

## Lessons Learned

I was recently reminded of why it is so important to draw upon past lessons learned. This was poignantly driven home while I was fishing in a Fishing Crew Team Tournament Trail event on lower Lake Oahe with a partner that due to his incredible shyness and astute aversion of any public attention, shall remain nameless. In reality, the fella is a bit larger than life character with a unique name to match. Regardless, he shall continue on in anonymity for the purpose of this article. Quick Hint: name rhymes with the word Budge-as in won't.

Anyway, given the conditions-flat calm, with fish moving deeper-everything I have learned to date would indicate that pulling crankbaits right from the get go would be the logical thing to do. In ol' nameless's defense, he actually asked what the @#%\* I was doing when right away I pulled into a point, lowered the trolling motor, and broke out the livebait rods. Against better judgement and previously mentioned logic, I tried to convince myself-more than him-that being it was cloudy, we might luck out and pick up a few bonus fish before beginning to pull plugs. Besides, as he professes a deep hatred for crankbaiting and can be a bit cranky himself, I figured it would be a good idea to humor him...at least for a little while.

The end result was most likely a world record catch of five inch Smallmouths in a three and one half hour period...with but one seventeen and one half inch Walleye to show for our efforts. Once the dullness of utter stupidity wore off, I finally concluded that your first inclinations are usually the best and broke out the trolling gear. After some quick adjustments to dark colored plugs ran well above the level of the fish; so as to create a distinct silhouette against the dark sky-we actually began to catch some fish. Actually pulled three quality fish in our first pass and even managed to scratch one more with plenty of time to make the run back to weigh in.

Even with the late start on employing the proper tactics, our efforts were good enough to eke out a sixth place finish and qualify for the Fishing Crew Team Tournament Trail Championships to be held at Chamberlain, SD on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October. At stake are \$10,000 *and* a Lodge Ice Shack valued at \$24,000 for First Place. Pretty good take home for a \$400 entry fee and only 60 Teams competing.

While we are on the subject of the Fishing Crew Tournament Trail, there is one more qualifying event left on this year's schedule. The event will be hosted by the City of Pollock and be held September 11<sup>th</sup> from the West Boat Ramp. As with all events there is a minimal \$400 Entry Fee and a \$10,000 First Place Prize based on 60 Teams. Cutoff date for Entries is September 4<sup>th</sup> and the field is filling quickly. As several teams have already qualified for the Championship, it would be safe to say that you will not even have to finish in the top ten in order to earn a berth.

If you would like to learn more and maybe even discover the identity of the “unknown fisherman”, go to [www.thefishingcrew.com](http://www.thefishingcrew.com) or contact Director Dave Underhill at 605-690-4649.

As Paul Harvey used to say, “the rest of the story”, is that we should never outthink ourselves and in the process outsmart and ultimately reduce our chances at success. Let instincts be your guide, in most instances you will come out ahead.