

Alternative Livebait Presentation

Here in the Dakota's (birthplace of the Bottom Bouncer) the vast majority of Walleye Angling is based on a Bouncer and livebait setup. Most folks turn to a Spinner Rig or Plain Snell/Bead or Float Combination. This is as easy as it gets and has taken an uncountable number of fish throughout the years.

Early in the year you will typically see the Plain Snell option used to slowly and thoroughly cover small specific areas. As the water temperature and the fish's activity level rises they begin to scatter into Summer locations. This is when the Spinner setup comes into play as you can move quicker and cover more ground.

One problem that each of these methods has is that they are both highly speed dependant. Kick up the speed with the Plain Snell and it can look just plain goofy and actually spin out of control and loose appeal. Fish the Spinner Combo below 1mph and the blade stops spinning and the whole rig begins to fall to the bottom. Now all you're catching is rocks and bottom debris.

What I am going to relate to you is an alternative method that effectively bridges the gap between slow and methodical and quick and dirty. What I'm referring to is the Mack's Lure Smile Blade. They offer you the best of both worlds in one unique package.

What the Smile Blade consists of is a Mylar blade with a Delta wing shape. They are extremely light and will easily turn at speeds as slow as 1/4 mph and excel up to the 2mph plus range. Thus allowing us to fish this attractor in all seasons, all locations and at whatever speed we feel the fish want it. Another advantage is that you can fish them off a Bouncer, Walking Sinker or a Slip Bouncer.

Most times I prefer to go with the Slip Bouncer as you can fish it as you would a traditional Bouncer *or* you can fish it slip sinker style. This gives us the opportunity to drop line to light biting fish, which often seems to be the case. Try this with a Spinner and if the fish doesn't firmly have the bait all you've done is place the whole rig on the bottom. It is highly effective to pump and pause your presentation. This intensifies the spinning action for a moment and then the Smile Blade will seductively flutter back. Walleye's are notoriously opportunistic and these two distinctly different motions will closely imitate a weak or injured baitfish falling out of a school and like prey that is scurrying to get away. An instinctive response will be the result.

They come in various sizes with numerous colors to satisfy even the most color conscious fisherman. I prefer to tie my own based on what I think will work given the time of year, forage base, water color, bait choice, etc. etc. A common combination for me is to incorporate a float to provide buoyancy surrounded by beads of an offsetting color to help it stand out. The most important consideration in your rig is to incorporate a premium hook. My choice is the Walleye Wide Bend series from Gamakatsu.

The Smile Blade, while not well known in many parts of the country, is beginning to gain serious attention from Tournament Fisherman and Guides along with recreational fisherman. If your local retailer doesn't carry them, ask them to get some in. If you are still having trouble you can always turn to Cabela's or order direct at www.mackslure.com.

DENNIS FOSTER
16 2ND AVENUE
MELLETTTE, SD 57461
USA

PHONE: 605 - 887-3451
CELLULAR: 605 - 450-1069
E-MAIL: dennis@nvc.net
WEBSITE: www.eyetimepromotions.com