

Dual Purpose

In our quest to catch walleye's, easily the most important skill any successful angler must have is the ability to actually feel a bite. Without this, all the time, effort, and resources we have expended to get to this point are futile. Yes, some folks seem to have a little more natural sensitivity in their hands, but unless you possess some sort of physical handicap, we all possess the same basic senses.

It all comes down to the tools we choose in which to perform our fishing duties. You wouldn't use a 10 pound sledge hammer to drive a finish nail; would you? Yeah, it may work, but there are much better solutions for the task at hand. Same scenario in the rods we select, as they are what allows us to present our bait in a manner that will elicit a strike...and ultimately relay that information through our hands.

Companies such as St. Croix, Loomis, and Fenwick continue to use high modulus graphite and innovative techniques to construct rods that are incredibly light and sensitive. You may even want to explore the option of going to smaller custom shops such as HH Custom Fishing Rods for more unique solutions and next generation materials such as Kevlar. These are all finely tuned and balanced instruments that are an absolute joy to use and will allow you to effortlessly...fish hard all day. This alone is priceless.

To be brutally honest, most anglers are just too cheap to acquire a decent rod. Therefore they are reducing their opportunities on the intended purpose of any outing and that is experiencing the joy of actually catching fish. The aesthetic values of any outing are all good and fine, but personally, I go fishing to catch fish!

Yes, I know there is some sticker shock involved in high end rods, and many of you will balk at the notion of spending two or three hundred bucks for a rod. But...I'll pass along a solution that may help you justify just such a purchase. With just a little forethought you can choose a quality rod that will perform more than a single duty for you, thus maximizing your value.

I'll give you some examples: A good choice for a live bait rod to be used in a rod holder is a 7' to 7 1/2" foot Medium Light Spinning model with a bit of give in the tip section, but with a moderately fast action. Allows you to easily see bites with just enough relaxation that the fish does not immediately detect your presence. Purpose two is that the same rod works great for accurately casting small cranks to shoreline cover and structure.

Another one would be a 6 1/2' Medium Light Spinning model with an extra fast tip. Works great as a handheld rod for live baiting as the quick tip section lets you feel even the faintest take of your baits. Duty two is that the length of this rod is just right for pitching jigs to shoreline, and even as a primary vertical jigging rod for those of us who prefer a bit longer rod in general.

One of my personal favorites is St.Croix's Legend Tournament Walleye Slip Stick. It is

a telescoping rod that stretches to 8' with a soft-yet fast reacting tip section. Making it perfect for use as a dead rod and doubling up admirably as a slip bobber rod.

Food for thought and consider taking the plunge this year by stepping up to at least one truly great rod- doubling your pleasure and doubling your fun.