

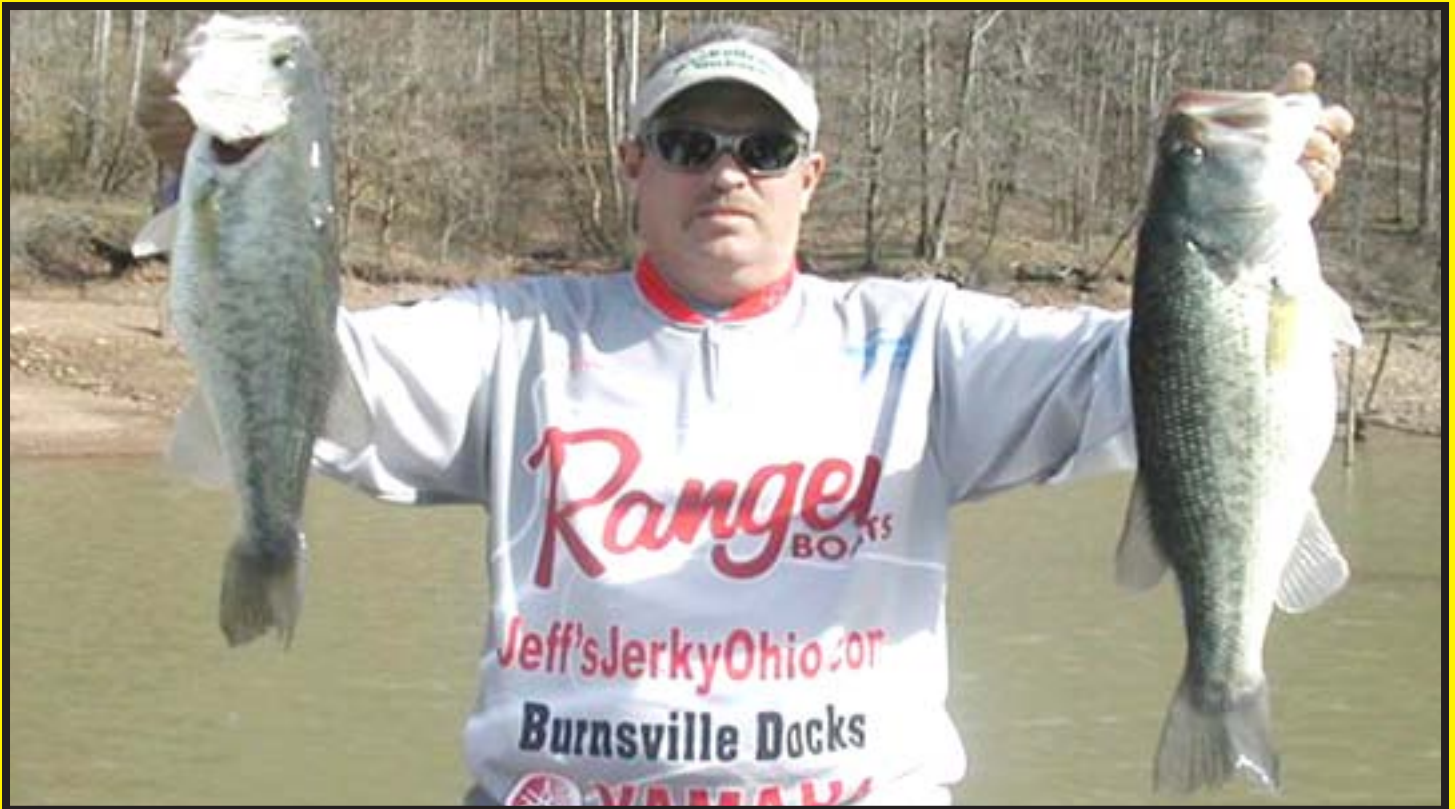


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"The where to and how to magazine for the outdoor enthusiast."

Vol. 1 Issue 197

May 2010



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TIPS**

**FLW
News**

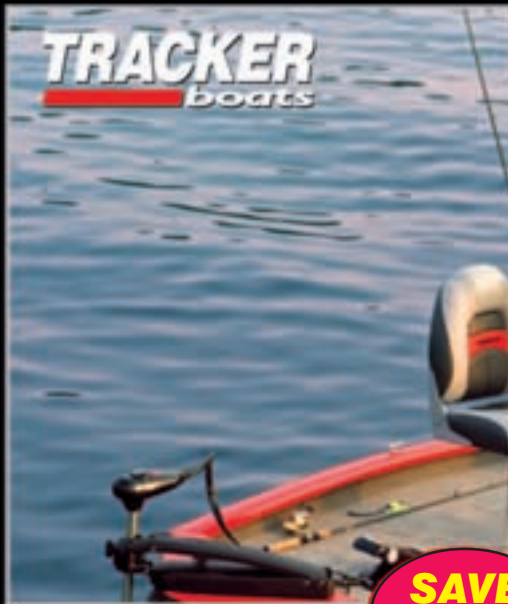
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Volume 1 Issue 197

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Cover Photo

Well known tournament angler, Andy Godwin, fished in Burnsville Lake for these two big largemouth bass. He was using an Eakins' jig and claw lure to land these quality fish. Burnsville Lake is noted for large fish of all types. Try Burnsville Lake this season.

This magazine is online for free each month. Back issues too. Log onto www.wvasportsman.net Photo courtesy of Mid-State Marina in Suttton.

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Let's Go Fishing

Plan your fishing trip where the fish are plentiful, especially if you're just starting out. Just getting outdoors to fish is part of the fun, but nothing beats landing lots of fish!

Where fish live

A city park, a pay-per-catch pond or a heavily stocked lake is a good bet. Rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and man-made reservoirs also hold fish. If you don't know where to fish near your community, call an official from your state fisheries department or ask someone working at a local bait shop.

Where fish swim

Fish love to swim off sandbars, in deep edges, in weed beds and around sunken islands. They also swim near artificial structures such as boat docks or piers and around natural cover such as fallen trees. Get a map of the lake if possible. It

will help you locate some of these popular fish locations.

FISHING TIPS: FISH LOVE LIVE BAIT!

Not all people like the same foods. Fish are no different. Choosing the right kind of live bait can depend on the kind of fish you're trying to catch. Here are some commonly used live baits, some listed with tips on where to find them outside of a bait shop. Click on the links to learn how to get them on your hook:

Corn (it's not alive, of course, but it works for some kinds of fish) - In a can from the kitchen.

Crayfish - Under rocks or other shelter in lots of cold-water ponds, lakes, streams and rivers.

Crickets - Outside under rocks or maybe even in your house!

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Frogs - In swamps, ponds and other areas with still, shallow water.

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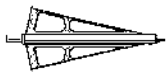
Hellgrammites (dobsonfly larvae)

Leeches

Mealworms (insect larvae)

Minnows (including different species) - continue to the next page

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**Game
Check**



Karen Butler hunted at Double "D" Ranch for this nice boar. *Photo courtesy of Bowlistic Archery in Chelyan.*

May 2010 ~ Page 4

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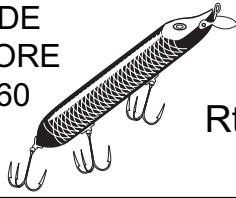
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es like chubs, dace and shiners)
- They can be tough to catch, but you'll probably find them in the same bodies of water you fish.

Night crawlers and earthworms -
Down in the dirt, probably in your yard or garden.

Salamanders - In swamps, ponds and other areas with still, shallow water. Sometimes you can find them on marshy land underneath logs.

Salmon eggs

Wax worms (moth larvae)



Doug Cox landed a nice hybrid bass. *Photo courtesy of Amish Country Store in Marmet.*

FISHING IS FUN! BUT REMEMBER TO STAY SAFE!

Tips for a safe fishing trip

Always wear your life jacket when fishing and keep it fastened. Safety should be your main focus, so the life jacket should be the right size (not too big) so that it won't slide over your head.

Have plenty of cold drinks and snacks in the boat.

Avoid getting sunburned while fishing. You should apply sunscreen to any part of your body that isn't covered by clothing.

Sunscreen should be applied at least 30 minutes before going outdoors, even on a cloudy day, and reapplied every two hours.

Keep hooks, sharp knives and fishing line in a tackle box. You don't want to get hurt.

Fins are sharp. Always handle fish carefully and under the supervision of an adult.

It is important to be aware of weather conditions before setting out on a fishing trip. Also, weather can change quickly so it is a good idea to take a radio along to stay tuned in to changing conditions.

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Wearing the right clothing for a fishing trip is important and it can help to keep you dry. Footwear should be appropriate for the occasion, and wearing multiple layers of thin clothes allows you to adjust to changing temperatures.

continue to the next page



Roger Gray hooked a huge catfish at this pay-lake. *Photo courtesy of Family Fishing in Grafton.*

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If fishing from shore, pick an area free of debris and large enough to allow casting space for all of the anglers in your group.

Never fish from bridges or roadways.

FISHING EQUIPMENT

Rod, reel and line

Start with a spincasting reel (the one with the push button on the back) rigged with 10-pound-test monofilament and a 5- to 5 1/2-foot, two-piece rod with light action. This outfit is easy to use and transport, and it will cast light lures.

Tackle

No. 2 straight shank hooks, 1/16-ounce clamp-on weights and floaters. This live-bait outfit works great with earthworms, minnows or PowerBait eggs and is highly effective for anything that swims. The most important factor to an enjoyable day of fishing is catching fish.

Spinner baits, 1/4- and 3/8-ounce willow-leaf blades in both white



A 42" musky was brought in. Photo courtesy of Willie's Sport Shop in Glenville.

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and chartreuse. These baits have plenty of flash, are easy to cast and retrieve, and are relatively snag-proof.

8-inch purple plastic worms, wire guard No. 3 hooks, and 1/8-ounce bullet-shaped slip sinkers.

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continue to the next page

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this one can't be fished too fast or too slow. Be sure to purchase treble-hook covers to cover the hooks when not in use.

Bait bucket

If you're fishing with minnows or other types of baitfish, you'll need a bait bucket. It should be tethered to land or your boat whether it is the kind that floats or sinks. This container will have small holes to allow fresh water inside.

Other items for a pleasant fishing trip

Cold drinks

Lots of snacks

Sunscreen

Sunscreen should be applied at least 30 minutes prior to going outdoors, even on a cloudy day, and reapplied every two hours.

Camera

Flashlight

Batteries

Fishing cap & sunglasses



Joe Bietz caught and released 2 nice smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*



Danny Warden caught a musky.

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Gary Newborne hooked a 4 1/2 pound smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

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Lamont Smith caught a 4 1/4 pound smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*



Danny Warden, from Fayetteville, caught a big largemouth.



Rodney Kirkendoll brought in a gobbler.

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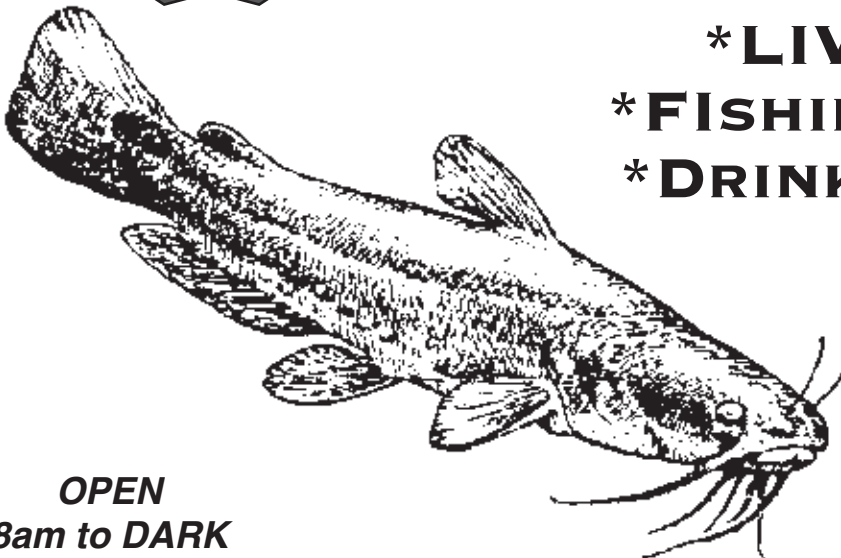
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John Murray landed a large Hughes River musky.



Alice Warden, from Fayetteville, went to Stonewall Jackson Lake to land this impressive bass. This is a cath-and-release lake.

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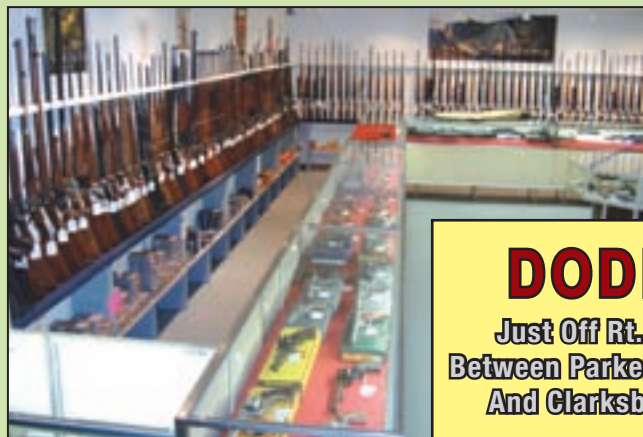
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Boating Safety

Never overpower your boat by using an outboard more powerful than that for which the boat is rated.

Take and pass a boating-safety course when offered in your area.

Make sure your bass boat's pedestal seats are lowered, especially in the front, so that your visibility is not impaired. Never allow a passenger to ride on the pedestal seats while the boat is in motion.

Make sure you and your passengers are wearing Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFDs), and that all required safety equipment is on board.

Note: in a high-speed bass boat, a zipper-type PFD may come off if you are thrown from the boat at high speeds. If you operate or ride in such boats, wear a life jacket that has been tested for high speeds.

Check to see that all articles of

clothing, tackle and other loose items are secured.

Do not operate the boat without an emergency engine cut-off switch ("kill switch") attached to your person while the big engine is running.

Do not use drugs or alcohol while boating.

Exercise common courtesy when on the water. Avoid running too close to other boaters or fishermen. Use extreme caution in No-Wake zones and other posted areas.

Watch where you're going. You can't keep both eyes on your flasher or graph and operate your boat in a safe manner.

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Josh Compton landed a 25 inch golden trout.



Dale Kirkendoll hunted in Wyoming County for his 1st turkey.

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Richard Riel hooked a 48" musky that weighed 37 pounds in the Ohio River. *Photo courtesy of Clark's Taxidermy in Parkersburg..*

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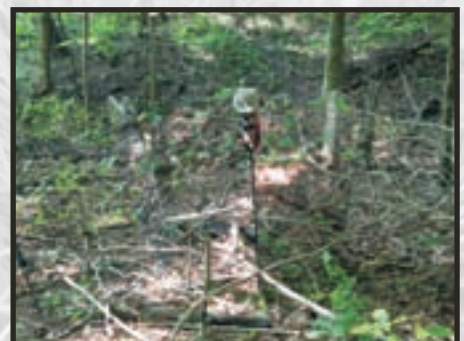
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Tips On Finesse Fishing For Bass

Advice From Mike Icanelli

Of all the different techniques and presentations that make up finesse fishing, I consider drop shotting special. It's effective in both shallow and deep water; in clear, stained or dirty water; and in open water or thick cover. The true key to drop shotting, however, lies in the fact the technique allows you to present a bait horizontally above the bottom at a depth you choose and to keep it there.

Do we use drop shotting in tournament competition? Absolutely, and far more than you'd probably realize, primarily because of this versatility. During last season's Bassmaster Elite event at Lake Guntersville, where most of us were crankbaiting the shellbeds and breaklines, Aaron Martens spent a lot of his tournament drop shotting — and he won. The 2008 Bassmaster Elite on Lake Erie? Kota Kiriya won by drop shotting. I could name other tournaments, but you get the idea; drop shotting is a technique definitely worth your time to learn.

I first saw how effective drop



Tara Taylor landed a big Greenbrier River smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*

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shotting could be during the 2000 Bassmaster Classic in Chicago. Because of rough water conditions on Lake Michigan, several of us decided to fish the more protected Calumet River and Lake Calumet. I thought I was a pretty good finesse fisherman then, and started using a tube jig, one of my favorite finesse lures. We'd all found the same pack of fish, but I watched as they

continued to catch bass drop shotting as the tournament continued each day, while I basically stopped catching them.

They were using a technique I had thought was limited to ultra-clear, ultra-deep water and were catching bass in dirty water less than 10 feet deep. They were also soundly beating me. That's when I

continue to the next page

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---	--

realized I had a lot to learn about drop shotting.

When you're just getting started, or if you're fishing a new lake and don't know where the fish are, consider rigging with 6- to 10-pound fluorocarbon (I prefer 8 pound overall), a 6-foot, 8-inch to 7-foot spinning rod with a matching reel, a slender 6-inch straight tail worm and a 1/4-ounce tungsten sinker. Use an improved clinch knot and tie your hook about 8 inches above the sinker.

This is only a starting point, and you can easily change different components to suit the conditions. I have used lures ranging from a 3-inch leech for smallmouth to a 10-inch Power Worm for big large-mouths. I've used a leader nearly 3 feet long, for which I also use a longer 7-foot, 6-inch rod, and my sinker weights vary from 1/8-ounce in 5 feet of water to 3/8-ounce in 40 feet.

Overall, my hook sizes range from No. 1 and No. 2 up to about 2/0. If I'm drop shotting water with little or no cover, I prefer an octopus-style hook and simply hook my bait through the nose. If I'm fishing cover, I use a light wire, straight shank hook and rig Texas style. Both offer high hookup ratios.

Most newcomers to drop shotting think this is purely a vertical presentation in which you drop the

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sinker to the bottom and then start shaking your rod tip to make your lure vibrate and dance. Believe me, there's much more to it.

First, don't shake your rod that much. You don't need to. The beauty of drop shotting is that it presents your bait naturally. Underwater currents, combined with your own normal hand movement, will impart plenty of action to your lure. Excessive rod shaking eliminates this natural appearance.

Of course you can shake your rod to try to attract a bass, but if you do, do it sparingly and always continue to the next page



Brain Murray brought in a gobbler. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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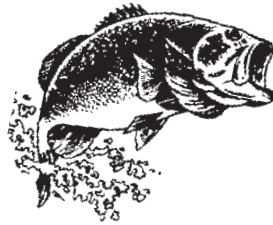


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shake on a semi-slack line. A semi-slack line keeps your weight in the same place on the bottom and helps maintain the natural appearance. I always fish a drop shot with a slight bow in my line, but I really keep the rod shaking to a minimum.

One of the more overlooked presentations with drop shots is "walking" it along the bottom. You can cast a drop shot to the bank and walk it back to the boat, along the edge of a pier or up to a brushpile. You can do it across the same flats where you'd use a Carolina rig, too, although I think walking is more effective in shallow water where bass might otherwise be spooked by the boat.

When I'm walking a drop shot,



Scott Sloan, from Clendenin, hooked a 42 1/2" musky.

I prefer to drag my sinker slowly across the bottom with short pulls to make certain the bait stays above the bottom. You can also use a pull-and-drop presentation by raising your rod tip so the sinker also comes up off the bottom. If you need to cover a lot of water quickly, this may be better than the slow dragging, but the bass will tell you. Either way, use a lot of pauses so you can continue to take advantage of the bait's natural appearance above the bottom.

Another misconception about drop shotting is that it's not a presentation for fishing cover. Let me

tell you that you absolutely can fish cover with this technique. In fact, we use drop shot rigs to fish the matted vegetation in Florida and other lakes. It's called "power shotting," and I'll describe it in detail in a future column. Just remember that a bass spends much of its life around cover, so that's where you need to be fishing.

Instead of the 8-pound fluorocarbon, rig with braided line, and tie it to a small barrel swivel that will still move through your rod guides. I like Berkley's FireLine because of its small diameter and remark-

continue to the next page

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able strength, but you can use any 15- to 20-pound braid you like. Add a 20-inch fluorocarbon leader to the swivel, tie your hook about halfway down, and your sinker to the end.

Don't be afraid of deep water, either. In fact, drop shotting is probably the most effective way we have now to fish deep water. The deepest I've caught bass with a drop shot is between 60 and 70 feet, but other pros I know have caught fish nearly 100 feet deep.

I'll admit, I used to be really intimidated about fishing deep water — until one day while standing at the bow of my boat I looked back at the outboard and realized it was 21 feet away. I could pitch a bait

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that far without even thinking about it. When I started visualizing that distance vertically, fishing deeper immediately became easier and maybe it will for you, too.

Remember, also, that in many deep water situations, such as

around bridge pilings, for instance, bass may suspend 15 or 20 feet above the bottom. You can use a drop shot without letting your sinker fall completely to the bottom — it takes careful depthfinder study, but under the right conditions you can see your bait fall to fish as you watch on your electronics. This is how Kota caught many of his bass in his Lake Erie win.

Overall, drop shotting can become one of your most valuable and productive fishing techniques. It's a subtle, non-evasive presentation that takes full advantage of a bait's natural appearance in the water. Drop shotting keeps the lure horizontal and in one spot above the bottom for as long as you want to leave it there. You can't do this with any other presentation, which is what makes it so special.



Danny Frazier showed everyone that he can catch musky too. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton..*

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Removing Line Twist

Fishing line gets twisted in many different ways while fishing. A spinning lure, fighting a fish on a spinning reel against drag and getting trash on your swivel will all twist your line. Here are several ways to remove the twist and quickly return to fishing.

Difficulty: Easy

Time Required: A Few Minutes
Depending On Method Chosen

Here's How:

If you are in a boat, remove terminal tackle and let the line out behind the boat while moving at idle speed. After letting most of the line on your reel out behind the boat, drag it for a minute or so then reel it in slowly. It will be straight with no twists when you reel it in. Make sure it is spooled tightly on your reel by keeping tension on the line as you reel in.

On the bank, find a clear place you can let your line out on the ground and not get it tangled. Prop the rod up and walk the end of the line with no terminal tackle on it out as far as it will go. Return to the rod and reel and slowly retrieve your line. Hold it tightly between thumb and forefinger of your free hand to make it untwist and to spool it tightly as you reel it in.

If the line is badly twisted, tie a good ball swivel to the end of your line. Attach the swivel to a tree

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branch and walk away, letting line out as you walk. When it is all off the spool, pull against the branch and keep tension on the line, letting it untwist with the swivel. Slowly reel and walk toward the swivel end to respool the line, keeping it tight as you walk.

If you are fishing in flowing water like a stream or river, remove terminal tackle and let the current pull the line off your reel. Let enough line out to get past the twisted part. Let it drag in the current for a couple of minutes and then reel it in slowly, making sure it is tight on the spool by pinching it between your thumb and forefinger as you reel it in. Make sure there is nothing in the water downstream to snag or tangle your line.

NEVER, NEVER let all the line out without holding on to it near the end that is on the reel. Several times I have not done that and consequently the line is not tied to the reel, especially with Zebco reels.

I even bought a walleye rod and reel from a sporting (fishing tackle only) goods store and had lead core line put on the reel, only to find out that it had not been tied to the reel. Good way to lose new costly line.

Tips:

Make sure you respool your line tightly on the reel.

Spool your line correctly when putting it on to avoid twisting it.

Change your line regularly to avoid twisting and other problems.



Amy Brookover bagged a turkey in Wirt County. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



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8 Items For Your Tacklebox

Every time you go fishing you need some things in your tackle box to make your fishing easier and better. These items are usually tools that help you fish but the list is varied. I don't leave home without all of these things in my fishing tackle box.

1. Needlenose Pliers

Needlenose pliers are needed for taking hooks out of fish - and you at times. They usually have cutters that will clip line and even hooks if necessary. You can mash splitshot, crimp leaders and do a wide variety of jobs with needlenose pliers.

2. Knife

Get a good stainless steel knife that won't rust. One with big sharp blade can be used for cutting bait, opening cans of sardines, cutting line and all the other things that need cutting while fishing. You can clean or filet fish with one and some come with a fish scaling blade. Some also have a hook disgorger on the end of the scaling blade.

3. File

A file will help you keep hooks sharp and even sharpen your knife.

A small flat file or a triangle file work best for me. Some folks also carry a small whetstone but I think a file is more versatile.

4. Toilet Paper

If you need it, you need it and nothing else is a very good substitute. Put some in a ziploc bag to keep it dry and be sure you have enough! It also comes in handy from lots of other uses from starting a fire to wiping sun screen out of your eyes.

5. Sunscreen

Too many fishermen get skin cancer - keep some with you and put it on before going out in the sun. Then use it to add more during the day as you sweat it off or wash it off while catching fish.

6. Asprin

A headache can ruin a fishing trip. Carry a few of your favorite pain killers in a film cannister for emergency use. Also carry other meds you might need.

7. Fingernail Clippers

Great for clipping line, some also have a small file that will sharpen hooks in an emergency if you lose

your file.

8. Cigarette Lighter

You never know when you might need a fire, but a lighter will also melt plastic worms to repair damage if you run out of the only color they are hitting and also melts the ends of nylon rope to keep it from fraying.



T Gray, from Hico, bagged a nice buck this season.

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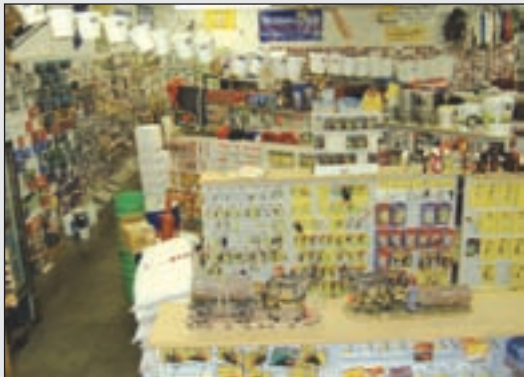
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Chyenne Dennison caught a 42" Little Kanwha musky. *Photo courtesy of Willie's Sport Shop in Glenville.*



Roman Rader, Zack West and Scott Rader had a nice catch. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*



A 49 and a 39 pound catfish were brought in by Andy Bett and friend. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*

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Brandon Smith caught an 8 pound bass in South Carolina.



Eddie MCloy hooked a 6 pound, 9 oz. bass at North Bend lake.

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Darrell Shrader hooked a 44 1/2" musky. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.



Paul McCallister caught a tiger trout. Photo courtesy of Waterfront Sporting Goods in Alderson.



Chuck Tanner bagged a large gobbler. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store.

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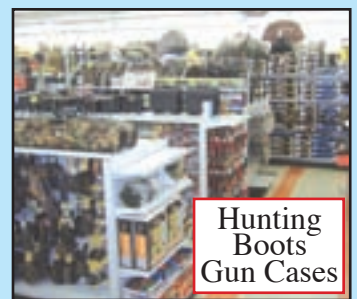


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Swim Baits

Editor's Note: Swimbaits are hot. Recognizing that, Bassmaster.com asked Elite Series angler Byron Velvick to write a series of monthly articles on "The Art of the Swim Bait." He was one of the early pioneers in their development and currently is on the pro staff of Fish Harder Companies as a swim-bait specialist. Velvick's thoughts, ideas and tips will help you catch more bass on these baits.

Byron Velvick was one of the early pioneers in the development of



Mike Mace caught and released a 50 inch musky. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.

swimbaits in bass fishing.

In this, the introduction to our series, it's appropriate to begin by trying to define what a swimbait is, and what it isn't.

When I think of a swimbait I think about an artificial lure that mimics a baitfish. It's a lure that's characterized by a lifelike action and a lifelike appearance, a lure that puts bass in the boat because they believe it's the real thing.



Paul Fisher, from Parkersburg, caught a 7 pound, 5 oz. largemouth in a pond.

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lieve it's the real thing. They want to eat it.

It's not a reaction bait they want to kill, nor is it a flash bait they bite because they're curious. And size and weight have nothing to do with anything. There are swimbaits as small as 3 inches and as big as 16 inches. Some weigh much less than an ounce while others exceed 3 or 4 ounces.

It's not characterized by its construction, either. Some are made from soft plastic, others from wood or hard plastic. Some are jointed, but just as many get their action from a lip or from the engineering design of the bait's body and tail.

In short, a swimbait swims and looks like the real thing.

I started fishing with swimbaits in the ocean off the California coast

continue to the next page

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n the early 1990s. I noticed that I caught rather small saltwater fish on really big baits. At the same time I was getting serious about bass fishing in freshwater. The lakes I was fishing were stocked with trout. In fact, they were the primary forage.

Around the same time a small group of California anglers were fishing for the world record with live bait — mostly crawfish. I reasoned that if they could catch giant largemouth bass on a tiny crawfish surely I could catch them on a big swimbait, especially if they were feeding naturally on big rainbow trout.

By 2000 I was hard into swim-baits. They were my bass fishing thing. I was attracted to them mostly because they were different. No one else was using them. My success was a closely guarded secret. So secret that when I caught one on a big bait during a tournament, I'd express surprise that it actually caught something. That kept my co-anglers from catching on and spreading the word.

All of my baits were handmade at the time, and most of them resembled rainbow trout in one form or another. Commercial production was non-existent. You either made them yourself in the garage, or you didn't have any. Over time, though, a few small custom shops began producing them. But even then they were mostly one of a kind special order items.

Over time my swimbait skills matured. I quickly learned the single most important lesson about these baits: Without exception, a swim-bait must match the hatch. If it doesn't, it's useless.

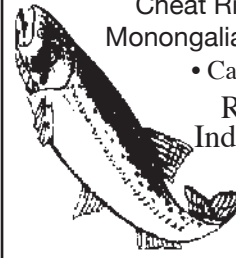
Matching the hatch isn't just about color, or size or movement. It's about all those things combined. A good bait must look like the real thing. First, that means the color must match the color of the prevailing forage. The best tilapia bait in the world won't be successful in a lake that doesn't have tilapia in it.

Bait color is also affected by water color. Colors don't look the same in clear, slightly stained and muddy water. They take on a different appearance. The lure must look like what's in the lake given the current water conditions.

Size is another factor. A 4-inch thin bait looks very different than a 4-inch fat bait. They make different profiles when pulled through the water. Size isn't just about length. It's about bulk and the appearance of bulk, too.

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Think of it this way: A rainbow trout doesn't have the body shape of a bluegill. So a rainbow trout finish on a bluegill body doesn't match the hatch, regardless of how accurate the colors may be on it. It doesn't look right. It doesn't have the right bulk.

Finally, we come to movement. Motion is made up of two parts — lure design and angler retrieve. A good swimbait — one that catches bass — must be engineered to swim like the real thing. If the lure isn't capable of a natural swimming action, you can't catch fish with it.

Next, your retrieve must match the real thing. If the local baitfish swim long distances without stopping or changing speed, your retrieve should duplicate that. If, however, the local forage stops and starts as it swims along, your bait should do the same.

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Catch-And Release

Some species such as largemouth and smallmouth bass have a higher percentage of catch and release than most species

A dead-weight tug on the end of my line signaled that the largemouth bass under the dock was indeed hungry. I swept the rod back and the four-pound fish rocketed up out of the water. She battled every foot of the way to my hand.

I reached down, tweaked the hook and felt it stick in the armor of the fish's cheek. Realizing the barb on the 3/0 Mustad Ultrapoint hook had done its job, I pulled out my pliers, crushed the barb flat and slid



Greg Bash brought in a nice gobbler. *Photo courtesy of Willie's Sport Shop in Glenville.*

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the hook out of the gaping mouth of the late-summer largemouth.

Catch and release is a fun and effective way of preserving the resource on any water. However, simply hooking and releasing fish is not the only facet of the practice. There are many other areas anglers should focus on for a successful experience. What follows are just a few tips to help anglers successfully practice catch and release.

1. Go barbless

A growing trend which originated in trout country is the use of barbless hooks. These hooks do little damage to the mouth of a fish and make it much easier to release. If you can't find barbless hooks, smash the barb flat with your pliers. You will find that most fish still stay hooked when properly played and they swim off with far less pressure on their jaws and mouth.

2. Wash your hands

No, you don't need to use soap or scrub for 20 seconds, but before

handling a fish or lifting it up for a photo, make sure you give your hands a quick dunk in the water. By doing so, you reduce the amount of friction that dry hands put on the slime coat of a vulnerable fish. If you don't plan to photograph the fish, unhook it while it is in the net or the water.

3. Needlenose power

Perhaps the most effective tool in catch-and-release fishing is the needlenose pliers. A decent model runs around five dollars and can last for seasons, presuming you don't drop it in the river. The long pliers can reach hooks that are back in the mouth and in other tough-to-reach places. Furthermore, the extra prying power is a welcome advantage when releasing fish. For smaller fish like bluegill, try a forceps or hemostat to aid in hook removal.

It's important to know how to properly release fish or there's no point in doing it at all

continue to the next page

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4. Limit your hooks

Lures with six or nine hooks running up and down them can pose a problem for releasing fish. Oftentimes hooks on the back of a minnowbait will land in the mouth, while the others will snag the eyes, gills and head. Not only do multiple hooks damage these vital organs, but also the removal of the trebles takes longer. That time out of the water poses a risk to the fish. Try using single hooked jigs or lures with fewer hooks when the situation allows for it; or eliminate one set of trebles, which also helps reduce snagging on bottom structure.

5. Cut ties, if necessary

When it comes to big fish like muskellunge and pike, bigger baits work best. Be prepared to part with some of your stickbait's hooks if the moment calls for it. If a hook is buried deep in the maw of a big esox, use a hook cutter to set the beast free. Cut the metal as close to the flesh as possible. The hook fragment will be forced out of the animal through time and the fish suffers less stress at boat side.

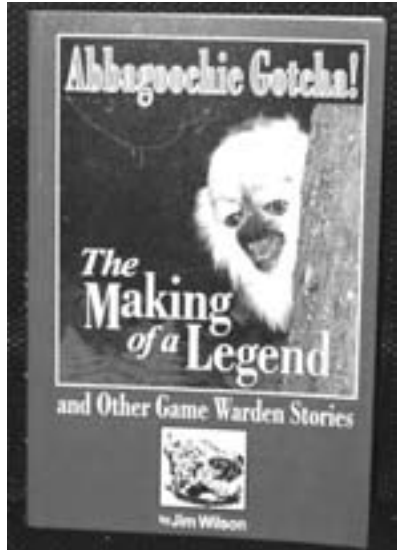
6. Check your net

When fish can't be lipped because of their teeth or must be landed with a net due to their size, make

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sure your net does little or no harm. Purchase a mesh cradle when pursuing big fish like muskies and use a rubberized net for other fish like walleyes, trout and bass. A good model is the Tangle Free Rubber Net from Frabill (www.frabill.com). The non-collapsing rubber net prevents unnecessary damage to the slime coat of a fish.

7. Pick your battles

Nothing is more exciting than a bulldogging pull of a bass or the drag-squealing run of a monster northern pike. But fighting a fish for too long can cause irreparable damage from lactic acid build up. Just as when your muscles ache the next day after a hard workout, fish suffer the same problem. But this acid build-up can kill fish. Limit the fight time to help the fish survive.

8. Know when to say when

continue to the next page



Tom Haddox hooked a big catfish.
Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.

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Blood in the water is never a good sight. If a fish is gill hooked, bleeding or injured badly do not release it. There's no sense in wasting the resource be responsible and know when a fish should not be released.

9. The thirty second rule

Take a deep breath. How long can you hold it? Thirty seconds is about the average. Now imagine you're a fish. Along those lines, think of how long that fish can stay out of the water without oxygen. Try to limit the time a fish is exposed to the air and out of its natural environment. Have a buddy ready with a camera and keep the photo session brief.

10. See them off

When releasing a fish, be gentle, do not toss the fish back into the water. Cradle the fish in your hands and slowly move it forward in the water or hold it facing the current. This moves water over the gills and helps the fish recover. Feel for the fish attempting to swim off. Hold it near the tail until it pulls away. If you see the fish go belly up a few moments later, refer to tip number eight.

By following these points, C&R anglers can help ensure that their preferred method of fishing continues creating opportunities for others...in our outdoors.



Donald Belcher, from Summersville, took a nice buck.

Farm Ponds

Many of North America's small ponds are home of our biggest and most denaopulated bass. Here I will tell you the tricks in landing that lunker from small, and often overlooked, ponds.

Farm Ponds:

Farm ponds are usually a very small and featureless lake filled by runoff or it may be connected to a stream. On average they are around 15 feet deep throughout the whole pond with no shallow areas. In these type of ponds largemouth bass will usually stick to the very edge of the water. On sunny days, the larger bass will be sticking to the side with the most shade. For example, if the sun is at the east, then fish the east side of the pond which will give the most shade due to long grass or other land-grown vegetation. Since farm ponds are mostly featureless, look for any irregularities that exist. If there is an overhang tree providing shade, work the area very thoroughly be-

cause without a doubt there will be a big old bucketmouth waiting there to ambush its prey. If there is other cover (ex. flooded brush), again, fish it thoroughly. The thing about farm ponds is that cover is scarce and if you know of some, then the largest bass in the pond will be close by. If you do not notice any cover you should cast parallel to the edge of the pond. Since farm ponds are not usually a tourist to fishermen and are mostly hiding in the middle of nowhere they get fished seldom. Therefore, the bass are usually very active and will be willing to strike a wider variety of lures and colours.

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Look On Page 38**

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Megan Carnahan shot this 20# gobbler in the Ohio youth season.



Young Tyler Seaver, from Ravenswood, hooked a 49 1/2" catfish that weighed 45 pounds. He got the fish by the Belleville Dam on the Ohio River.

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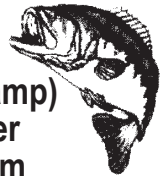
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CJ Sundstrom, from Mt. Claire, hooked a 6 pound 14 ounce rainbow.

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Terry Knight, from Missouri, with a 4 pound, 6 oz New River bass .



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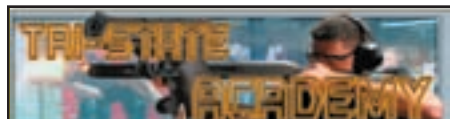
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Braxton Cooper took a cow elk at Double "D" Ranch. Photo courtesy of Bowlistic Archery in Chelyan.

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Jimmy Wilson hooked a 5 pound-river smallmouth. Photo courtesy of Hess Fish & Tackle in Harrisville.



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Daniel Miller brought in a nice buck with a bow from Wyoming County. Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.

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Ask The Pro: Mike Wurm

Q: Since turning pro, what fishing-related question have you been asked most often? How do you typically respond?

- OperationBass.com staff, Conn.

A: The one question that seems to come up most often is: "How do you approach all the different lakes and new locations and still catch fish?" This question often is asked by individuals who have fished most of the time on one lake and are now faced with traveling to other bodies of water.

The best answer I can think of is to try to first reduce the size of this new body of water so that you can cover a smaller area. Look at a map of the lake or river and choose a single creek arm or bay or maybe



Randy Weaver caught a nice catfish at this pay-lake. *Photo courtesy of Family Fishing in Grafton.*

a bend of river or area of main bank to begin your trip. Being intimidated by the sheer size of some of these lakes is easy to understand.

Next, after remembering the time of year, type of water (lake, river, etc.) and weather, approach the general location of fish accordingly. Try to fit the area to the style or kind of fishing that you like to do. You will be more confident and receptive to the information you discover as well as what is going on with the body of water in general.

And finally, take the information learned from that small segment of the lake (or river) and, looking at the maps, find other sections with the same characteristics and apply what you learned from the first area to the new area. Hopefully, a pattern will emerge. If not, remember that eliminating stretches of water can also be very helpful for your future fishing experience.

Q: I'm overwhelmed with the number of spinnerbaits available on the market. What do the different sizes do differently and when should I use one over another?

- J. Fickbohm, Clearwater, Fla.

A: In regard to spinnerbaits, generally try to match the size of the spinnerbait, especially the blades, to the size of the baitfish. The blades present the flash and vibration to the fish and are usually the first the fish sees and relates to.

The three main styles - Colora-

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do, Indiana and willow leaf - each have distinct vibrations and flash. Colorado and Indiana styles give the most vibration while the willow leaf presents the most flash. Colorado and Indiana blades are better used under conditions when the water is off-colored and stained or muddy. The willow leaf is better in clear water.

The different weights of a spinnerbait -
continue to the next page



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bait not only relate to the size of the lure but also relate to how deep you need the lure to get down in the water. The smaller sizes, one-eighth and one-quarter ounce, are better suited for shallow water or for situations where the baitfish are small. The larger lures, three-eighths, one-half and three-quarter ounce, are for larger applications such as deeper water presentation and larger baitfish.

Spinnerbaits can be very effective from the surface to very deep water to fishing on the extreme bottom. The three-eighth and one-half ounce sizes are probably the most common because of the size and ease of casting. One thing to remember when fishing the spinnerbait is to vary the retrieve until the fish tell you which one is the right retrieve. A cast around any type of cover is usually better.

Q: I've been fishing southern California waters for several years without much luck. There's plenty of vegetation, but not much structure. What can I do?

- Chris Baade, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.A: It's important to remember that vegetation, oftentimes, is the structure that bass are relating to. Many lakes and rivers through-



A nice golden trout was brought in. Photo courtesy of PC Bait in Hinton.

out the country probably could use a little more vegetation; however, lakes with too much vegetation can also present some problems for anglers.

When fishing vegetation, or any type of structure, always watch for anything different or irregular. This could be a change of grass type, a point of vegetation, an open hole in the grass or especially an isolated clump or mass. It is usually these irregularities where the bass locate to ambush their prey. A point comprised of grass can be every bit as effective as a land point or point of rocks. Also take notice where two types of vegetation come together or a log or rock is situated within a grass bed. Both can be very effective areas.

Lures and presentations should be of the shallow variety. Topwater lures can be very effective in this situation. However, the easiest lure and one of the most reliable is probably the plastic worm. Texas-



rigged fishing works well here also because the components are extremely versatile in both color and use. Weedless spoons and spinnerbaits can be utilized to cover a lot of territory. Soft-body jerkbaits also can present a different profile to the fish.

Remember, always pay close attention to detail with each fish you

continue to the next page



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catch and apply what you learn to catch another. When fishing vegetation, note exactly what type of vegetation, depth, location, point or hole, etc. and find other situations like that to catch other bass.

Q: I've been an avid bass angler



Mike Vanripper went to Santee Cooper for this 38 pound blue catfish. Photo courtesy of Cheat Trips in Independence.

for years and have become quite skilled at it. I'm thinking of hitting the tournament trail. What advice can you give me to make this transition?

- Bryan Sweet, Fairmont, Minn.

A: With professional bass fishing becoming more and more noticeable and visible on television and in other media, many individuals are beginning to think about tournaments. Making the transition from recreational fishing to tournaments can be very exciting and rewarding or very frustrating and costly.

If you are just beginning to fish tournaments, proceed in steps by first fishing local or weekly four-hour tournaments or their equivalent. Get a feel for fishing for a prescribed time and work on concentration and focus. There are many good team tournament series out there and pairing up with a friend with tournament experience helps a lot.

Proceed from the smaller tournaments to a more organized tournament trail, either draw or pro-am, with a championship at the end of



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the season so you can get used to accruing points and fishing more consistently. What should be happening now is that you will begin to gain more exposure to different types of water. Remember, fishing tournaments does not mean that you know it all. Keep learning every time you are on the water and also learn from every partner. However, if you choose to begin fishing tournaments, do not forget to come up with a plan and a set of goals. This gives you a focus and a measuring stick for your success. And, one last thought: Always think positive, have confidence and believe in yourself.

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Youth With Drive Program

Introducing young people to the game of golf and maintaining interest as a lifetime outdoor activity is the focus of a new "Youth With Drive" program starting this spring at Pipestem Resort State Park. Qualifying youth participants will get a 50 percent discount on greens fees.

"Golfers aged 16 or younger, when accompanied by a paying adult, will automatically get this half-off greens fee rate at both our Short Course and Championship Course throughout the golf season," Pipestem golf professional Phil Weichman said.

Youth participants also receive a

20 percent discount on Pipestem Pro Shop merchandise as well as food service at Mulligan's Restaurant after presenting a golf receipt on the golf play date when accompanied by a paying adult. "Youth With Drive" does not require an overnight stay.

Weichman also offers "Youth With Drive" golf clinics. The clinics are scheduled every Friday from June 18 through July 16 at 9 a.m. for youth when accompanied by an adult. "Sometimes a little advice about technique, golf rules and etiquette and general play helps youngsters enjoy the game more," said Weichman. The clinics are open to any youth interested in learning golf and last about 45 minutes.

Junior Season Passes also are offered at Pipestem Resort. "Junior passes are very reasonably priced and allow young men and women an affordable opportunity to learn the game of golf without breaking a parent's wallet," Weichman said. Youth passes are \$200 and are for individuals 18 years of age and younger. Play is unlimited except

on weekends and holidays when Junior Pass holder play is open after 2:30 p.m.

"Winter snows have rewarded us with early greening and the turf grasses are in great shape," says Dave Caplinger, park superintendent. "Our challenge is to encourage adults to get the clubs out and play golf and, more importantly, to continue to the next page



Randy Timmons, from Harrisville, hooked a 45" musky.



Jesse Yates caught a large drum. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.



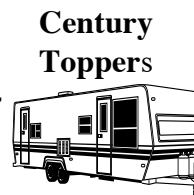
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serve as a mentor to a youth and promote this healthy lifetime sport. What we offer is an affordable and enjoyable opportunity for adults, parents, guardians, uncles and aunts to play golf and to bring a kid out to join the fun."

Golf and more outdoors opportunities at Pipestem and other state parks

The championship and Par 3 short courses at Pipestem challenge the most senior of golfers but are also forgiving of youth and adults new to the game. "Once you've played either course here at the park, you'll return," said Weichman.

Frequent golfers recognize season passes as a best rate value. Season passes are available for single players with add-on options for immediate family members. Reciprocal play at other state parks courses is part of the season pass value.

"In addition to unlimited play at Pipestem as a pass holder, season passes include two plays at Cacapon, Twin Falls and Canaan Valley resort state parks and reduced fee play at Stonewall Resort," Weichman explained.

In addition to the two golf courses, Pipestem Resort State Park features lodges, cabins, campground, horseback riding, restaurants, hiking, and fishing. Pipestem is less than a two hour drive from Charleston and White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia or the Blacksburg, Wytheville, Radford and Roanoke areas of Virginia. From the Beckley and Bluefield/Princeton areas, Pipestem is a short drive.

For more information about Pipestem Resort State Park, golf and other outdoor opportunities, call 304-466-1800. More information is available by viewing our website.

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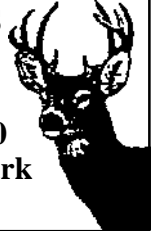
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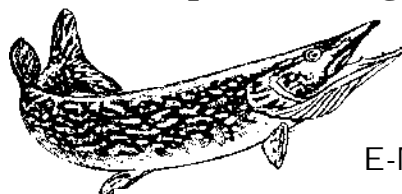
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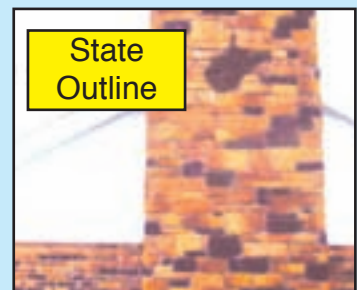
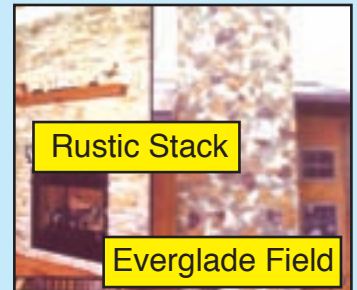
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