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Mack Attack

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Gettin' Jiggy with Mack's Lure Smile Blades by John Clark

This is an article that contains one of the many ways I use Mack's Lure products. As an angler I'm always looking for ways to improve my skills and techniques fishing for walleyes and saugeyes. I'm always looking for that something different that will put fish in the boat. Some of you might think of only spinner rigs when you hear the words Mack's Lure, but I think of many presentations that I can add to my arsenal.

First I would like to talk about the jig. There are several ways anglers can use the Mack's Smile Blade

to add action to their jig presentation.

I learn of guys placing a Smile Blade onto their lines, adding a small bead, placing a bobberstop, and then tying on their favorite jig. I tried this and it did add more action to my jig. It also added vibration along with the extra flash from the Smile Blade. I took this presentation one step further by tying a small swivel to the end of my line, and placing the Smile Blade, bead, bobber stop, and jig onto a four-foot leader. If I wanted to change the Smile Blade on my line, all I had to do was cut the line at the

top of the leader, pull the Smile Blade off, place the color blade I wanted on, and then tie the leader back onto the small swivel that was connected to my main line. I still use this presentation today, but like all anglers I was always looking for ways to add different presentations. Last winter in my basement I took this presentation even one step further. I was looking at the many different jigs that I have acquired over the years. That is when I spotted my box of Northland Whistler jigs. I remembered doing well with this jig and that's when the light bulb went on.

I began thinking of combining a Mack's Smile Blade to a jig to create my own version of a whistler jig. My mind was racing thinking of all the different color combinations that I could create. When you have 24 different colors of Smile Blades to choose from, it's like a kid in a candy store. I purchased 1/8-ounce live bait collar long shank jigs in colors of orange, glow, chartreuse, and pink. Next I went to Radio Shack and purchased electrical heat shrinking tubing. I then took my extra 3mm colored beads from my bead assortment.



I took out my 1.1" Smile Blades. Finally I had all the supplies I needed to start making my jig. I started by cutting down a few of my 1.1" blades. I took off about a fourth of their size. I did this so that I would have some jigs that would drop at different speeds, give out different vibrations, and have different flash.

The reason I picked Bait Rigs jigs was so that the blade could be placed as close to the head of the jig as possible. This could not be possible with a collared jig. The reason I decided to go with a long shank jig was to make sure I had enough clearance from the blade and the hook point for a good hook set. I ran the hook of the jig through the hole of the Smile Blade, with the color side of the Smile Blade facing the head of the jig.

Next I ran the hook through the 3mm bead so that the blade had something to spin on. Finally I cut the shrink tubing into small enough sizes to fit in the rest of the straight part of the hook shank. I placed the shrink tube so that the blade was as close to the jig, but had enough room for spinning freely. I then heated the shrink tubing just enough so everything would hold in place. If you heat it too long your tubing will catch on fire. I learned that through trial and error.

After I finished my first jig, I ran upstairs and filled the bathtub. The jig worked just as I imagined it in my head. I use FireLine so I could feel how much vibration the blade was giving off. I was very impressed. You could see the flash on the lift and the drop. I then went back into my basement and assembled 20 different color combinations. I had chartreuse jig head with glow gold tiger blade, orange jig head with chartreuse sparkle blade, and glow jig head with red scale blade. This list goes on. I

was like a kid on the last week of school before summer break waiting for the ice to come off the lakes in Ohio.

That day finally came and I was out fishing up on Indian Lake with my partner Marc Colwell. I had Marc throw a regular jig while I tried my new homemade smiley version of a whistler jig. It was a couple of weeks after ice-out with a strong 25mph west wind and the lake was muddy. We were fishing up North Fork Creek which is a feeder creek on the north side of the lake to get out of the strong wind. We were planning to fish the hole out in front of the creek mouth but the wind was too strong. We cruised up about 200 yards from the mouth till we found clearer water.

I started out with the 1/8-ounce

chartreuse head with glow gold tiger blade jig that I made. Marc started with a 1/8-ounce chartreuse jig. We both were using shiners on the end of our jigs. We were slowly moving upstream casting our jigs ahead of us; slowly retrieving them with a lift drop motion. Within the first five minutes I caught a 16-inch saugeye. A few more casts after that I caught an 18-inch saugeye. Marc stated "those jigs you made seem to be working very good". He then went into his box for chartreuse whistler jig. I then caught another. Marc finally caught one on his whistler jig. I continued to catch fish at a two to one ratio. Marc said, "give me one of those jigs you made!" I finally

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Tip of the Month



New Line at the Ready!

by *Bill and Bernadine Ayres*

When you are on the water, the bite is hot, and a zebra mussel just cut your line. You may ask yourself, "Now where is my leader material?"

We solved that problem with our new Line Tamers! We have them mounted in a place that is out of the way, but easy to access when we need new line in a hurry. We used a permanent marker and each one is

marked. We have one for 10# fluorocarbon, 17# fluorocarbon, 20# fluorocarbon, 14# Maxima, and Power Pro 10/2. Each one of these are necessary with our various presentations. The best part—they have their own cutter so you don't have to hunt for a scissors.

We used industrial strength Velcro, and placed them so they are in easy reach for us also easily visible to those who pass by our boat.

Public Panfish #1

By Hall of Fame Angler Stan Fagerstrom

Part three of four

No other time of year consistently produces as good success for crappie as does springtime. This is a period when these interesting panfish school up. Chances are if you find one there will be others in the same area.

In my last two columns I've talked about the importance of fishing in the right spots if you hoped to catch crappie consistently. Once you've got their springtime holding spots pinned down, the next step is to fish at exactly the right depth.

I had the importance of fishing at the right depth brought home in a hurry one morning long ago on Columbia River backwaters called Coal Creek Sloughs west of Longview, Washington. These sloughs are home to both bass and a variety of panfish.

I had been bass fishing one beautiful early July morning. The bass weren't cooperating. I had always done well for crappie in the part of the slough I was on. I decided I'd fished bass long enough and would

look for crappie instead. The problem was I hadn't brought my usual crappie gear along. When I'm serious about crappie fishing I carry a separate tackle box for that purpose. It's loaded with the smaller jigs and tiny worms that crappie can't resist.

As I said, I didn't have any of these

things along. I scrounged around in my tackle box and finally found a couple of little spinner-flies. I cut a piece of bass sized pork rind down to a couple of inches and hung it behind the fly. I took a little ¼-ounce Bead Chain sinker and hung it ahead of the spinner. The combination just barely gave me a lure heavy enough to throw with the casting outfit I'd been using for bass.

I fished that little spinner and rind in the spots where I usually caught fish when I had my crappie tackle along. I couldn't buy a bite. Finally, tired and disgusted, I tried to throw that lightweight rig farther than I should have. The result was a backlash that would have made a preacher practice profanity.

I sat there picking at that miserable tangle of monofilament line for five minutes. In the meantime my little spinner-fly sank to the bottom in water that was at least 25-feet deep. I finally got the twisted line untangled and started reeling in. I moved my spinner-fly about three feet out of that deep water when the line tightened. Snag, I thought. Wrong! That snag turned out to be a dandy crappie.

I sat right there that morning and wound up catching 20 of the nicest crappie I ever took from Coal Creek Slough. Why hadn't I caught fish earlier? Because I hadn't been fishing deep enough. The fish weren't up in the shallows where I'd expected to find them. They were much



farther out. That backlash turned out to be a blessing. Once I finally blundered onto fishing the right depth, I started catching fish.

I've had this same kind of experience time and again in crappie fishing. This time of year you'll find crappie in tight clusters and at the same depth. I don't know how many times I've taken beautiful catches from around downed logs on Western crappie waters. Drop a jig or perhaps a little marabou-feathered fly on one side of such logs and nothing happens. Let it down to exactly the right depth on the other side and it's a fish every cast.

You simply can't be too alert when you are after crappie. Try to remem-

ber what you were doing and the depth at which you were fishing when one comes along. Get your lure back into the exact spot where the first one appeared. I repeat, in the spring crappie will be in tight clusters and feeding at exactly the same depth. They might come up to grab a lure, but they will have followed it up from the depth where they first saw it and where others are holding.

A word of caution: If you find crappie holed up in the branches of a downed tree, and that's a common situation, try to avoid tugging and pulling on the branches if you hang up. Sure as you do you'll spook the fish. When that happens you may as well move to a new spot.

Even after you've found crappie and established the depth at which they are holding, there's a third and final key to putting them into your boat consistently. It's using the proper lure speed. We'll take a close look at that aspect of crappie catching in my next column.

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broke down and let him use the jigs I had made. We were just about done fishing for the day after both of us caught our limits, which we didn't keep.

We were making our way out of the creek. As we headed toward the muddy water I switched over to a glow head with a glow tiger blade. To my surprise I caught a 22-inch saugeye right in the muddy water. We both thought it was a fluke. So we stayed a little while longer to fish the muddy mouth of the creek. We ended up catching three more fish in that muddy water, that neither one of us would have tried. All in all I had a great experience with my modified Smile Blade jig. Like I said in the beginning of this article this is just one of the ways I incorporate Mack's Lure into other presentations.

Photo of the Month

We want your photos! Send your photos to bernie@mackslure.com.



Carl Watkins & Steve of Reno, NV limited on these terrific trout, at Amador Lake, using Wedding Rings with worms in late April. They were fishing with Rene' Villanueva of SteelieDan Guide Service.

The Mack Attack is a free service provided to anyone who is interested by Mack's Lure, Inc. We need your input! If you know of anyone who would like to be on the mailing list to receive the Mack Attack, please forward their e-mail address to al@mackslure.com. Photos, stories and comments are welcomed and encouraged. Please forward all content materials to bernie@mackslure.com. **THANK YOU!**