

1st Memorial Gust Wattelé

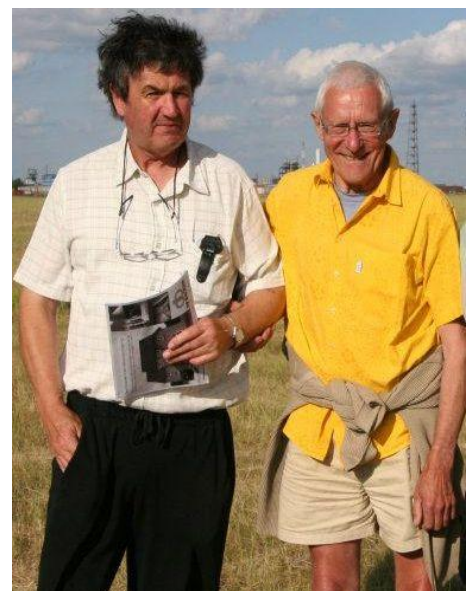
Antwerp, 23 & 24/06/2012

In Belgium surfcasting has slowly outgrown his status of unknown, somewhat bizarre sport. The majority of anglers are familiar with it and the sport gradually gets more attention from a wider public. Belgian surfcasting has also drawn international attention, with a world champion and several fine performances at international competitions. But only few people know that thirty years ago, one man played a very special role in the history of surfcasting: Gust Wattelé !

Gust started his own fishing tackle shop in 1972 under the name "Leeuwlanstport". His inborn ambition to do everything just a little better than the rest, made Leeuwlanstport widely appreciated among anglers. Very soon it was clear to him that a good technique and long casts are indispensable for beach anglers. Frustrated by the limitations of the material at that time available in Belgium, Gust went in 1978 to England in search for better beach rods. He travelled around the island in a mobile home and ended up at the Zziplex company. As a keen businessman and angler he did not hesitate to import this promising brand on the Belgian market.

Together with some of the first Belgian surfcasters, the English techniques such as the pendulum cast, were extensively studied and practiced. Legendary are the trips that Gust made with his "students" to casting tournaments across the Channel. They usually began on Saturday evening, after closing the shop and with Gust as the driver of a crowded car. After a sleepless night in the bar of the ferry followed a long drive towards Chelmsford, Hillingdon, Peterborough and other unknown places.

Like a real coach he knew to motivate his team to compete against a horde of English top casters. On Sunday evening they returned towards the mainland, packed with new experiences and especially proud of the trophy for "best overseas caster".



It took not long before the first casting competitions were organized on Belgian ground under the name "Grote Prijs Leeuwlant sport". Gust invited even the former world record holder and other big names in the world of surfcasting. The announcement that they would demonstrate casts over 200 meters hit like a bomb. Despite the winter season the Grote Prijs Leeuwlant sport attracted during six editions (1984-1989) an unprecedented number of participants and spectators.



LEEUWLANTSPORT  

AANDACHT!!
Houdt 12 februari 1984 vrij i.v.m. grote hengелwedstrijd verwerpen, met Bfr. 50.000/f 2.750,- aan prijzen. Tevens voorstelling van de nieuwe hengels waarmee de engelse kampioenen een demonstratie gaan geven met worpen van minimaal 200 meter.
Inschrijvingen: tot 10 februari 1984. Bij Leeuwlant sport, Deurne.
Telefonisch tot 31 januari 1984.
Het inleggeld bedraagt Bfr. 125/f 7,-

De zaak met de "betere" service.

Hoek Leeuwlant- en De Neufstraat - 2100 Deurne - Tel. 03 / 324.52.54

Between 1986 and 1988 Gust also organised demonstrations in Calais, Bruges, Ostend and Middelburg with the "Leeuwlant sport casting team". This induced a real hype around surfcasting and especially Zziplex rods. His smartest move however was the Zziplex Europa series, a beach rod designed exclusively for Leeuwlant sport and suitable for the traditional overhead cast. Gust understood that in Belgium the pendulum cast would remain the domain of tournament casters. The Europa rod series was a huge success among anglers.

Gust Wattelé united with his ingenuity and enthusiasm surfcasters from all over country and laid the foundation for what today has become the Belgian SportsCasting Federation. With this Memorial we are proud to make him part of our casting history.

