



An F25 box, Single Net Bag and Ethos Holdall is all Jon carries on his mini sessions.

COMMANDO MISSIONS

Jon Arthur explains a setup for mini fishing trips, short practices and what he fondly refers to as his commando-style missions!

"Remember when you could carry all your gear in one trip?" "Remember when you could get two lots of gear in one car?" Two things I hear so many people say with a large pinch of nostalgia! It's amazing how things have changed since I caught the fishing bug. Nowadays I struggle to squeeze my tackle in a medium sized van!

I think it's fair to assume we ALL carry lots of gear these days. But what could you possibly leave behind? It's all genuinely useful stuff! I also believe in duplicating the most essential bits, but it all adds up in both bulk and weight. The best answer has to be not to get rid of anything, but purchase a Matrix Transporter instead!

If you've watched the entertaining 'Polly Versus' series on Club Matrix you've no doubt chuckled at the amount of gear Mark Pollard and I carted to the bank for our head-to-head encounter. This was a match with something huge at stake – pride! It was also a venue where neither of us knew what to expect. Imagine if I single-mindedly turned up with just a pole and then Polly started emptying it on the feeder, for instance! It was safer to take the lot and have every possibility covered. I'm sure most sensible match anglers would have done the same.

For the majority of trips I'm happy to carry the lot. It's reassuring to know I have every eventuality covered. Being prepared wins matches. However, I still have

a pared down setup that I can call upon. This is for my short trips, practices and 'commando missions'! Get there quickly, set up in minutes, catch a few fish and still get home in time for tea – or sometimes breakfast!

I'm a big fan of mini missions like this. You get to scratch that fishing itch, plus you can learn a lot from a short, focused session. Last winter I paid several mini trips to local canals and rivers in particular. I occasionally use this light setup on coaching days, too.

The most important part for me is the seatbox. I love my all-singing-and-dancing XR36 Pro, but on a mini mission I opt for a Matrix F25 Mk2. This box is light and compact, but I take it a stage further by removing the footplate. It's not as comfortable to sit on like this, but it's even easier to carry and I'm usually only fishing for two or three hours tops.

No footplate brings the entire box lower to the ground so I also trim a few inches off the two right-hand legs. This is so they don't protrude higher than the seat, which can get in the way when pole fishing. In fact, trimming down your legs can be useful for any seatbox if you have short legs like me.

The F25 box has a deep cross drawer plus a 90mm deep unit, so there's plenty of room for all the bits I need. I also use the space under the padded seat for a few pole winders, spools of line and pre-tied hooklengths.

As there's no footplate leg to attach the keepnet to I also have a long keepnet arm attached. I personally prefer an angled 3D-R Long Cross Arm (43cm) for this as it helps to raise the net a bit higher. If I'm planning on pole fishing I will also take a medium Cross Arm to fit a pole

sock onto. If I'm feeder fishing I make sure I've got a long extending Feeder Arm with me. I normally pack a little sidetray, but sometimes just the side drawer or floor can suffice as the table. Proper old school!

So what else do I carry? Not a lot, is the answer! My carryall is an EVA Single Net Bag. This bag is nice and small but with space for a 2.5m Compact Keepnet, landing net, side tray and a bit of bait. I can even squeeze a bit of camera gear in it. Just remember to stash a few poly bags in there for the trip back to protect gear when your nets are wet.

Finally, I also take a small holdall. If I'm feeder or wagger fishing it'll be an EVA Pro Stiff Rod Holdall. If I'm pole fishing I like a 1.95m Ethos 2 Rod Compact Holdall. The bare minimum goes in; one rod, a pole or whatever; just don't forget to include a landing net handle and feeder arm!

That's all I need for a short fishing trip. I can comfortably cross fields and negotiate muddy towpaths with all that on my back. I know everyone's setup is quite personal, but hopefully I've given you a little bit of inspiration for building a mini-mission setup of your own. Hopefully we can all get out and enjoy a bit of fishing very soon! ■

A feeder-tempted perch from one of Jon's river missions.



Jon's box still swallows up plenty of tackle; more than enough for a short session.

