

# Worm Turns for Bass Fishermen Now Changing Style and Method

By CHUCK ROBERTS

Used to be — and not too many years ago — that to be a bass'n man meant flinging "full grown" plastic worms attached to line heavy enough to moor the Queen Elizabeth during a hurricane.

And then the rest of the battle came: the first time a two-pounder made it to the surface was the last time he got his tail in the water. A quick, short-lived fight that proved once again that rope for line, a winch for a reel and pool cue for a rod really could whip a youngster bass.

But the worm has turned — to shorter lengths — and the bass'n man is changing his style. Not only style but also his method because method can dictate style. He's going lightweight for the heavyweights and catching more bass in between.

What's with this lightweight stuff? Well, that's what it is... lightweight spinning equipment that's been fished by a lot of fishermen for a lot of years but has gotten the blessing of the pro fishermen the past season or two.

To Win — Must Catch

It's spinning equipment and the reason for its rising popularity is a combination of economics and logic: bass tournament winners win money and trophies. If they win. To win they must catch fish. More fish in total weight than the other fishermen.

More logic: there are more little fish in the lake than big fish. Little fish catch easier because (1) there are more of them and (2) they eat more frequently. Ten of these "little fish" (a limit) will generally weigh more than two or three of the bigger fish which may not bite anyway. Little fish bite better on smaller lures. To throw smaller, lightweight lures you need lighter tackle which says spinning tackle.

"There's another reason," emphasized bass tournament professional John Powell of Alabama. "Water clarity." And what the director of Zebco's Pro Advisory Staff is saying is that when fishing clear water lakes you have to back off from the fish and present the smaller bait.

"When I won the Table Rock National (63 lbs. in three days) I was down to 6# and 10# Stren line. The next tournament at Ross Barnett was the same thing. I had to go to 1/16 oz. Doll flies to catch fish."

See More Strikes

Powell believes that one key to fishing these light baits on spinning tackle is the line. He carries several pre-filled spools for his Cardinal 4 loaded with different tests of Stren line. "Line watching is the key. I'll see a lot more strikes than I feel and the fluorescence of Stren lets me see them. I liken fishing without watching the line to fly fishing with a popping bug with boxing gloves on my hands and a blindfold over my eyes. It don't work."

What percent of the bass pros carry and use spinning tackle? Powell says it's over 90%. Whatever the percentage, the results are good:

another Zebco field staffer, Glyn Wells, won back-to-back professional tournaments this spring on Cardinal spinning equipment.



Short rods and open-face reels gain popularity as bass fishermen wish to be more versatile.

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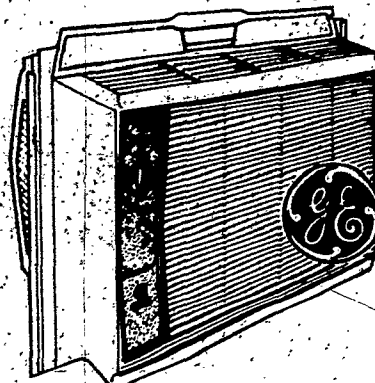
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