

Joel Janeczek - Trolling for Stripers with Artificials at SML

6.3.22

Joel's gear starts with 7' Ugly Stick Medium or Medium Heavy striper rod. Those are paired to Abu Garcia line counter 6500 reels which have star drag and reliable inline gears on the line counter. He sets the drag to the amount preferred when fighting fish. After putting the line out, then he backs off the drag by "2 star points". That way when a fish hits, the line will spool out and he can properly set the hook. Once hook is set, he adjusts drag back by 2 star points to the fish fighting level.

He prefers 30lb white braid as main line on spool, with 8' leader of 15lb fluorocarbon line. The leader attaches to braid with 60lb swivel. Changes leader every spring. Finally, he uses a crankbait snap (no swivel) to connect the lure to the leader.

He prefers dawn to noon for best 'flat water' trolling. Trolls at 3.7 mph, which not only makes the fish hit but also covers more area than slower speeds. Lightweight rod has 20lb braid and 12lb fluorocarbon for trolling smaller baits, which swim better on lighter line. Carries 6 trolling rods on his boat: 2 'lightweight' shallow lures, 2 'medium' depth, and 2 'deep diving'. Allows him to keep 2 rods in water most of the time. Runs two rods at a time because more rods create problems when you get a hit.

He used floating lures that don't sink and snag when putting boat in neutral to fight a fish on one line. One good producer is "Sexy Shad" (silver body w/ blue or black back or white body w/ chartreuse back). Bomber LongA is another favorite. It has two treble hooks. Rapala Jointed J13 is also designed with 2 treble hooks. On the 3 hook "Walleye Deep" lure, he takes off the middle treble to make it easier to use. Berkley Hit Stick is also a good trolling or casting lure, especially at night. Also 'tunes' new baits by putting it over a few feet from boat and watching closely to make sure it runs true, and not to one side or the other. If it pulls one side or the other, use pliers to gently tweak it toward the direction you want it to move.

He tests the lures to see how deep they run by removing trebles and watching depth chart while trolling over a point of known depth until they bump. Often they are not exactly what package states. Test each one to see for yourself! Lure sizes can also make a difference – 2", 4", 6" sizes of same lure produce differently at different times. If the bigger sizes are not working when you see fish, change to small size and go around again! Important: don't troll deeper than 20' or the SML trees will take your lures! Only exception is in center of the main river channel. If you are careful to stay within the channel, can run lures (or Alabama or umbrella rigs) deeper than 20'. Joel does not use either lead core, or downriggers, because wants lures and lines to float, not sink. Trolling Lures can be used on planer boards, if heavy duty clips (eg, Offshore brand) are used to replace the stock line clips on the board.

He keeps 4 casting rods in boat, in addition to the 6 trolling rods. They are rigged as follows: Storm wild eye shad swim bait, deep diving crank bait like Strike King XD, swamp monkey w/ zoom fluke, and white hair jig. Uses one of these when breaking fish are close by, or on a point that is hard to troll over. He throws to left or right of breaking fish because the school is always moving. He also will cast a deep diver when high birds are around, sometimes fish underneath the bait on top. Swamp monkey and hair jigs can also be 'dead sticked' (left alone in rod holder) especially if wind is creating some boat action.

TIP1: Change the hooks from original ones that come with lure to the "2x" heavy duty replacement models, to avoid having hooks straighten out and lose a good fish.

TIP2: If you see fish deep in main channel, let out 60-70 feet while stopped, then start boat so lures will 'float up' in the water column as boat begins to move forward.

TIP3: Always let out same amount of line (100') to learn how lures run and achieve consistent results. Too much line results in line resistance as water pushes against the line and makes it rise.

TIP4: Use a marking pen to add a touch of chartreuse to lures to make more appealing.

You can watch this recording on Facebook by clicking this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/SmithMountainStriperClub/videos/823202168654199>

Thank you, Joel, for sharing your insight and experiences!