

ANGLING

Rodstars: The rivals



The scene of the battle: Bury Hill Fisheries where Simon Osborn and Daniel Jones worked for angling glory

Picture by Alec Kingham Photo No: RSMMAK300709-A02

It was the battle for the riverbank bragging rights as the the Dorking Advertiser's Daniel Jones squared up to the Surrey Mirror's Simon Osborn in a fishing competition. Celebrity angler Russ Evans was on hand to make sure there was no low blows...

Daniel: We arrive at Bury Hill Fisheries on a glorious summer morning. I am simply delighted to be out of the office on a such a fine day, Simon is, however, already getting rather competitive.

Simon: Dan lets slip that his Dad had taken him angling when he was a kid. I thought he was a novice too. I'll have to try and even this up a little.

I play the only card I can, and tell Russ that I'm a fellow West Ham fan. We talk about the football for a few minutes and get on great, I catch Dan give a sly, suspicious glance. Good.

Fine, so that's how it's going to be. With the East End Mafia getting on famously to my left, my line is in and oh what's this? A fish? Already?

It puts up a bit of a fight, but lets be honest what with all my angling ex-

perience it never stood a chance. One nil to the Advertiser!

I haven't even got a rod set up yet and he's already got a bite. This could be a massacre.

But hold on, before Dan has got his in the keep net I seem to be onto something. The line goes limp quite soon though and I fear I've lost it. But then I feel it again, the blighter had been swimming towards me. I reel it in and have caught my first fish. Inside my head I do little victory dance of celebration.

Bigger, one-all. Two fish inside the first two minutes. This isn't angling as I remember.

Before I can break into a rendition of 'you're not singing any more' my line is going again. Two fish in the bag already, piece of cake this fishing lark.

I suspect that my colleague's claims that he's

never been fishing before are perhaps not 100 per cent accurate. Then I see Russ giving him a hand landing his second bream of the day, after he gets into a bit of a flap, and change my mind. At least I'm doing it on my own - well sort of.

I get cocky and my cast ends up about a foot in front of me. Er, Russ, can you help me a minute?

The fish are coming at regular intervals now, for some reason I can do no wrong while Dan's line is offering nothing. Clearly the fish are being put off by his grumpy expression as I bag a nice tench.

A tench? I'm getting so far behind that only a monster carp will get me back into this. My suspicions of a West Ham carve up gather pace.

I get another pull of the line and this time I can tell it's something big. It's fighting like mad and I know if I can pull this one in then I'll be on the way to a great victory.

I can see him pop out the water, he's a huge bream. "Careful," warns Russ. Don't want to blow it.

Blow it, please blow it! Disaster! Despite Russ's encouragement, at the critical moment as the keep net is being prepared, I lose him. As I pull the line out of the water all I see is a damp hook. My very own 'one that got away'. But will this cost me?

Without doubt the best part of the morning so far. That looked rather large and I'm already miles behind.

My fury at myself is sedated somewhat by seeing Dan lose out on a big one himself. You actually saw it jump out of the water and it was huge. But he can't reel it in. My laughter echoes across the lake.

Damn, damn, damn, damn, damn, damn. That



Face-off: There's no such thing as a friendly

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would have got me back into it, and even Russ looks slightly annoyed at me for missing such a fine specimen.

With just over an hour to go I'm well ahead, but Russ - who seems to be enjoying his role as our fishing guru - warns that it can all change very quickly. I think he's just trying to keep Dan's spirits up. Poor guy.

I need a miracle. Our host encourages me - "Matches have been won and lost in the final stages. All you need is a couple of 4-5lb fish." Nice fella that Russ.

Buoyed by his kind words, I crack on. All of a sudden things have gone pretty quiet for Simon and the fish are "fizzing" in front of me.

It seems I may have been a tad quick to call victory, as, just as Russ predicted the tide seems to be turning.

Dan is bringing in fish after fish. There is nothing I can do about it.

Could this be the

biggest comeback since Ian Botham and Bob Willis inspired England to a famous Ashes victory at Headingley in 1981??

I must put four to five nice bream in the net in the final half hour.

The gap is closing but fortunately I manage to land one more, my biggest bream of the day. Will that clinch it for me? This will be a lot closer than it could have been.

The "old warrior", as Russ refers to it, that Simon's just landed has finally ended my hopes.

Still, 23lb 12oz of bream in three and a half hours of fishing. Sunny weather and good company. A great morning.

So I win by 7lbs, but I'm just happy to have caught anything at all.

And as we leave, the heavens open, perfect timing. Angling has definitely been the winner today.

No, I think you'll find that was me.

Evans' verdict

I set up two identical feeder set ups for the head to head match.

Both participants had no angling experience so I thought it best I cast out for them to give the best chance to catch some good bream.

After being behind early Dan produced a great fightback although Simon grabbed a bonus tench of 3lbs plus the biggest bream on the day - a touch over 5lbs.

At the finish the score was 13-10 in Simon's favour, but both caught well and recorded weights any angler would have been pleased with. Well done lads.

Final score
Daniel Jones:
23lbs 12oz
Simon Osborn:
30lbs 12oz



Pucker up: Jones gets close to his catch

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