

# **Jeff Currier** *global fly fishing*

## **World Fly Fishing Championships – Portugal, 2006**

September 21, 2006

Dear family and friends,

From a cold as heck Victor, Idaho. It's gonna snow today. I can feel it!



I got back from the World Fly Fishing Competition in Coimbra, Portugal late Monday night. I did not send any reports from Portugal because of lack of time during the demanding competition. It's too bad, as I just found out that the link from my website to the Portugal World's website was useless as the Portuguese never posted any information.

So here it is:

Fly Fishing Team USA finished in 10th place amongst 21 teams. Although this may not sound great, this is only the 3rd time Team USA finished in the top ten in 25 years, three of which came in the last four years. 2003-Spain 8th place, 2004-Slovakia 9th place, 2005-Sweden 15th place and now Portugal 10th place. We are getting better, just not good enough YET.

You can't imagine how good the Europeans are. Not only are they good, but many have fished the competition waters previously to most World Comps. giving them a huge advantage before the comp. even starts. This will be the same next year in Finland, but with one difference, Brian

Capsay, a member of next years Fly Fishing Team USA starting line up, fished the Finnish waters two weeks ago. Great news!

Unlike past years, Fly Fishing Team USA 2006 was made up of only two veterans, Pete Erickson and me. Pete began competing in 2003 and had excellent finishes 2003, 04 and 05. I have fished many World Comps. since 1998. After Slovakia 2004 I retired from all competition. It seemed a great time to retire, particularly after back to back top 10 team finishes. It was



also time to let a long list of young anglers looking for a spot on the team get a chance. Obviously, I came out of retirement this year, accepting an invitation from the team to fish in Portugal. The venues of Portugal seemed ideal for me as I am a specialist in small streams and spooky wild brown trout - exactly the type of fishing described in Portugal.

The rest of this year's 2006 team consisted of, George Daniel, Lance Egan, Brett Bishop, Mike Sexton and our Capt. Anthony Naranja. These guys earned spots on the team by successfully competing throughout the USA in 2005/2006. They then performed excellently in the 1st ever National Champs. held in Boulder, CO in June.

I might add, 2005 was the first time the USA had any type of competitions to find talent. Man did this work!

In past years, I was considered the angler to lead the team to a decent finish. If it wasn't me, then it was Pete. Our carrying the team all changed this year.

After only one year of National Competitions, the cream of the fly fishing crop has already begun to show itself. George Daniel of PA, carried the team on his shoulders with an individual finish of 5th place, one of Team USA's few top 10 individual finishes in history. Behind George was Lance Egan of Utah with an individual finish of 24th - also excellent. Brett Bishop finished in the middle of the pack and Pete and I did not finish at all. Pete did not fish day 2 allowing fishing time for Mike Sexton of Colorado (who became the teams alternate). Then on day 3, I had Mike sub for me during session 5 on the Alva River. Once the sub fishes for you, you no longer qualify for an individual position in the competition.



Having Mike fish my last session was a great thing. My individual performance was only average and the chance Mike could jump in and do at least as well could help the team immensely. Also, my 41 years were letting me know how bad the body hurt from crawling on my hands and knees during the previous 2 days (small rivers and wild brown trout in Europe require crawling on your hands and knees in order not to spook the fish) On that note, the thought of 6 more hours of crawling on day 3 did not seem possible. The last thing I wanted to do was a mediocre job on the last session because I couldn't maintain the needed stealth and damage the teams placement.

Day 3 went like this:

Mike and I traveled together to my two final beats. I fished session 4 the morning on the Ceira River while Mike watched, then we flip flopped in the afternoon with Mike fishing session 5 on the Alva River while I watched.

My final session was memorable and nearly exactly the way I wanted to retire. 1st of all, the Ceira River was everything I dreamed Portugal would be - tiny, only about 12 ft wide at most with tremendous amounts of overhanging trees creating the ultimate casting challenge. I literally had no more than a few inches of fly line out of the rod for short side arm casts. In many situations there was no room to cast at all and I had to "bow-and-arrow" cast to get my fly anywhere. Best of all, the inhabitants of the spectacular Ceira River were small wild brown trout.

I crawled the entire 3 hour session, never getting up more than to my knees for a quick stretch and then back down. I went the 1st hour without a fish, but during the next two I landed four, but only two measurable. A fish must be 18 cm to count. I had one that was 22 cm and one exactly 18 cm. The other two hovered between 14 and 17 cm. Although small (very), I can honestly say they were the most gorgeously colored trout I have EVER caught in my life (I've caught a few).

When the session ended I was slow getting to my feet. Not only were all the muscles from head to toe fully cramped, but I knew I had made my final cast in competition. This was a difficult thought to swallow. I flat out love competing and traveling to these wonderful places. More important, I have made many international angling friends. Many of which I may never see again. We say we will, but the truth is we live thousands of miles apart and our handshakes on Sat. night may of been our last.



At the time, my two measurable browns seemed like an average score at best. However, I quickly learned that the South African on the beat upstream of me got blanked as did the Slovak in the beat below. It turned out that 11 anglers blanked, the Bosnian got 2 and only the Portugal angler caught more than 2. He caught 3. Because the Bosnian's fish were larger than my two, he got 2nd place on the session. I got a respectable 3rd. Not a bad ending to a long career.

I was not disappointed in the last session either. Mike Sexton landed a fish. It was a 36 cm brown during the 1st 15 minutes on my Alva River beat. A "big boy" by Portugal standards and a trout that would secure Mike a solid finish of 10th place for the session. Meanwhile, the rest of the team performed well on the big river and two lakes. Thus Team USA went from 12th place at the end of day 2 to a respectable finish of 10th place on day 3.

When you break it down, I traveled all the way to Portugal for 12 hours of fishing. I did not get in any practice in Portugal before the comp., fishing only the 4 three hour sessions of the comp. itself. IT WAS WORTH EVERY BIT THE HAUL! Not only did I catch the most beautiful trout of my life, but I got to be part of the best team the USA has ever put together. These guys are unbelievable anglers, great fun to be with and willing to share a wealth of knowledge.

Our Capt, Anthony did a fantastic job keeping the team at top performance as did coaches Jack Dennis, Ed Opler and Poland's finest anger, Vladi. I wish them all the best in Finland!

JEFF