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June 2008



A Reason to Smile

by Dennis Foster



When I mention a reason to smile, I am referring to a deadly presentation method, that when added to your bag of tricks, will ultimately put more walleyes in your boat this season. I will describe an innovative system that will help you bridge the speed gap between traditional ultra-slow live bait fishing and quickly moving spinners through an area. We can

now go from both ends of the speed spectrum, and anywhere in between, with the same setup.

The system is predicated on using Mack's Lure Smile Blades for an attractor on live bait leaders in lieu of more mundane snells. It offers an extremely attractive substitute for a

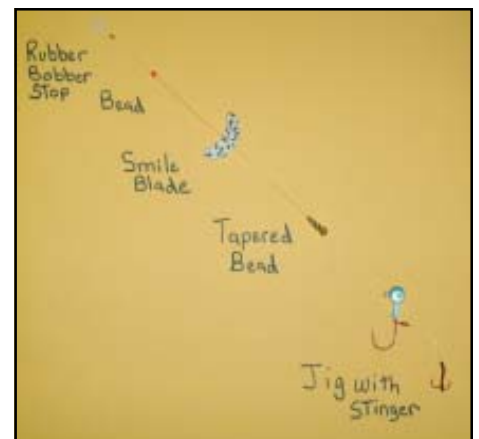
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Tip of the Month

Souped Up Jigging

by Jim Reath

Here is a little tactic I like to use when ice fishing or vertical jigging for walleyes on Little Bay DeNoc. I like to use a 3/8-ounce jig, a tapered bead, a Smile Blade, and a rubber bobber stopper with a bead. Slide on the rubber bobber stop with bead, then the Smile Blade, tapered bead, and then tie the jig on, slide everything down but leave the rubber bobber stop about 1/16-inch away so the blade can spin. The rubber stop keeps everything together so the rig doesn't separate on the drop. The little bit of up and down movement spins the Smile Blade creating more flash and movement that helps entice more finicky walleye into biting. Tip the jig with a minnow and use a stinger hook.



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traditional bouncer and spinner combo. This is definitely something that not many fish have seen before and can give you an advantage in heavily fished areas.

They consist of a spinning delta-wing-shaped blade made of extremely lightweight Mylar plastic. The unique construction allows them to remain nearly neutrally buoyant and rotate at speeds as low as .25 mph, meaning they don't immediately sink to the bottom and snag as do other leader options presented at low speeds. This gives us the advantage of adding action to our baits at speeds previously unheard of. Thus, we can apply a bit of spice to our live bait of choice. Try this with a conventional metal-bladed spinner and all you will do is dredge bottom.

Now that we're aware of the low end capabilities, we need to discuss bumping the pace up a notch. You can simply do just that. As the rig continues to function, it just spins faster. No need to switch to a spinner when you want to increase your speed. By leaving the Smile Blade setup on, you can achieve any action you feel the fish may want. It's very beneficial in the fact that you can effortlessly go up and down the scale, letting the fish tell you what they prefer at any given moment.

Another method of throwing the fish a change-up with this presentation is you can either bend the blades inward for a tighter, more compact spinning motion, or outward for an action that can be best described as undulating and erratic.

Further triggering action is accomplished without changing boat speed by simply sweeping your rod forward and letting it fall back under slight tension. That action changes not only the tempo, but thump and

vibration, conveying some visual cues to fool the fish into thinking your bait is either scurrying away or is in distress and falling back. You do not see minnows swimming at a constant pace in a straight line for any distance. If you can help it, your offerings shouldn't either.

Continuing with this theme, not holding and manipulating your rod is by far the largest downfall I observe with most anglers. They toss the rod into a holder and forget it. Which is fine for one "dead" rod. You just as well make the other one "come alive" since you are in control of its actions. This also lets you feel subtle takes, and gives you the ability to react accordingly. How many times have you sat and watched your rod tip bend ever so slightly... then nothing? You can either chalk it up to "the fish were off" today or do something about it. Every fish that mouths your



These fish taken were on Smile Blades and crawlers from Lake Oahe during a trip to the Mobridge area of South Dakota in May. The father is Dave Peterson and daughter is Shelby Peterson.

bait is a fish that can and should be caught. They have obviously showed some interest, it's up to you to finish 'em off.

Cookin' Your Catch

Crock Pot Walleye Chowder

submitted by Troy Walwood

This walleye chowder recipe is a no-brainer and it's easily made in the crock pot.

Ingredients

½ lb of hickory smoked thick sliced bacon - chop into bite sized pieces (fry until done in skillet)
1 large spanish onion (chopped)
5 medium red potatoes (chopped)
4 cups of water
2 cubes of chicken bouillon
1/4 tsp of black pepper
1 tsp. salt
3 to 4 lbs of walleye filets (cut into bite sized pieces)
3 cups of Half and Half

In a no-stick skillet prepare the bacon and onion together, cooking until the onion is golden brown. (Drain off grease).

Place all ingredients into the crock pot except the Half and Half. Stir together and set the temperature onto the high setting for four hours (or until the spuds have cooked). Add the Half and Half when there is about 30 minutes left on the high setting. Make sure to stir this thoroughly to ensure the chowder effect.

Serve with sourdough bread, coated with real butter. To spice things up a little add Frank's Red Hot to the mix! Bring the chowder on the boat for an on-the-water treat during chilly weather.

He Makes His Planning Pay

By Hall of Fame Angler Stan Fagerstrom

Part 1



Dave Pitts is a man with a plan. I don't know that because I've had a close relationship with this retired California police officer. But it isn't difficult to reach that conclusion after hearing some of the things he has to say about his approach to salmon fishing.

I was particularly interested in what he told me about the way he takes salmon while using a Mack's Lure Sledge Hammer. "Many view the Sledge Hammer as a tool for trolling in salt water," Pitts says, "but I asked myself why I couldn't use it as a trolling rig in a river application."

He eventually decided there was no reason why he couldn't, and that's exactly what he does. Here's how he

explains his approach: "The difference between fishing a Sledge Hammer from a downrigger in salt water and the way I use it in a river is simple. For river use, I simply combine the Sledge Hammer with a jet diver or I may use a drop sinker and just bounce it back to where the fish



are holding."

Dave does something else that you'll do well to consider if you take the same kind of approach. That's to add a plug cut anchovy or herring to the Sledge Hammer.

Actually, Dave does a good bit of planning before he gets near the river. "There are two types of coastal rivers," he says. "There are those that are less than 70 miles in length and those that are longer. I target the shorter rivers. I do this simply because of the quality of the fish."

Take a look at the picture that accompanies this column. It doesn't take 20/20 vision to see that the California angling expert accomplishes his objective. Many of the fish he catches are beauties.

What Dave's saying makes nothing but good sense. The more miles a salmon has to travel on its way to its spawning ground, the more time there is for its body to deteriorate. "I usually fish from a drift boat," Dave says, "and I concentrate on the first 15 miles of the river I'm fishing. On shorter rivers the majority of the fish are going to be river spawners."

Pitts also shared with me some of the spots on rivers where he especially likes to present his Mack's Lure Sledge Hammer. "Salmon are light sensitive," he says, "and they seek areas with less light or diffused light. I tend to stay close to river banks that have overhanging trees. I like to walk my lure and bait right through this type of cover."

Dave's comments bring a memory of one of the most memorable days I've spent fishing for salmon myself. It took place on the Wilson River. I had the good fortune to share a boat that day with Chuck Yeager, the famed test pilot. Buzz Ramsey, a nationally recognized expert, was our guide.

We'd been on the water less than

an hour when Yeager nailed a 40-pounder. A half hour before we were to quit I hooked one of the same size. My fish came out of the exact type of water Pitts is talking about. Buzz had positioned our boat so my lure worked right in next to shore and through the shade some overhanging trees provided.

The salmon catching expert brings up another factor angling newcomers might overlook. "I'm a firm believer," he says, "that hooked fish not only release a fear pheromone, but that the behavior of a hooked fish stimulates the lateral line of other fish. It does it in a manner that places them in a state of heightened awareness or alarm mode. That's why when I'm fishing a river I think it's wise to fight a fish away from the place I just

Welcome to our new monthly question feature! Feel free to contact us at bernie@mackslure.com if you have a question you would like to see featured!

Q: What is a "Line Tamer" and what does it do?

A: No it doesn't have anything to do with big African cats.

hooked it."

Pitts has been spending lots of time on the water since he retired from his post with the State of California Department of Corrections.

Question of the Month

The Line Tamer is a nifty tool for dispensing fishing line. It features a series of stackable cartridges that can be used for pulling off and cutting a short length of line, or for spooling a reel. Check out more details on this clever product at mackslure.com, then click on accessories.

I've just skimmed the surface on some of the fishing fundamentals he has developed. I'll share some more of them in next month's issue. Stay tuned!

Photo of the Month

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



The new HummBait from Mack's Lure is already hard at work. Mack's Lure Director of Marketing and Promotions Bernie Barringer has been testing the lure and has caught several species of fish on it, including many large-mouth bass. This bait will prove to be a terrific bass bait and it will have many great applications for several species of fish.

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