

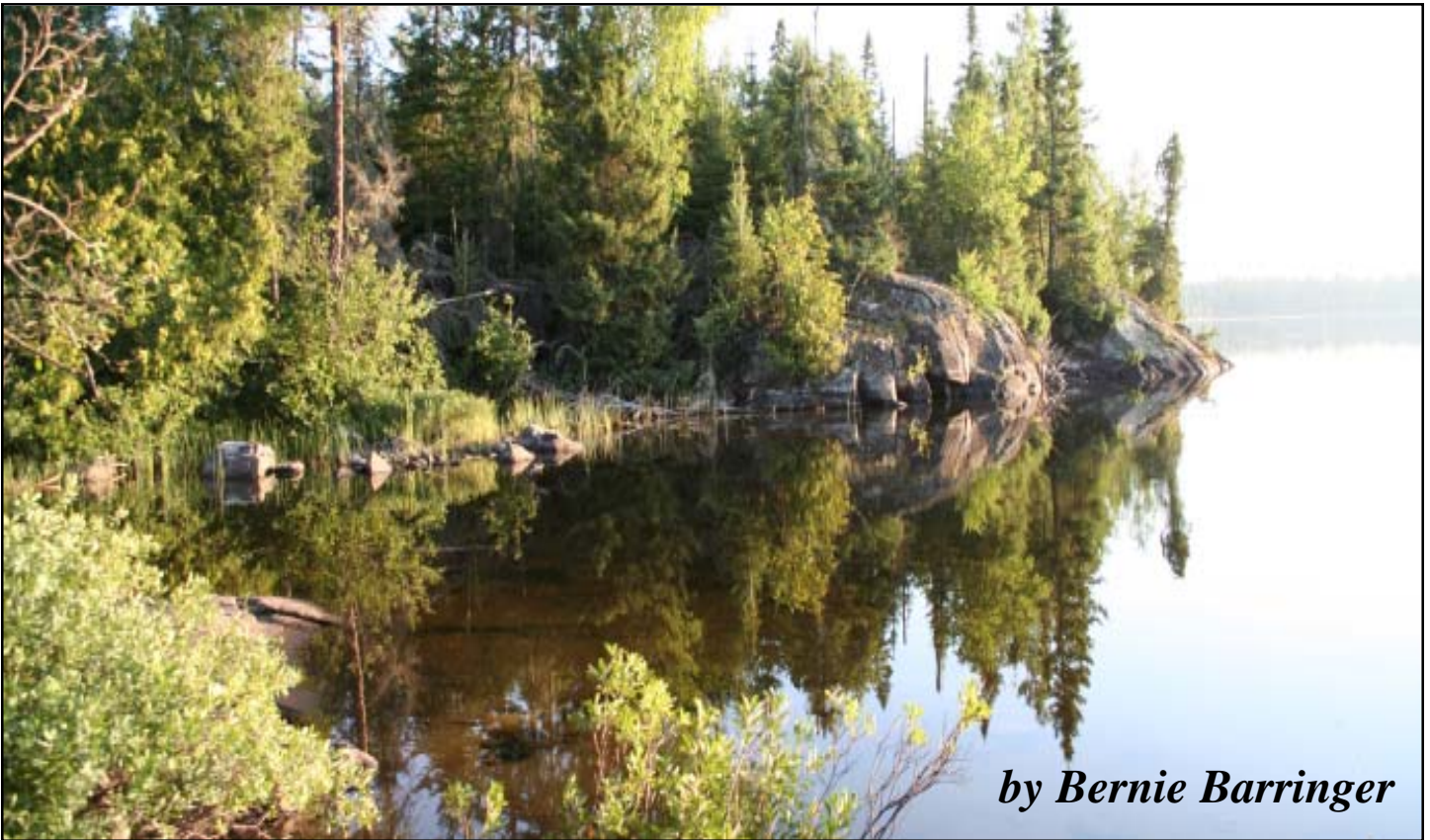
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Smile Blades on the Canadian Shield



by Bernie Barringer

One of my favorite things each summer is spending a few days in the Canadian bush with my family. In fact, it has become quite a tradition. I actually started going fishing in Ontario on a regular basis with a couple buddies about 30 years ago. As my kids got older, I began to take them. My wife Cheri discovered that she too loved the peace and solitude of the northern wilderness, and it has now become a valued part of our

family's heritage.

We really rough it. At first we tented on the shore at the end of a logging road where we would unload our boat in the lake. There are no facilities at all, of course, and the nearest town is about three hours away. After a few years, an especially intense encounter with bears put an end to that. We had bear experiences before but this was different. There were two bears and they were quite

aggressive. I won't go into details but let's just say it is hard to get back to sleep after a bear has taken big bite out of your tent a few inches from your head. We then took a hard-sided pickup camper down the logging roads for a few years until the government, under pressure from resort owners on the more developed lakes, made it illegal to camp on the lakeshore. We took to loading all our gear into our boats and camping on

an island. That has been our thing for quite a few years now and we really love it that way.

The camping, the exploring, and the adventure of just getting to the end of that old logging road are some of the things that draw us, but the real reason we are there is the fishing.

Northern pike, smallmouth bass and walleyes make their home in our wilderness lake. Little has changed in the way we fish the pike and bass, but the way we fish for walleyes has undergone a rather traumatic progression over the years. We began by trolling minnow-baits such as Rapalas, and stopping to jig whenever we found a pod of walleyes. We worked terribly hard to keep many dozen minnows alive, and we really caught a lot of fish that way.

The advent of good sonar and GPS changed that. We all but abandoned trolling as we had found a lot of great spots and could go back to them over and over with the help of the GPS. As I found fish on deep humps with the depthfinder, I began

to target them with bottom bouncers and spinners. I all but abandoned the extra work and frustration involved with the minnows, and went to Berkley Powerbait and Gulp.

Then I discovered Mack's Lure Smile Blades. For a reason I cannot fully explain, the last few years, our Smile Blade spinners have out-produced traditional spinners by a significant margin. I am not sure if it is the different combination of flash and vibration, or the way you can vary your speeds more effectively, but I know they really work. And surprisingly, we catch few of those pesky "hammer-handle" northern pike when we are walleye fishing. Now don't get me wrong they are ever-present, but for some reason, we aren't as constantly fouled with them.

I have often seen where smile blades will produce more walleyes than other spinners on pressured waters and I have attributed that to the fact that they are different and offers pressured fish something they haven't seen as often. But that is not

the case on this lake, where most of the fish you catch are having their first look at an artificial presentation.

I have decided I do not need to know why. I just know it works and that's enough. (That's a hard thing for a guy like me who tends to overanalyze everything.)

So here are some tips I have discovered for making the most of this new-found knowledge. First of all, choose blade colors such as blue and silver--natural color patterns--in clear water. Choose bright colors such as pink, chartreuse and orange in the stained water so common on the Canadian Shield. It is just plain hard to beat chartreuse on those tea-colored waters.

Use a bottom bouncer just heavy enough to keep ticking the bottom and don't let it drag too much or you will be going back for snags constantly. Most of the bottom is boulders and very snag prone.

While I usually fish only where I see fish on the depthfinder, I know that seeing one or two fish may mean there is a good pod of them there. The wildly irregular bottom structure can hide fish that are near the bottom or laying beside a boulder. If you catch a fish, make a couple more passes before moving on. Last year, four of us caught two dozen fish out of an area the size of my living room, yet only three were visible on the sonar when we pulled onto the spot.

You do not have to rough it like we do to find great fishing. Hundreds of lakes have resorts and can be driven to. No matter how you decide to go it, I would highly encourage you to take a trip to the Canadian shield area of Canada. The scenery is terrific, the fishing is fantastic, and the memories will last a lifetime. Make sure you bring some Smile Blades and you'll be a believer too!



Wally Pops, Cha-Chas and Double Whammies have become staples in the author's tackle box every time he heads to Canada. Canadian shield walleyes cannot leave them alone.

The Stan's Spin Spinnerbait

Tricks & Tactics That Put Fish In the Boat

By Hall of Fame Angler Stan Fagerstrom

Part 1 of 2

What happens when a well-known lure company hangs your name on one of its products? I can tell you. What makes me an authority on the subject? I've had that experience. Regular readers of this column probably already know what I'm talking about. A few years ago the good folks at Mack's Lure came up with a brand new style spinnerbait. Ray McPherson, the president of Mack's Lure at that time, knew that I had helped pioneer the sport of bass fishing in the Pacific Northwest. He asked if I'd help in the testing of the new spinnerbait and if it was all right with me if they called it the Stan's Spin.

Ray will verify my response. He'll tell you I told him I'd be pleased and proud to have my name associated with a Mack's Lure product, but with one stipulation. That stipulation was that the lure would catch fish. He gave me these new spinnerbaits in an assortment of colors for testing purposes. I was familiar Ray McPherson and his company. I had the highest regard for both. Ray and I share a number of beliefs that aren't restricted to just the selling of fishing tackle.

You can bet I set about testing the new spinnerbait at every opportunity. My first experience with it was at

Siltcoos Lake on the Central Oregon Coast. The very first time I took it out I had one of the better days I've ever had on that particular lake. I continued to have sufficient success with the new lure elsewhere to call Ray and give him an enthusiastic "Let's do it." While I was proud to see my name on the new spinnerbait once it hit the market, I found I had another reaction. I very much wanted other bass anglers to have the same success with it as I'd had.

One of the first questions I had from anglers who purchased the lure



I caught this dandy bass on the Pro Model Stan's Spin

was, "What's the best way to fish it?" It's a question I continue to get. I wish there were one easy answer to that question, but there isn't. Bass, you see, don't always react the same way. That's one of the things that make the sport so darn interesting. What those fickle boogers do today they might not do tomorrow.

Most newcomers to fishing a spinnerbait do the same thing whether it's the Stan Spin or some other model they're throwing. They simply cast it out and reel it back. Rarely do they vary the speed of their retrieve or try a variety of other procedures that sometimes pay off big time. Have you, for example, ever tried fishing a spinnerbait so slowly that it was bumping the bottom all the way back to the boat? Now and then you're going to be surprised if you can simply manage to slow down enough to try it.

Bass fishing isn't one of my wife's favorite things, but every once in awhile I can talk her into going along. On those relatively rare occasions she does accompany me I know in advance the lure she'll invariably want me to tie on for her. It will be a spinnerbait. That was true before there was a Stan's Spin and it's even more true now.

Like most other bass fishermen I'm inclined to fish too fast. My wife doesn't have that problem. Time after time she'll sit back there in the stern seat of my bass boat and throw her Stan's Spin into water I've already covered. The difference is she retrieves so slowly the lure gets down where mine didn't. Now and then, for that matter more often than I care to admit, she catches fish when all I get is casting practice.

There's more than one reason why that slow retrieve with the Stan's Spin often pays off. If there's a good bit of cover where the bass are hold-

ing a slow retrieve is a cinch to cause the lure to bump off underwater obstructions. For some reason bass can't stand to see a lure bump and run without doing something about it. It's a super way to trigger strikes when the fishing is slow.

If you're familiar with the Stan's Spin, you're aware it has a Mylar plastic blade. That lightweight blade continues to turn at extremely slow speeds. It's ideal for a slow retrieve.

The Pro Model Stan's Spin also has a metal blade to go along with the Mylar blade. The Pro Model provides the best of both worlds. You

still have the easy-turning Mylar blade, but now you also have the whump and thump vibration of the Colorado style metal blade up ahead of it.

I've just covered a couple of the methods that I know get results with the Mack's Lure Stan's Spin. There are several others. In my next column I'll get into a couple of other procedures I've used with it. Certain of those techniques have accounted for some of the largest bass I've ever caught. Watch for them in my next month's column.

Photo of the Month

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



Late fall on the Saskatchewan River is a great time to find huge wall-eyes. Nobody knows that better than Jerry Kruczek. This monster was caught from the river close to Tobin Lake. The length was 30 inches, and the weight was 11.00 lbs. He caught it on September 27 while live-bait rigging with a leech on a 6.5-foot snell with a #8 Mack's Lure Glo-hook. He was using 8lb P-Line Fluorocarbon, while drifting on the non-current side break from the old river channel in 16 feet of water. The fish was caught during pre-fish for the Vanity Cup.

Cookin' Your Catch

Easy Fish Breeding

Here's something I'll bet you haven't tried before, and it may be one of the easiest fish breeding recipes you've ever seen. And I'm betting it might become one of your favorites too.

Grind up two cups of Ritz cracker into crumbs (other crackers work well too, feel free to experiment). Add to the cracker crumbs one cup of ground parmesan cheese. Mix well.

Roll wet fish pieces or filets in the mixture until well coated and drop in hot oil. Make sure the filets are fairly thin because the breeding cooks fast. As soon as the breeding turns golden brown, take them out and eat them as soon as they are cool. You'll be amazed how good this is!

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THANK YOU!

