

FISHING NEEDS MORE OF THIS

Tommy Pickering's junior coaching sessions have been a resounding success. Jon Arthur witnessed first-hand what a massive service they provide to the future generation of pole anglers.

It was great to meet up with Tommy Pickering at Garbolino Lindholme Lakes in South Yorkshire for his feature on Loco Pool for this issue. I have known Tommy for a number of years and as a former World Champion and reigning UK Champion he is without doubt one of the best anglers in the country. He may have made his name on natural venues but unlike many anglers of his generation he has not been afraid to tackle the commercial revolution and the new methods and techniques that come with it. That means that he knows his stuff, from catching roach on rivers to bagging up with carp on places like Lindholme.



Tommy extols the virtues of carbon and glass-stemmed floats rather than wire on commercials.

Straight after shooting our feature, Tommy explained that he was staying on for an evening coaching session on Bonsai Lake. Tommy gives up his time to do this for free most Monday evenings for 12 weeks of the year, up to the end of August. Fishery owners Neil and Bev Grantham also kindly give up their water completely free of charge for the sessions so, with generosity like this and a tutor like Tommy in attendance, it is little wonder that these coaching sessions have been a massive success. An average of 30 juniors of all abilities attend each week and many have been coming every week for the two years that it has been running.

"The kids that returned from last year have really come on and it's great to see them holding poles the right way, shottng floats correctly and feeding well. Some even fish matches and are beating grown-ups off the next pegs! This isn't about match fishing, though," Tommy was keen to point out. "This is about teaching people the fundamentals of angling to get them into good habits from the start. I teach them properly on a specific subject every week and they seem to take it all on board. It gives me a lot of satisfaction watching them catch and treat the fish with the respect they deserve."

I was in awe of Tommy as the boys and girls sat in a circle around him, listening to his every word and scribbling down notes. Tommy



Tommy explains the finer points of pole elastics to the future of the sport.

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was explaining how to elasticate a pole and choose the right float. He explained how important balanced tackle was, from the hook all the way to the elastic, why tight elastic is a no-no and why carbon or glass stems are his first choice for floats. He then explained how important hooklengths are and why a

ruler is an essential bit of kit to ensure that your traces are all 15 centimetres long for pole fishing. Woe betide anyone who doesn't have a ruler in their box when Tommy is about!

Just as importantly, he explained why preparation at home will lead to more fishing time on the bank. They were all instructed to bring a tin of meat with them the next week because he planned to explain the finer points of bait preparation. It was all crucial stuff for any aspiring angler and I just wished I'd had something like this when I was starting up!

There are so many obstacles and hurdles to jump over before you can start coaching children

but one look at the good that Tommy and Lindholme have done for angling is enough to highlight the rich rewards. Tommy has spent a considerable amount of time to ensure that he has the correct training and coaching qualifications and the kids must all sign a form before he can help them. Thankfully, ambassadors like Tommy have not let the red tape put them off from the massive service that they can provide to up-and-coming anglers.

He was absolutely in his element passing on decades of experience to the future Raisons, Ringers, Findlays, Scotthornes... and Pickerings, of course! I would dearly love to see more fisheries follow Tommy and Lindholme Lakes' lead, link up with a qualified coach and support a scheme like this. It is a massive investment for the fishery, the region, young anglers and the wider sport as a whole.

I cannot praise what I saw highly enough. Tommy, Neil and Bev are a credit to angling! **POLE**

For more information on Garbolino Lindholme Lakes visit www.lindholmelakes.co.uk. For the free junior coaching sessions, telephone the fishery on 01427 872905, 01427 875555 or 07785 752222.