

# Kerry's Way

*This month we take a look at Lee Kerry's latest exploits in the Winter League semi-final. Can he and his Ultimate Barnsley Blacks team qualify for the final? Read on to find out...*

## Woodland Lakes

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VENUE FILE

## KERRY'S WAY

I like to be involved in big angling events all year round. It is the success and, I suspect, the fear of failure that drives me on in these situations and makes me work harder to achieve good results.

The first 'big' event that I was involved in in my match angling career was the Winter League team championship, now run by the Angling Times. This competition will always occupy an important place in my angling calendar and this year is no different.

After six rounds of our local league, the team managed to qualify for a place in the Northern semi-final at Woodland Lakes, near Thirsk. I was looking forward to having a look at the venue from a team point of view because previously I have only ever gone there for individual matches, where a positive approach for carp is really the only option.

With the semi-final taking place in the middle of March, I felt that practising in the depths of winter was unnecessary, so as the evenings started to get lighter I booked into a couple of open matches. With a month to go before the big match, team captain Glen Lawrence asked me to take the reins for the semi-final due to his unforeseen work commitments. Even if it is just for this one match I was honoured to be asked and jumped at the chance to captain the side.

Obviously as stand-in captain I firstly wanted to make sure I caught a few fish to get an understanding of the venue. There were five lakes in for the semi-final. Despite all being very similar in appearance, the fishing can be quite different.

The first practice match saw me draw Peg 10 on Kestrel. This lake had been particularly hard for catching carp recently but was probably the most prolific for silver fish. I knew I didn't

have a chance of getting into the main frame, so it was time to try to sort out some tactics for the team.

Catching carp on these lakes

is often done using a rod and line so part of my pre-match preparation involved getting some rods ready. My tip rods were both 10ft Mini carp rods. The first had a 15g Preston Inline Method feeder free running to a Quick Change bead. This sort of free-running setup is so simple but I still see people trying to complicate it.

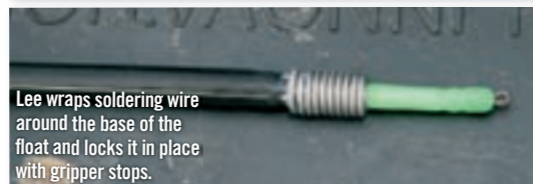
The hook was the ever-reliable PR 36 in size 18. I had two types of hair rigs prepared, however. One used a Korum Quickstop so



With the fishing hard at Woodland Thirsk, Lee uses a 15g feeder to reduce noise.



Insert wagglers replace standard pellet wagglers as a more sensitive alternative.



Lee wraps soldering wire around the base of the float and locks it in place with gripper stops.



Casting the waggler regularly is important to getting bites.

baits such as corn, meat and punched bread could be presented; the other had a new Preston band that could hold either a 6mm or 8mm pellet.

I think using different baits with a Method feeder is less important than with a bomb and single bait. But I have definitely caught more fish on certain baits at certain times so I like to keep my options open when approaching a new venue. The bomb had the same hook, line and hair rigs but the hooklength was 40 centimetres long, which locals had recommended as the optimum length. As a team we would try to experiment with things like this as sometimes copying the locals is not the way to go.

The other rod that I set up was an 11ft Mini float rod for a waggler and pellet. This only works if the conditions are right, but the best thing about having made-up rods is that you always have them ready in case you need them.

I'm a big fan of using a traditional waggler in place of a pellet waggler. This is because the carp on most commercial fisheries are so heavily fished for that bites on a normal dumpy pellet waggler are almost impossible to hit because the fish rejects the bait so quickly as it feels the resistance. I use Preston Innovations insert wagglers and simply wind some soldering wire around the base until they're shotted perfectly. (I can't take credit for this as Alan Scotthorne showed me.) I instantly knew that it was the right thing to do as it allows you to fish light lines such as 0.18mm Power Max without big shot damaging

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the line. To secure the float all you need to do is slide two gripper-type stops either side of the float. This also makes it very easy to change the depth.

With the rods raring to go I had a plumb around on the pole and decided on a couple of lines for some silver fish. The first would be a pellet line. It was only four feet deep at 13 metres so small floats were the order of the day. For shallow lakes I've been using the PB Carp 3. This float has a fibre-glass stem, which is strong yet provides stability to a light float. It has a short, visible bristle that helps me read bites better in an open-water swim. I set this float up in a 4x12 and a 4x16, both to 0.13mm Power main line with a bulk and two droppers to a 0.10mm hooklength and a size 18 PR 490 hook.

The difference in weight is worth noting. I don't see the point in setting up floats that may only be slightly heavier than each other because I know that 4x12 will be the optimum float in this depth if conditions are good. If I need something heavier then increasing to a 4x14 will make very little, if any, difference to my catch rate. By increasing in size to a 4x16, which is three times the size, I know that if I change rigs I am drastically altering the presentation and bite registration in my swim, so I will be able to see if it is making any real difference. This is something worth thinking about the next time you sit down at your peg.

With rigs for the pellet line sorted, the other line I wanted to feed was at five metres. The purpose of using this line was to not limit the catch to one species. I felt casters would give me a chance of catching everything that swims so I settled on that. The rig for this line was simply a 4x12 Chianti with No11 shot strung out to a size 20 PR 412 and 0.09mm hooklength.

On the whistle I chucked out the bomb with a single 8mm pellet and sat back to wait for a carp. Twenty minutes passed and, with no liners, I was concerned that fishing for carp could be a non-starter. Nobody had caught a carp on the tip, so just before I had a look for silver fish I tried the waggler to see if the carp were cruising around up in the water. I was about to change again before a slight dip of the float and a strike resulted in a carp around the 3lb mark. A few more casts resulted in nothing, so it was time to look for some silvers.

A look on the pellet line was met with loads of indications, but very few fish were finding my keepnet. The problem had to be in the feeding. I was giving the fish a small Cad Potful of pellets every cast but with loads of tiny skimmers in the peg they were soon all at different depths and I couldn't put any sort of weight together.

A look on the caster line was also not very productive, and with others catching silver fish or carp quite steadily I needed to get my act together. I decided to restart my pellet line a section further out, only this time I would feed hard balls of pellets and try to catch several fish before re-feeding. This seemed to work; the fish settled to feed properly on the bottom, and I was soon catching well.

I had upped the amount of casters I was feeding on the short line and, with 90 minutes left, dropped on it with a single caster and was rewarded with several big roach and some small tench. It was clear to me that by feeding the line heavily, more bait was getting to the bottom and keeping better fish in the peg for longer.

There was now half an hour to go before the end so a carp or two now would finish off a good second half of the match. That was exactly what happened – two carp including one of around 10lb was a great end to the match. The scales gave me 39-12-0, enough to win the section and the lake. But more importantly I had learnt lots for the team.

Next match I drew Skylark Peg 3, which is at the poor end of the lake, so I decided to try to

LEE'S RIGS

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**BOMB RIG**

**METHOD RIG**