish are caught during an event to fill the qualifying places or that the fish caught still cause a tiebreaker situation, the competitors shall take part in a 'cast off' which shall involve a test of casting accuracy. The Pair judged as being the most accurate shall be classed as qualifiers.

6.27 Should a match need to be cut short in duration for reasons beyond the organisers control, the following will apply. If the match is beyond half way then the result at the time the match is cut short will stand. If the match is less than half way through then a cast off will be held to determine the qualifying position.

7. BAITS

7.1 Bait restrictions are only imposed based on the rules of the host fishery and all competitors must abide by fishery rules in terms of bait types and limits.

For clarification, some fisheries prohibit the use of maggots and worms. Maggots are defined as any non-aquatic fly or beetle larvae either dead or alive, in any stage of its lifecycle. This includes maggots, pinkies, squats, casters, and all derivatives.

Worms include all variations of earthworm and derivatives, including the 'soil' they are grown in, and all marine worms including lugworm and ragworm and similar.

All bait used during the competition should comply with The Feed Hygiene Regulations and Animal By-Product Regulations.

7.2 The organisers retain the right to search all competitors' tackle or vehicles to combat any form of cheating or rule breaking. Anglers found cheating will be banned for life from the British Carp Angling Championships.

Fishery rules apply unless otherwise amended to for the purposes of the event by the fishery manager / organiser. Please make yourselves aware of fishery rules and adhere to them.

8. CONDUCT

8.1 All competitors must behave in a courteous manner at all times showing respect to fellow competitors, Marshals, fishery officials, and members of the public.

8.2 Use of foul and threatening language, excessive consumption of alcohol and/or use of recreational drugs will not be tolerated and will result in disqualification. The Angling Trust are partners with UK Anti-Doping, and their Clean Sport policies and practices will apply to the BCAC competition. For more information go to ukad.org.uk

8.3 If any competitor wishes to make a complaint about the conduct or practice of another competitor they must do so to their Marshal within 30 minutes of any alleged infringement taking place.

Any competitor wishing to challenge the results of an event or a decision made by a Marshal at an event must do so to the Head Marshal within 1 hour of the end of the competition and must make a formal written challenge/appeal to the Angling Trust Head of Competitions within 24 hours of the event concluding. The appeals procedure will then apply, and the result will be provisional until the outcome by the adjudicating panel. The appeals procedure will be notified to all concerned parties as appropriate.

9. MEDIA

9.1 Competitors must comply with requests from accredited media members at all times regarding media coverage. Accreditation for media professionals must be applied for a minimum of one week before the date of the event via the Angling Trust Head of Competitions – steve.fitzpatrick@anglingtrust.net

9.2 Anglers will be required to show respect to media gathering individuals and sponsors and promote the event in a positive manner if they chose to create content on their own social media pages.

9.3 Images and video of anglers competing in the BCAC may be used for event coverage and promotional media, including via sponsors, across multiple platforms. By purchasing a ticket for the BCAC you agree to the terms of our media usage policy.

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