

A Legacy of Innovation
Since 1969

October 2007



The Mack Attack
www.mackslure.com
2514 Easy Street, Wenatchee, WA 98801 509-667-9202

Nighttime Tactics for BIG Fall Walleyes

by Bernie Barringer

Like most of you, I enjoy hunting in addition to my fishing. Matter of fact, I'm chasing deer, bears and other critters whenever I can find the time during the fall. But there is one thing that causes me to forsake the deer stand for a few evenings each fall, and that's the fall feeding binge that takes place among the walleyes in the upper Midwest.

In clear Upper Midwest lakes, there is a phenomenon that happens around the full moon in October, and to a lesser degree in September and November, depending on the body of water. Fall is prime spawning time for several kinds of baitfish, and the big walleye follow the bait to the shallows. In most lakes it takes place on the rocks: Rock humps in the main part of lake basins, rocky shorelines and areas with rocks and current. The full moon is a big part of the equation but is not necessarily the most important part.



The best part of this scenario is that it is one of the best times of the year to catch trophy fish. Often these large walleyes follow schools of baitfish over open water, and are not targeted effectively by anglers for most of the year. Since they are difficult to catch and often overlooked in many bodies of water, they do not see much fishing pressure. That gives

them the time to grow big. This may be the time of the year when you have a legitimate shot at catching that fish of a lifetime.

These baitfish move onto the rocks to spawn at nighttime, and the action for catching the walleyes that feed on them is best during the full moon. The argument may never end about why this is so. Some say that the fishing is better around the full moon because there are more bait and therefore more fish on these shallow areas due to the effects of the full moon. Some say that the fishing is better because the moon provides more light and the fish can chase prey easier; therefore, you catch more because the fish can see your baits better. Interesting debate; but what's really more important to me is that it really is a time of great fishing.

I have figured out how to up my odds of catching these nighttime walleyes using a combination of Mack's Lure Hot Wings and minnow-imitating crankbaits. I like the big chrome Rapalas and Reef Runner Ripsticks. I use the #13 size Husky Jerks and the big Ripsticks in silver/blue and silver/green. I am not the only one on the lake that has figured that much out. But I am one of the few that has increased my odds by adding another attraction to the presentation.

I add a Mack's Lure Hot Wings about three feet in front of the crank-

bait. I like the silver and holographic blades but I have used several colors with some success. It seems that the key here is to have a high degree of reflectiveness. Using this was a result of some deep thinking and the belief that a crankbait moving by quickly was missing a lot of opportunities to hook up with a walleye, because they didn't have the time to adequately react to a bait that came cruising through the area.

I arrived at this conclusion because I seemed to be missing quite a few hits, and catching quite a few fish by the back treble hook. My thought was that they didn't have enough time to react when the bait was near them, and I was only catching the ones that were aggressive and willing to chase down the bait. I thought if I could offer something that would get their attention and get them turned towards the bait sooner, I would have better success.

So here is why I think I am catching more fish with the Hot Wings. The Hot Wings serve as an attractor and get the fish turned towards the bait and possibly moving towards it. Just when you get them interested, the crankbait comes by and now they are in a better position to grab it.

I'll grant you that being out alone on a lake in the middle of the night, bundled up against the freezing cold with nothing but a full moon to keep me company, could be doing funny things with my psyche. Maybe I'm just overanalyzing this. But what I do know is that it works. I do catch more fish with the attractor three to four feet in front of the bait. Maybe I'm not as smart as I think I am, but I do know that I seem to be catching more and bigger fish than the anglers



in the other boats coming off the water at 2:00 a.m. and that is reason enough for me to keep doing what I am doing.

Find a lake where the baitfish are on the shallow rocks at night and let the full moon be your guide to great nighttime fishing. Bundle up good and stick a couple handwarmers in your pocket. Drag a few cranks loaded with Hot Wings around and see if you don't agree with me!

Tip of the Month



'Copter Connection

Largemouth bass often hold in the slop—the thickest weeds they can find—during the summer. Presenting a bait to them can be a challenge. Often small openings or pockets in the thick weeds are top places to catch summertime largemouths.

One of the most effective ways to catch these bucketmouths is to drop a bait down into those pockets. Problem is, the bait is only in the fish zone for a split second, and then it usually balls up with weeds on the way back to the boat. The tantalizing action of the Stan's Spin as the unique blade helicopters slowly down through these weed pockets makes it one of the deadliest bass baits for this presentation. Try it out!

Cookin' Your Catch

Blackened Walleye

Most people associate blackened fish with saltwater species, but you can also use firm-fleshed freshwater species, such as walleye and perch. This recipe is not for the faint of heart. It is definitely spicy and if you don't like food that is pretty spicy you should probably pass on it.

Homemade Blackening Spices

- 4 tablespoons paprika
- 3 ½ teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano leaves
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon cayenne

Mix the ingredients in a bowl. This recipe will make enough seasoning to coat four medium-sized filets.

Heat a large cast-iron skillet over a charcoal fire for 20 minutes, so it is very hot. Rinse the filets and pat them dry. Melt ½ cup (one stick) of butter in a saucepan.

Coat each filet evenly and generously with homemade blackening spices (see above) after dipping the filet in the melted butter.

Drop the filets into the pan after pouring in half the butter left over from dipping them. Drizzle the rest of the butter over the filets and flip them right away.

Turn the filets every minute, cooking them until the fish flakes with a fork. Cooking time varies from two to six minutes, depending on the thickness of the filets.

It is best to cook the fish outdoors, because blackening creates billows of thick smoke that can fill the house.

You'll Do It Better With A Blade

By Hall of Fame Angler Stan Fagerstrom

Part 2

You can never go wrong letting the fish tell you what color lure they want and how it has to be fished to get them to grab it.

Do much fishing for elusive critters like the finicky walleye and you had better make that approach a part of your angling strategy sooner than later.

That's exactly what the walleye expert I told you about in my previous column has been doing now for some time. That angler is Brian Stauffer, of McPherson, Kansas.

As I mentioned in that last column, Brian and his fishing partner Nick Brumbaugh have been using Mack's Lure Smile Blades almost exclusively for their walleye fishing for the past two years. You won't talk walleye fishing with Brian long before you realize how much importance he attaches to using the right Smile Blade color.

Brian had been fishing for walleyes the day before I last talked to him. Among things I asked him was if he thought his spinner blade color made much difference. "Color," he says, "can make a huge difference in your angling success. Yesterday, for ex-

ample, we had to use either a red or silver shade or they just wouldn't hit."

It's their color that Brian thinks is one of the keys to the Smile Blades effectiveness. "The way those blades reflect color," he says, "seems to imitate the scales of a fish. It catches the eye of the walleyes we're after."

I started writing about fishing way back in the mid 1940s. In the countless newspaper columns, magazine articles and Internet features I've done since I've often reminded anglers to avoid a common major mis-



take. What is it? To go on using the same approach and exactly the same lure color at the same boat speed hour after hour if they're not getting results.

Brian is still a young man but it's a lesson he's already learned. That's why he emphasizes the importance of color change. Changing colors, of course, means you've got to remove the Smile Blade you have on and replace it with a different shade. Brian and Nick have worked out a time saving way to go about doing it.

"What we do," Brian says, "is tie a Surgeon's Loop Knot at the upper end of our leaders. We insert the snap swivel at the end of our main line into the leader loop. When we want to change Smile Blades we simply un-snap the leader. We then pull off the blade we've been using and poke the leader loop through hole in the center of the new Smile Blade. Then we simply slide the new blade on down in front of the bait."

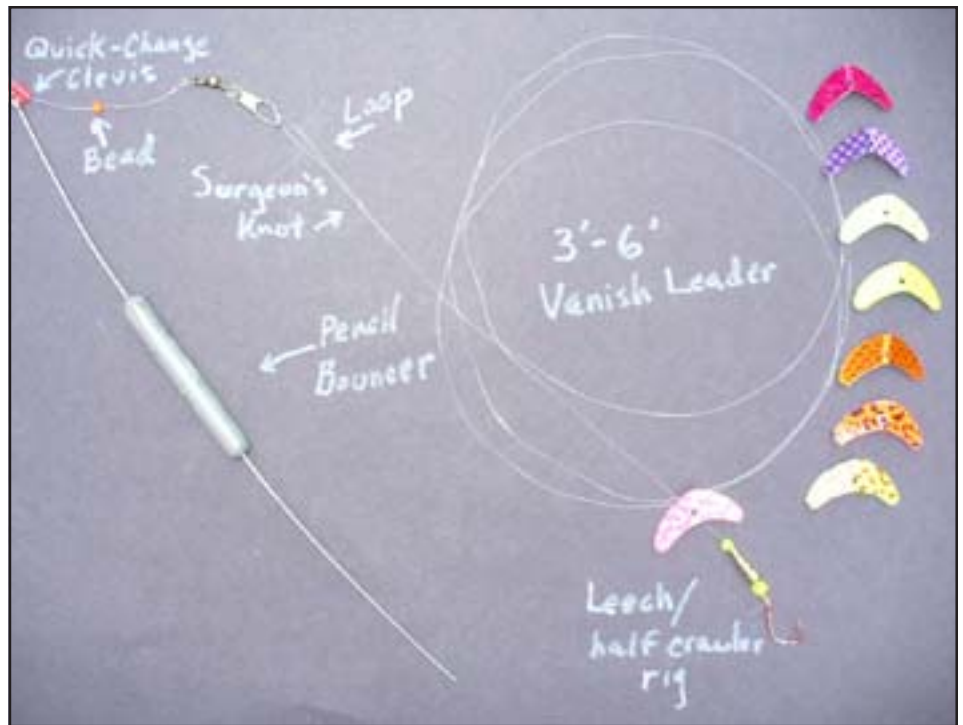
These Kansas walleye specialists are able to use this procedure because the hole in the center of the Smile Blade is big enough to allow them to pull the small Surgeon's Knot through it to remove it and to insert another blade of a different color in its place.

At first glance this method of changing blades might not seem all that important. That's not how Brian and Nick see it. They know they're going to change blade colors until they find one the fish will hit. When they make those changes they don't

want to mess around and take any more time than is essential.

“The way we do it,” Brian says, “saves time and you can’t catch fish without having a line in the water. The last thing we’d want to do is mess around having to cut our leader and tie new knots. The small Surgeon’s Knot let’s us avoid that problem.”

Stauffer will tell you much the same sort of thing about boat speed. He says even a slight change can make a major difference. “We were out early once,” he says, “and the fishing was really slow.” “We had gone all the way down to a boat speed of .8 per mile trying to interest the obviously inactive fish. When the sun got up we increased our boat speed to 1.2 and 1.3 miles. We immediately started catching fish.”



It’s always a pleasure to have opportunity to probe the thoughts of someone like Brian Stauffer. He’s a

dedicated and thoughtful angler. I won’t be the least bit surprised if we hear a good bit more about him in Kansas professional walleye fishing circles in the future.

Photo of the Month

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



I just came out of the Cascade Mountains near Entiat with Icicle Outfitters for a family pack trip. I let Carmen Swannack of Lamont, Washington borrow a Mack’s Lure Promise Keeper and she promptly hooked this nice brook trout. ---John Kruse, Malaga, WA

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!**

A Legacy of Innovation
Since 1969

