

**TACTICS** | RECENT RAIN SHOULD SIGNAL SUPERB SPORT IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, BUT YOU NEED THE RIGHT FLOAT



Extra water in the rivers means there'll be great sport to enjoy in autumn and winter.

# Up and running on the rivers



**UK'S NOT RIVER ANGLER**

**I'm going to stick my neck out and predict that this winter will be the best in years for river fishing.**

So if you've turned your back on running water, now's the time to give it a go again. The recent heavy rain has put much-needed extra water and colour into our rivers and I reckon the timing is perfect.

I always hope for a lot of rain at the end of September or beginning of October, as I think this is when fish want to be on the move to their winter haunts. If we don't get rain and rivers are low, this migration doesn't occur, or at least not as well as it should.

Last season the opening River Wye winter league match took place in the first week of October, with the river as low as I'd ever seen it for such an event. Swims that are usually good throughout the winter were devoid of fish and most of the anglers, myself included, struggled to catch.

A few weeks later, with a much higher level after rain, those same pegs fished really well with 20lb and 30lb weights everywhere. Loads of dace had moved into the match length but roach numbers were down

on what we'd caught in previous years and I think the climate and water levels had a lot to do with it.

It's been a similar story on the River Severn in recent years. Many have blamed the decline of the fishing on cormorants, but while they are a major issue I can't believe a whole section of river can be wiped out

I've been fishing competitions at Shrewsbury since 1979 and it was never a great venue until it had extra water and low temperatures. In fact, I can remember winning and framing with very low October weights of less than 6lb. Then the rain came and brought the level up, the air temperature dropped and as if by magic we started to catch bigger weights until the end of the season.

**GO LARGE!**

Now that the rivers have received that much-needed extra water you need to think very carefully about your approach. Lightly shotted floats, which might have worked well in July and August, will probably now need to be replaced with much heavier gear to cope with the flow.

Big floats are much easier to control than small ones, but that doesn't mean you have to sacrifice presentation - far from it! A sensibly shotted big float in fast water will give you better presentation and



Dave's new 8g and 10g Avons are perfect for autumn and winter rivers when there is strong current.



The Bolo float on the left is for steady flow, while the float on the right is better for holding back at distance in fast rivers. As the Avon floats get bigger, so do the tops.

many more bites than a lighter one that is difficult to control.

I have recently added larger 8g and 10g sizes to my Alloy Stem Avon floats and wish I'd produced them sooner, as they have caught me loads more fish than the lighter models in recent pleasure outings.

Shooting on these bigger models is kept exactly the same as on the smaller ones, with an olivette about 2ft from the hook and a single drop shot below. With the lighter floats that shot is either a No6 or No4 but these bigger models require something bigger like a No1 or a BB positioned about 10in from the hook.

On the subject of large floats, a lot of people seem to get confused when it comes to Avons and Bolo floats and I am often asked when and in what situations they should be used.

My Avons are all made with alloy wire stems and range from 2g to 10g. The tops of the floats get progressively thicker as the size gets bigger. This is an important aspect of the design as

you sometimes need to be able to see the float at distance. The second important design factor of the Avon is the shoulder, positioned to allow the float to be slowed down or held back hard without riding up in the water.

Very important in the design of my Avons is the taper on the balsa tip. You can shot them right down to a dimple if you wish, which can be useful on flat calm days when roach and dace are the quarry. I will sometimes fish these floats a long way out, but most of the time they are best used from very close in up to three rodlengths out.

My Bolo floats are shotted the same as the Avons but are intended for use much further out in the river, in situations where the flow is smooth and not too fast. The Standard Bolo is the one to use in steady flow while the Big Bolo is shaped to allow it to be held back in much faster current.

The tip of the Big Bolo is thicker, too, which means you can see it a long way down the swim. The tips of both floats are made from hollow plastic, which makes them highly visible, especially on days where there is any sunlight shining through them.

As a general guide to size selection, go for 1g for every two feet of water for Avons and Big Bolos and 1g for every three feet of water for the Standard Bolo.

**Big floats are far easier to control than small ones**

**PERRY DALGARNO MEMORIAL**

Next weekend (Saturday, October 13) it's the second Perry Dalgarno memorial match on the Severn at Shrewsbury, and I'm hoping we get a really big turnout so that we can not only pay tribute to him properly but also get to use the whole length of the river from the top of the County Ground to the bottom of the Quarry length.



Perry Dalgarno, a much-missed face on the Severn.

That's the only way we are going to be able to test the stretch properly, find out where the fish are and how extensive the stock level is. I believe it will be a very good match because of the rain we've had and hopefully it will be a sellout. Wouldn't that be fitting on a day that we also get to remember Perry, someone who did a lot of good work on the river at Shrewsbury?

You can book a place through the Total Angling tackle shop in Shrewsbury on 01743 462699. The draw takes place there too.

**AUTUMN AND WINTER COACHING**

It's been a real pleasure meeting so many new people and being able to pass on my river fishing knowledge over the summer.

I'll be running the summer days again next year and I'm now taking bookings for my autumn and winter coaching days on the River Wye.



Shaun Court enjoyed a great day out with Dave last winter.

While barbel can still be the target fish on milder days, most of the emphasis in the winter months is laid on fishing for chub, roach and dace with float gear.

It's a complex subject, as there are so many different ways of approaching the many swims that the river has to offer. It's a really interesting way to fish, though, and the people who fished with me last year had some memorable days.

As with the summer sessions, anglers are welcome to use my kit if they feel they don't have the right equipment with them.

**MORE INFO**

Dave Harrell has fished for England at World and European level and now owns his own tackle company, Dave Harrell Angling. For details of the product range go to: [www.daveharrellangling.com](http://www.daveharrellangling.com) He is also available for one to one and group coaching sessions on the River Wye throughout the river season. For more details contact Dave at: [info@daveharrellangling.com](mailto:info@daveharrellangling.com)