

Choosing and Rigging New Equipment

If you haven't updated your boat and accompanying equipment recently it may be time to head on down to your local dealer and check out what's available.

Notice I said "local". As with most purchases, you will be better off dealing with hometown folks. As a rule, you will be treated fairly, service is often better, and of course, close by. Just buy a new boat or equipment from a dealer hundreds of miles away and see how well you are cared for the first time there is a problem. Not to mention the time, travel and hassle involved in correcting minor glitches or routine maintenance.

The best way to avoid encountering problems is to do your homework and buy quality products from a reputable dealer from the start. Have all of your accessories rigged properly and your new package will afford you years of enjoyable and reliable use.

I have been personally running Triton Boats powered by Mercury in conjunction with MinnKota trolling motors and Raymarine electronics; which are serviced by the Sportsman in Aberdeen , for several years with great satisfaction.

Once you have researched all of your options and have made a decision to spend some of your hard earned money on a new boat and or accessories, your final and in my opinion most important consideration is in the rigging. I'll give you one very firm bit of advice on this subject: Do Not Cut Corners! The first time you do I can guarantee you'll pay for it in short order.

We subject our gear to a great deal of abuse in conditions that are often harsh. Any weak links will quickly be apparent. Equipment failures will earn you a trip back to the shop to remedy what should have been done correctly in the first place.

Before anything is mounted you should spend a great deal of time considering how the equipment will be used and the ergonomics involved. Accessories need to be functional and not interfere with each other. Actually get in the boat and envision yourself performing all fishing related activities. Such as raising and lowering trolling and kicker motors, viewing electronics from all angles, using rod holders for various techniques, casting, netting fish, etc. Mark out with tape where want each item. Visualize everything that can go wrong and adapt your locations accordingly. Do this over a couple of sessions until satisfied that all is correct and workable. This may sound trivial or even anal but you'll be glad that you took the time to do it. A poorly thought out arrangement will prove to be inconvenient at best and a constant irritant. Once installed, you will have to live with it. After holes have been drilled they can't be erased.

Make sure to use the heaviest wire suitable for each electronic application. Quality connections are a must, and will fail, if not. Solder connections wherever possible to prevent corrosion or breakage. Place all fuses where easily accessible. Upside down under the dash bouncing in big waves while trying to locate, let alone replace a fuse is no fun. Been there done that.

All of this applies whether you are handy enough to rig all of the components yourself or have the service provided. If your dealer does it, be sure to be very specific down to the smallest detail. It must be clear to the man doing the work what your intentions and preferences are. After all, this is

your boat and not his. Your enjoyment and even safety depend on it.

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