

NATIONAL ANGLING AWARDS



MAN FROM NOWHERE

Modest Jon Whincup is more than a bit good...

BEFORE 2016 you may only occasionally have heard of Jon Whincup on the match scene – but back then the Peterborough angler was still to win two of the UK's biggest titles, banking £95,000 in the process. And now he's been voted Match Angler of the Year by Angling Times readers in this year's prestigious awards.

The 42-year-old postal worker is a bit of an unknown in comparison to the likes of Alan Scotthorne, Steve Ringer and others, but those who have seen Jon develop from a youngster on the local scene into a key member of the mighty Essex County side and then go it alone

Well, wouldn't you look happy if you'd just won £95,000?



on the individual front won't be surprised at the big man's recent success.

In a heady two months this summer, Frenzee/Bait-Tech-backed Jon took the £70,000 Maver Mega

Match This title and then added £25,000 by winning the Parkdean Masters at White Acres. Add to that the Guru Festival title at the same venue in the spring and it's been a profitable year!

Polling well over 60 per cent of the vote, Jon is a worthy winner to round off what is fair to call a breakthrough year for him.

As he lives just a few miles from the Angling Times offices, we thought it only fair to invite him in and get to know a little more about the man who won almost 100K from two matches!

AT: Let's get some background on you, Jon. How did you start out in match fishing?

JW: I started fishing matches with Market Deeping Juniors, who were just a few miles from where I lived. We used to go to the River Folly and Welland, plus Maxey Pits, and from there I graduated to joining Peterborough's junior team. This let me fish bigger events such as the Junior Nationals and when I got too old, I then fished club matches for local work sides including Molin's, APV Baker and Baker Perkins. This was on the River Nene and the drains around Peterborough.

AT: You then stepped up to fish for the main Peterborough side. Was this a big change?

JW: Not really because the venues we fished in the leagues were ones I was familiar with, and I knew most of the older anglers in the team, so I got on well with them. I fitted in well and had some good results, and I remember we finished second in the Angling Times Winter League final in 1997 behind Essex County on the River Trent.

AT: Essex County – now there's a team that were to play a big part in the next stage of your career.

JW: Absolutely. I used to fish the same venues like the Welland in Spalding and the Old Nene at March with Wayne Swinscoe, who was then the Essex

captain, and I always used to joke that I would fish for them one day. I remember that I was in the pub after work one day, around 2003 I think, and I got a call from Mark Sawyer at Van Den Eynde asking if I would like to join Essex. I said yes immediately.

AT: Presumably it was another learning curve to get on, as much of the fishing was on canals?

JW: It's fair to call it a big change as I was suddenly fishing canals and big reservoirs, a world away from the drains around Peterborough. Once again, though, I fitted in well, bided my time and took my chances to fish when they came.

AT: And then it all came crashing down when Essex disbanded in 2007.

JW: That was a shock and put me in a kind of limbo. I didn't really want to fish for a smaller team so I thought 'well, I'll fish on my own for a bit and see how it goes'. That meant getting back on the drains and rivers but I also began to visit Decoy Lakes more regularly.

AT: There was then a distinct leaning towards commercials. Why was that?

JW: Simply because the big matches on rivers and drains weren't there unless you fished in a team. I made the decision to knuckle down at Decoy, learn all about carp and take it from there. Plus, Decoy was on my doorstep so there was little travelling involved! I still went to Ireland in the closed season with my mates for the festivals and enjoyed it, but it simply filled a gap in the year.

AT: There comes a time when every match angler takes the plunge into fishing for big money. When was this for you and why did you decide to go for it?

JW: That would have been around five years ago when I went to White Acres for a festival for the first time and shortly afterwards, the Maver Mega Match This began. Suddenly, there was a lot of money to be won and on commercial fisheries too so the appeal was obvious. I guess the change came about because I got stuck in a bit of a rut locally and thought 'I have to do a bit more than this'. I was also sponsored by Frenzee at this stage and felt that I





Jon Whincup – he's now the one to beat!

owed their generosity and support something more substantial.

AT: So when did the breakthrough come for Jon Whincup?

JW: The Maver Festival at White Acres in September 2015. I'd made it an aim of mine to win a White Acres Festival and after coming close a few times, I finally did it. That was a good year, thinking about it, as I made the Match This Final at Larford as well.

AT: And that leads us on to 2016 and that crazy summer. Could you ever have predicted the two wins?

JW: I suppose you go to win, so I could say that I achieved what I set out to do, but I never expected to win Match This and the Parkdean. Winning the Guru Festival would have done me. Thankfully, I qualified early but then there was the change of final venue from Larford to Hayfield Lakes.

Part of me wanted the final to stay at Larford as I'd qualified from there twice and got on well with it, but Hayfield was my type of fishing, I suppose, catching big carp on relatively straightforward methods and baits, and I fancied it just as much, I guess.

Looking back, I think I can safely

say that I drew the right side of the lake in the final and for the first four hours of the match I wasn't fazed at all but in the final 60 minutes I went a little bit to pot. Jamie Hughes was applying pressure and I was losing fish.

I always felt I had enough of a lead, but the enormity of the situation slowly crept up on me. Winning that was tremendous, and I was so happy. More importantly, it sent me off to White Acres in September with a lot of confidence.

AT: So what of the future? Fish O'Mania perhaps?

JW: Definitely, and back to White Acres and Match This. Why not? Much of my fishing will still be local at Decoy but I've also just started coaching and that's going well (visit www.jonwhincup.co.uk) so things are busy.

I'm also tempted to pay March on the Old Nene a visit, as I used to do well on there and I guess I do miss it when I read the results and 30lb of roach is winning. I do know one thing, though – I won't be getting back into team fishing any time soon!

IT'S been another good year for former winner Steve, as he earned individual and team silver in the World Feeder Champs with England, won the inaugural Feeder Fest event on Ireland's Inniscarra Reservoir and came third overall with brother Phil in the World Pairs



HIGHLY COMMENDED
Steve Ringer



GOLD

IT'S DAIWA DORKING!

FOR all their dominance on the international scene, when it comes to the World Club Champs the various sides that have represented England have never quite managed to take gold – Starlets, Barnsley and Dorking all returning home empty-handed.

All that changed in one glorious weekend in San Marino in July 2016 when Daiwa Dorking finally showed their mettle to become champions, joining Essex County who won back in the 1980s, as the only English sides to have won the illustrious title.

They were utterly dominant in doing so against the best that mainland Europe had to offer. A team made up of William Raison, Des Shipp, Simon Willsmore, Callum Dicks, Darren Davies and Lee Edwards, managed by Steve Sanders, won both days on the Ostellato Canal, finishing on 23 points, four in front of Italian locals and red-hot favourites Lenza Emiliana Tubertini.

"To be the first English club to win after so many years and many near misses is a tremendous achievement," Steve said. "We



TEAM OF THE YEAR

Daiwa Dorking

were third a few years back but this is the one we have so badly wanted. We've won everything back home and this was the one missing from the trophy cabinet.

"Local teams are hard to beat at any level of international competition, especially in Italy, but the team were awesome, professional and full of confidence.

"It was also a fantastic physical performance. In the 10-minute prebaiting period we fed a crazy amount comprising 12 litres of groundbait made into 17 balls and thrown in, then six more cupped in, topped off with 20 balls of leam potted in all at 13m!

"Doing that in near-40-degree heat was no mean feat."

HIGHLY COMMENDED Tri-Cast Weston Team Wales

SUCCESS for the Welsh national team has been thin on the ground of late, but the principality's anglers finally scored gold in the European Championships, conquering Holland's Lage Vaart Canal and a strong line-up to be crowned champions.

Andy Johnstone's team relegated Drennan Team England into second, scoring 32 points over the weekend to finish four in front of their neighbours. The Welsh plan had them fish around 7m out with bloodworm and joker to catch perch and an odd roach after priming their 13m bream line.

"We're so, so happy to win as it gives us something to show for all the money and time that we and



SILVER

our sponsors have invested.

"Some of the lads in the team have been fishing the World and Euro Champs for 20 years and never tasted anything like this. There were tears on the podium and afterwards too!" Andy said. "It's a tremendous achievement for Welsh match fishing as we are a small nation with not many anglers to pick from and not much funding. I really couldn't ask all those involved for any more."