

The

September 2006



Mack Attack

Monthly publication of Mack's Lure, Inc.

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Walleye "Popped"

By Pat Slater

Pro Staff – Ranger Boats/Mack's Lure

I couldn't believe the report, nice weather predicted for the next five or six days at Canyon Ferry. On this body of water like many in the West, you pay attention to the weather man and nature's signs if you want to be back again tomorrow. In the first seven years of this tournament, sudden high winds on two different occasions had sunk several tournament boats, forced anglers to find safety in creek arms, or get off the water completely.

Routine weather changes play havoc with the patterns every year frustrating the majority of the tournament participants. But right there on weather.com was near perfect weather for practice and the tournament days. I still held my breath not daring to believe the forecast. Everyone knows "Murphy".

My partner Sam had located a few fish the weekend before I arrived and our past experience gave us a fairly good game plan. Our two days of practice would involve trying to find some big fish. The reservoir had risen 16 to 18 feet since the middle of May so it would be a challenge.



We had had some success in previous years using both crankbaits and livebait (leeches and crawlers) but this year the cranks just weren't producing for us. Mack's Lure Smile Blades have produced for us consistently over the years and were the first choice when we decided to slow down. Our practice went well as far as numbers of legal fish and for locating several areas that held fish; we just couldn't find the quality we wanted.

Tournament day was upon us and we had our goals set; five legal fish, a good kicker fish and then upgrade as many as possible. In the Montana Circuit, teams are allowed to catch as many fish during the day as they can however only five fish are allowed in the boat. Once you have five legal fish, (minimum length is 14 inches) you must stop fishing and proceed to the weigh boat. Fish are judged to be releasable or not, measured with their length written on your weigh card and then released immediately. The fish's length is

converted to weight by a standard chart and your best five fish are your weight for the day. This method ensures the maximum numbers of fish are released healthy rather than having them held in a livewell all day.

The Canyon Ferry Walleye Festival is billed as a "Sunrise" tournament with the launch beginning promptly at 6:00 a.m. just as the sun clears the mountain. It's an awesome sight to see, 150 boats lined up for the start with the sun peaking over the mountain tops. I get goose bumps every time we get the all clear from the start boat and my Yamaha powered Ranger 619 jumps up on plane and we fly to our chosen starting spot.

We had decided on a stretch of water where we had picked up three keepers in a 20 minute time frame in practice. It was on a flat with a depth of 14-16 feet with a hump rising to 10 feet. We each were running one line on a planer board with a second line out the back of the boat. There were a few boats in the area but we were hoping the pack would be elsewhere and that first morning they were. We had various Smile Blade combos out, Wally Pops, Double Whammys and even a Hot Wings attached to a bottom bouncer.

Tournament day pressure builds with every passing moment, waiting for that first strike, anxious to get the "skunk" out of the boat. It didn't take long; 40 minutes into it our first keeper came to the



net and into the box. Nothing to write home about, but having endured fishless days, being on the "Board" early helps the attitude! We continued to work our area, expanding it, hunting, changing depths, moving closer to shore, knowing everyday is a little different and adjustments have to be made.

There's a fish! Save the net, it's just a little one. Throughout practice about one in three have been sublegal fish which bodes well for the future of the fishery but on tournament days you don't want to see them. Another small one and the anxiety level in the boat is rising. That fish in the live well is lonely.

Fishing was slow and the other tournament boats in our area had moved out. I moved my Ranger in closer to shore, down a stretch I hadn't covered yet. The Minn Kota Auto Pilot propelled us quietly along. I had a two-ounce bottom bouncer with a green scale medium Smile Blade on a Wally Pop custom tied with a #1 Gamakatsu worm hook behind an Off

Tip of the Month

Add a Large Smile Blade to a Fly for Super Salmon Action!

Sometimes the salmon and steelhead want flies. You can add even more attraction and triggering ability to a salmon fly by putting a large 1.9 size Smile Blade in front of the fly.

The advantages are many, but most importantly, it allows you to add more flash, more vibration and an additional color to the bait. Try it!



Shore planer board. The boat was in 12-14 feet of water and I guess the board was in 8-10 foot. Almost imperceptibly, the board hesitated, the back of it dipping slightly... snag? No, there a twitch, a fish, grab the rod and crank the reel to set the hook. Good fish!

Slowly the board came to my partner; I grabbed the Minn Kota remote on my belt loop and slowed the trolling motor a little. Sam unhooked the board and I felt the weight of the fish, WOW! The fish surged and I dipped the rod and peeled some line adjusting the drag. We hadn't boated a fish over 19 inches during practice and with so many carp in the area I held my breath waiting for it to run sideways, but it stayed straight down. It took me to the back of the boat, way too close to the sharp stainless steel prop, then up the starboard side to the bow. I tried to lead it around the electric trolling motor but at that point I wasn't sure who had who.

Sam had the net ready but asked me if he should get the big net which didn't have the handle extended yet. Knowing we may only get one shot at landing this fish I told him the small net would be okay. The fish made another surging run, taking line, and then I gained some line, and some more line. Suddenly she was in sight. Should've gotten the BIG net! She turned on her side, tired from the battle, Sam netted her perfectly, head first but with a very broad tail still sticking out the front of the net. In a couple seconds there she was, in the bottom of the boat, HUGE, and best of all, not another boat in sight!

What a feeling, heart racing, trying to catch my breath and after countless hours and thousands of miles fishing tournaments there was my trophy! There was no time for pictures but there was a lot of hand-shaking and back-slapping! All of a sudden our day was looking exceptional!

I placed her gently into the live well which suddenly looked very full; she took a few minutes to right herself. It was back to work but the smiles on our faces were a lot bigger. We had our next three fish by 10.00 a.m. and it was off to the weigh boat.

We got some quick photos and had it tagged as my trophy fish for the tournament and returned her to the live well for the rest of the day as per tournament rules. We were limited to catching only four fish

now but we could decide by measuring the fish on the water whether it would upgrade what we had on our weigh card. We upgraded our four smaller fish ending the day with 20.22 pounds and putting us in 3rd place.

My trophy fish measured about 30 1/2 inches which converted to 11.42 pounds but she weighed 11.57 on a certified scale at the end of the day. We accomplished all our goals and slept pretty well that night. Day two would be different.

All of our day one fish came on Smile Blades of different colors. The green scale Smile Blade Wally Pop accounted for the first keeper on day two but the fish moved and we were forced to switch to crankbaits to cover a lot of water to get our remaining four. We slipped to 5th place for the tournament but the excitement of the big fish will stay fresh in my mind for a long time.

Cookin' Your Catch

Great Walleye Batter Mix

Try this unique recipe for a tasty treat of fried walleye!

Ingredients:

Dry potato buds in a box

2 eggs

1 can of beer

Salt and Pepper

Krusteaz bake and fry mix (or Pride of the West or whatever type fry mix you like)

Instructions:

Beat 2 eggs into about 4 oz of beer (more or less). Roll dry walleye fillets into Krusteaz fry mix (add pepper to fry mix to suit taste). Next dredge them into the egg/beer batter. Then roll fillets into dry potato buds. Place coated fish into hot oil at 365F until golden brown.

Lightly salt to taste and eat. Hint: use zip lock bags to coat the fish with the dry mix and potato buds, this is the best way I have found to coat them.

California Angler Gets The Drop On 'Em!

By Stan Fagerstrom
Part 2

As an increasing number of bass anglers have discovered, the Mack's Lure Stan's Spin spinnerbait can be fished effectively in more than one way.

In my previous column I told how Grant Olguin, a tournament bass angler from San Ramon, California, used it to take spotted bass and some dandy trout from California's Lake Shasta.

You may have already bumped into Grant at outdoor shows in the California area. He is one of the pros who works with the Zebco/Quantum people and is often present at their show booths. Now 34 years old, Grant has been fishing since he was 10. His dad taught him the basics when he was still just a little guy.

Lake Shasta isn't the only place Olguin has done well with the Stan's Spin. This California bass fishing specialist has also been fishing it on the Delta. So far he's not hooked one of those potbellied hogs for which the Delta is famous, but he figures there's a good chance he will. "I've taken lots of 3 and 4-pound fish out of the Delta," Grant says. "I've been flipping the Stan's up next to the weedlines and just letting it drop."

If you read my previous column you're aware that's the same thing Grant did with his Stan's Spin when he scored so well with it on Lake Shasta. He simply flips the lure up close to the cover and then lets it drop straight down on a slack line.

If you've fished pork and plastic baits you know it's not uncommon for bass to pick them up as the lure drops. Chances are you're also aware that if you're allowing your bait to drop in free fall it's essential to watch your line as you do so. "Be alert to the slightest line movement," Grant warns, "It may be the only warning you'll have that a fish has picked your bait."

Olguin throws his Stan's Spin on 12-pound test line when fishing at Lake Shasta. He loads his reel with 20-pound test when searching for bass on the Delta. The Delta, as anyone familiar with that extensive California waterway knows, is home to some really big largemouth. These lunkers are the result of the introduction of Florida strain bass into the Delta's productive waters a

number of years ago.

Olguin knows what a big Delta bass looks like. "That's where my largest bass so far came from," he says. "We didn't weigh it before it was released, but we estimated its weight at from 12 to 13-pounds."

The Stan's Spin Grant Olguin has used so effectively is the one Mack's Lure calls its silver shad. Its specific number is 50406. Eyeball this spinnerbait up close and careful and you'll find it has a white and black



Grant Olguin does a good bit of his bass fishing on the California Delta. He often flips his Stan's Spin spinnerbait to the edge of the cover and lets it fall straight down.



body and a silicone skirt with black and clear strands. The lure's metal Colorado blade is a hammered nickel finish. The Mylar blade is nickel on the outside and gold on the inside.

The Stan's Spin color Grant has done well with are much the same as those I've used to good advantage in my own fishing. Chartreuse and white may be the all time favorite spinnerbait skirt color, but there are times different shades work better. Grant is obviously well aware of that. "I especially favor more natural colors," he says, "when I'm fishing on the Delta."

Grant works as a paramedic. It's a job he has held for the past 10 years. His work schedule is such that he has a good bit of time off. It only takes him 30 minutes or so to get to the Delta from his San Ramon residence.

"I'm looking forward to fishing the Stan's Spin on Delta this fall," Grant says. "I've got a big bass pattern that I'll be using with it."

So far the largest bass I know of being caught on a Mack's Lure Stan's Spin weighed 10-pounds, 4-ounces. I'm certain of that one's exact weight because I used a Stan's Spin myself to catch it at Mexico's El Salto Lake.

I won't be at all surprised if Grant Olguin beats the bejabbers out of that current Stan's Spin weight record on the Delta before the year is out. Certainly that productive and expansive bass producing area has more than its share of larger bigmouth that give him a good shot to do so.

And nobody will be more pleased than I'll be if and when he does it!

Product Feature

The Sledge Hammer

Lots of features mean lots of attraction and lots of fish!

This is a dynamite salmon lure with lots of flash and vibration due to the large Flash-Lite blade. It is built on wire line with a large single hook. The hook is attached with a split ring so you can add a treble hook if you like. It features a soft inner float tube for buoyancy and flashabou in the squid skirt. You can add scent to the body cavity to make the lure even more attractive.

The Sledge Hammer comes in eight different colors, many of which



glow for high visibility even in deep water.

The *Mack Attack* is a free service provided to anyone who is interested by Mack's Lures 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!

Photo of the Month

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



Rich and Mark Fike WIN! The Farmington, Pennsylvania brothers took home \$25,000 in cash and a \$25,000 Ranger boat for winning the 2006 Cabela's National Team Championship. Mack's Lure Smile Blades took home the dough! Watch for more info in next month's edition of the Mack Attack newsletter!