Advanced Tactics
Pressured Walleyes

PRESENTED BY

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FISHING THE
WILDSIDE®
Goals for Today...

- Rewire how you think about walleyes.
- Help you build effective patterns by translating what you experience on the water into good decisions.
- Help you identify opportunities that others miss...by looking outside the “walleye” box for solutions.
- Help you tweak presentations to make them more effective. “Little things” like line choice does impact success.
• Chip Leer is a passionate and respected multi-species angler. 2019 Inductee into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

• Stage host of the world’s most prestigious walleye tournament circuit, Bass Pro Shops/Cabela’s National Walleye Tour

• The angler driving the popular digital fishing information hub, Fishing the Wildside.

• He is an industry influencer has shaped many of the products we fish with and refined techniques we use daily to catch fish. Over his 30 plus year career he has been the tournament director of the In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Trail, TV Host of the FLW Walleye Tour, co-host of In-Fisherman Ice Guide TV, and published in numerous regional and national publications.
Walleye...Not a Mythical Beast

Angler success still hampered by misconceptions about walleye

- 1965 Bill Binkelman – Nightcrawler Secrets
- Preached small hooks, light line
  - Lots of disciples—Spence Petros, Lindners (Lindy Rig), many others.
  - First generation of anglers with access to mono, spinning gear and sonar … made finesse possible and they killed fish!

The Problem—There are still anglers who believe the only way to catch walleyes is finesse rigs and live bait!
Exploding Walleye Myth

- Early days of MWC (Manufacturer’s Walleye Council), boys from the Dakotas showed up with bottom bouncers and guys from Minnesota thought they were nuts... they weren’t
- Bouncers aren’t just for bouncin!
- Keep an open mind
There is no magic lure or bait!

- Some work much than others, but no lure is the best every day.
- The difference between catching fish and getting skunked is often very small - something as simple as the line you are using or the sinker can impact success.

**FISH TALE** - Bass/Carolina Rig...finesse power
**FISH TALE** - Spoon is not a Spoon/Jig is not a Jig
Catching Pressured Walleyes...

You target “Pressured Fish” every day...
Live on a great walleye lake... see effects of pressure daily - boat after boat hit best spots multiple times

“Pressured fish” are fish reacting to the presence of anglers...
- They move, typically off a spot, even when feeding
- Quit biting
- Respond to new presentations (importance of new tackle)
- Finesse techniques and live bait can be killer, but then so can power fishing
Catching Pressured Walleyes

1. Find Fish Others Can’t

Consistently successful anglers are those who find unpressured fish

- Secondary areas now key
- Non-traditional walleye spots
- Lot of pressure on good spot?
- Play detective ahead of arrival
- Ask yourself – WHERE DID THEY GO?
Effects Mapping on Walleye Fishing

- Back in 90s, was there when Magellan unveiled portable GPS
- Mapping soon arrived-blown away on a trip... found marker bouy...7 miles out and 2 feet under the water!
- Mapping still blows me away because the information available:
  - Easily locate structure (and so can everyone else)
  - Overhead view provides useful info on what’s holding fish
  - Look at depth, is structure is shoreline connected or mid-lake
  - What’s around it---deep, shallow, contours (fast, slow)
  - Shape (points, inside turns...)
  - NOW FIND OTHER SIMILAR AREAS!
Walleyes live in the green stuff!
Some anglers still avoid weed walleyes!

Early 1990s MWC - Cane in Winnebago System - Stiles and Berry

- Perry Good - Gull Lake tourney took big walleyes using bottom-bouncers, spinner rigs and plastic worms to pluck weed walleyes to 7 pounds

Rainy Lake - Mid-July: pods of walleyes in shallow cabbage chasing jerkbaits

- Great Summer Pattern - Rattle baits over mid-lake humps - Pine Mountain, Edward—fish to 10, with bonus bass, crappie and pike

**FISH TALE** - Walleyes on Bass Spinner Baits
Bottom Bouncer = Weed Deflector
Break From the Rules

- Innovation comes when you don’t follow the crowd. Traditional walleye spots get hammered - see it daily.
- Fish where others aren’t, try things other don’t.

FISH TALE – Top waters in 60 feet
FISH TALE – Walleyes in harbor
FISH TALE - 70’ LOW walleyes
Study Types of Rejections
Catching Pressured Walleyes

3 Responding Effectively - No Bites

Change locations - when to change is one of fishing’s toughest questions
- Shallow to deep
- Shoreline to offshore
- Weeds to rock
- Different lake?

Presentation tweaks
- Speed up or slow down
- Change presentation direction
- Select best bait options
- Try different colors
Catching Pressured Walleyes

4 Decision Process - Every Rod Helps
Lure/Bait Selection

- Location determines presentation
- Doesn’t mean everyone in boat should use same bait or lure!
- Start with different presentations:
  Lures, colors, live baits, and let fish tell you what they want!

FISH TALE - Mille Lacs (leech vs minnows)
FISH TALE - small red spinner
Early Spring - Location / Techniques

Best Locations:

- Weedy Flats - Close to spawning areas
- Depths: 2-6 feet
  
  Fish here are spooky - trolling motor in or you blow fish out. Fish can be scattered over whole flat, but typically found in small schools - catch a fish, work the area before moving on.

- Wind and cloud cover help bite
- Cast with wind
- Avoid shallow back bay - want harder bottom areas
1. Jigs—Very Effective
   - 1/32, 1/16, 1/8, 1/4 ounce typically best. Go as large as you can to fish fast - that may mean 1/32 ounce

2. Artificial vs. Live Bait
   - Both work--artificial baits are tougher, last longer. Lots of reaction strikes

3. Top Lures
   - Impulse Smelt Minnow 3.5’ & 4.5”
   - Impulse Jigging Leech
   - Impulse Paddle Minnow
   - Note: tip jigs with a piece of crawler if you MUST have live bait for confidence

5. Jig Stroke
   - Most of the time I use standard jig stroke, but there are times when ripping or slow swimming action works better.
   - Short, precision casts to weed edge or weed holes are preferred, especially when fishing denser milfoil

6. Bass Tactics for Walleye
   - Drop Shot
   - Jika rig
Line Selection

1. Braided Lines
   - No Stretch - Sensitive, great hook sets
   - Floats (Important)
   - Must tie good knots
   - Great casting distance

2. Fluorocarbon
   - Nearly invisible Underwater
   - Sinks
   - Stretches

3. Monofilament
   - Neutrally buoyant
   - Stretches (25-28%)
   - Knot strength is great
Crank Baits

Deadly for weed walleyes.

- In many fertile lakes, weed walleyes are found very shallow 3-4 feet, and respond very well to small cranks - like #4 and #5 Flicker Shads and Shad Raps. Baits have sunfish profile!

- Superb baits in low light...rattles work well then. Throw on 8-pound Bionic Braid on 7-foot spinning rod. I usually add a short leader of 8-pound mono...makes it easier to re-tie quickly.

- Short casts—steady retrieve with numerous rod twitches - Key

- Trolling - line lining minnow imitators works well after dark, as does working the outer edge of the weed flat with shad style baits. Move up bait sizes as needed - #6 & 7 Flicker shads.
Color Selection

Fishing the Wildside
Late Spring - Summer

1. Key Locations:
   * When weeds get really thick, walleyes move to the outer edges and concentrate in areas like points, inside turns and cups, in areas adjacent to the main-lake basin...
   * The key here is covering water. You are faced with lots or green, relatively little gold.

2. Key Techniques:
   * Trolling – especially with Bottom bouncers and spinners.
   * Go as heavy as needed to maintain a 45-degree angle to bottom
   * Run the trolling motor for stealth.
   * Spinner rigs - leave the dock without live-bait and try baits like the Impulse crawler, jigging leech or rigging leech or the new 7-inch Spinner crawler, which has built-in bends for more action on the hook. No panfish issues.
Rigging for late Spring - Summer

Spinner Rig Alternative - Slow Death
- Based on Slow Death hook and short piece of artificial or live crawler
- Most full-time guides and tournament pros have a personal version
- Reduce size of GULP packages and ad IMPULSE crawler package

Plain Hook, Floaters
- Plain Hook
- Floaters
- Gulp Pinched Crawler
Jig Worms
• Killer this time of year

Structure Trolling
• Deep-diving baits for shorter line and more control.
• Using your map and sonar to stay tight to cover,
• Troll the edges of weedlines
• Focus on core areas like points, inside turns and cups.
• Mark places you catch fish and go back and jig
Minnesota has over 11,000 lakes Less than 7% infested –
  • It’s far from over!

Why
  • 50,000 non-native species (terrestrial and aquatic) in North America, 4300 of those are considered invasive
  • There are 796 fish (marine and freshwater) species listed on the USGS list of non-natives and 199 aquatic plants

Did you know
  • 21 Day Dry Mandatory for any equipment transfer. 
    Docks, Swimming raft, Irrigation pump

Behavior Change is the answer
  • Seat Belts, Fish Harvesting, Life Jackets
  • AIS campaign launch 40% vs. current 2% of Boat Plug law violators (97% compliance, 98% have no weeds)

What can I do
  • Talk, Talk, Talk! Family, Friends, Neighbors, visitors & other boaters
  • Share information on social media
    Don’t be shy…. Speak up more!
  • Think Small = Aqua shoes & water toys
Let's Talk Fishing!
Thank You!
& Happy Fishing!

www.FishingTheWildside.net