

“THE ANCHOR: A VERY IMPORTANT TOOL”



18 pound 3-fluted River Anchor

By Chase Klinesteker CSI

WHY SHOULD I ANCHOR?

Both casting and trolling are needed to thoroughly fish all types of structure situations under varying weather and water conditions. Although the majority of a Spoonpluggers' time on the water over a given season is spent trolling, **once the fish are located, the best way to catch the most fish** is from an **anchored position**. By **anchoring shallow and casting deep** we can **keep a walking lure on bottom** all the way back to the boat. Fast and slow speeds can be checked in this manner. **Fan casting** from an anchored position is the **most thorough way** to check a pinpointed area. The main **goal** of Spoonpluggers is to **catch a number of adult fish** on consecutive casts from an anchored position. When a fish is caught and the boat is anchored, one can **immediately cast back to the same spot**, and if a school is present, catch a number more.

WHAT TOOLS ARE NEEDED?

An anchor with **adequate weight** is best. I prefer an **eighteen pound 3-fluke river anchor** because a shorter rope can be used than with a wind or navy type. A **thicker rope** (at least 5/8 inch diameter) works well and **makes lifting** the heavier weight much **easier**. A simple **knot in the rope about 2 feet above the anchor** is easy to grab and **lift it into the boat**. 50 feet of **rope** is minimal but **100 feet** is better, especially if one fishes structures that go 30, 40, or more feet deep. If there is much wind, anchoring in more than 20 feet of water would be difficult with only 50 feet of rope. One good way to **store the rope is on the side or deck of**

the boat between 2 large cleats about 3 or 4 feet apart. This allows for easy access and **quick drying**. **Cleats** at the **bow, stern, and midship** should be available to **quickly tie off** the anchor rope. A **marker** should be **used to spot the boat** in the desired location.

HOW DO I PROPERLY POSITION THE BOAT?

As an example, if a **fish is hit** on the troll and a **marker thrown**, the approximate location of the fish is known (e.g. 60 feet back if 2 colors and the same depth as lure size). If the structure is known (mapped previously), the exact spot for anchoring is easily determined. With a new structure, **a minute or two may be needed to check it with a depth sounder**. Another **marker is then thrown on the exact spot you want the boat to be for casting**. The boat is then **motored upwind** of the marker, the **anchor is dropped** from the stern, and **rope is let out until the boat reaches the marker**. The anchoring position should be **as shallow as possible** but still **close enough to reach beyond the fish** with a cast. Try to position the boat so **the lure will have the same depth, speed, and direction as on the troll**. If possible, position the boat to **cast with the wind** to allow longer casts and fewer backlashes. If a second anchor is to be used, the motor is used to reposition the boat perpendicular to the casting area and the other anchor is dropped. **2 anchors are needed when there are 2 or more people casting** and/or the wind is swinging the boat back and forth. In most situations the rope can be tied off at the stern, but **with brisk winds or large boat wakes, the rope must be cleated off the bow** for safety. Even in brisk winds, it is more accurate for the driver to drop the anchor from the stern and then walk to the bow to cleat the rope. The exact positioning of the boat can be critical and **5 or 6 feet can make the difference whether you catch fish or not**. There is little room for guesswork. **If you don't catch fish after 5 or 6 casts** with a walking lure, **reposition the boat**. **Leave the marker to help you visualize the structure form** and where the next position should be. Before leaving the area, **check it with jump lures** and more trolling passes at different depths.

ARE THERE SITUATIONS WHERE I SHOULD NOT ANCHOR AND CAST?

High wind and waves or heavy current usually **indicates a trolling situation** (or get off the water!). Also, **large gradual structures** like in the Great Lakes **require a mostly trolling presentation**. I fish from a 14 foot boat and if the 18 pound anchor tied off at the bow won't hold, I am forced to troll or head to calmer waters. Once fish were located (by trolling), **some of the best catches** I have had from an anchored position **were** when the **wind was blowing** 10-15 mph. Always evaluate the weather and waves first to **make sure you are safe**.

CAN I ANCHOR AND CAST IN A RIVER CURRENT?

Yes. With moderate current present, **anchor above the area being fished and cast downcurrent**. A proper size Spoonplug can be cast and will walk the bottom all the way back to the boat. When casting jump lures in this manner, **often ¾ ounce or better is needed**. **Terry O'Malley** likes his **jump lures** to **"cast like a bullet and sink like a rock"** for a more **efficient presentation**. Moderate fancasting can be done, but **casting perpendicular to the current or upstream** will **increase the chances of getting snagged** and be less accurate, so moving the boat may be indicated for wider areas. **Varying the length of the cast** will help get more **thorough coverage** of the area. Heavy current would dictate a trolling situation or to go fish areas with less current.

WHAT ARE SOME CASTING TIPS?

---When **fancasting**, make a **mental note of an object on the opposite shore** where the lure hits the water. You can then **return to the same spot if a fish hits on that cast**.

---**Always count down** the number of seconds it takes your lure **to hit bottom**. When fancasting, this will tell you **where the deeper water comes closer** and often **indicates the contact point**.

---Make a **note** of where the **harder bottom** is. This can be felt by the bottom walking lure and seen by watching the line with the jump lure. **Fish use harder bottom areas** for their pathways and sanctuaries.

---For better control of the fish, **use baitcasting reels**, 6 to 6 ½ ft. **medium-heavy casting rods**, and **14 to 17 pound** mono or braid **line**.

I AM ON A "PLATEAU" IN MY FISHING. WHAT CAN I DO?

Many Spoonpluggers have found themselves on a "fishing plateau", **feeling very frustrated**. They are catching some fish trolling, but **can't seem to get into schools on the cast**. Two very important areas of Spoonplugging often are the reason. The **first** is **lack of experience in mapping and interpreting** different structure situations under varying weather and water conditions. This can be overcome by the **drawing of maps and spending time on the water** following Spoonplugging procedures. This skill **requires discipline** to develop, but it is an essential prerequisite for getting into schools of fish. **On the water training** by a certified Spoonplugging instructor **helps many to get "over the hump"** in this area.

The **second** important area is **paying attention to detail** with proper anchoring and casting procedures. **Often, Spoonpluggers will not stop and cast after catching a fish trolling**, or if they do, only making a few half-hearted casts. They **do not pay attention to what structure is there or where they anchor the boat**. When they don't catch fish, they get frustrated and go right back to trolling. What they fail to see is **they may have missed the thrill of getting into a school of adult fish** on consecutive casts! If they caught a fish, there is likely a movement of fish occurring. **The fish have already been located. Trolling a larger area does not make sense** and the **movement will likely be short**. Anchoring and casting is only logical. Paying attention to detail when following procedures as outlined by Buck Perry is the key. **Practice and experience improves ones' skills. JUST DO IT!!**

Chase Klinesteker CSI