

## Bassin' with the pros

In recent years, the technique of "flipping" has become one of the most effective ways of catching spooky bass out of thick cover in shallow water. Basically, it is a variation of vertical jigging in dingy water with a plastic worm or jig, and it has been credited with numerous national tournament victories.

Even more recently, tournament anglers have modified the flipping technique, changing it for use in clear, shallow water where bass are extremely wary. This new technique has been named "pitching", and it is best described as long-distance flipping.

"The advantages of flipping are that they let an angler present a lure very quietly, naturally, and accurately to a bass," explains Evinrude Outboards Pro Staff member Denny Brauer.

"While flipping is normally done right beside the boat, the pitching places the lure 30 or 40 feet away with the same accuracy and quiet approach. When bass are shallow in clear water lakes with heavy cover, or when bass are spooky because of heavy fishing pressure, pitching is an excellent way to approach them."

Brauer, recognized as one of the nation's experts at flipping and pitching, points out that pitching isn't difficult to learn, either, although gaining accuracy will take practice. The best pitchers, he says, can consistently drop a jig into a paper cup at 40 feet.

To learn pitching, Brauer recommends using a long 7 or 7½-foot rod as in flipping, although shorter casting rods can also be used. Open face spinning outfits work extremely well and are used by some pros.

"Pull about three feet of line off the tip of your rod," instructs Brauer, "and begin by holding the rod parallel to the water, just like you'd be starting a normal overhead cast. Bring the rod up sharply to about the 11 o'clock position, and then make a quick flick of the wrist, bringing the rod down like an underhand roll cast."

"It's really easier to do than to describe," Brauer laughs, "but what you want to do is send the lure out low over the water the same as in flipping. You might even describe pitching as a speeded-up flip. You use the speed of your wrist and rod movement to give the lure momentum."

Lure control is done by feathering the reel and by raising or lowering the rod. Basically, however, the rod should be pointing at the intended target as the lure lands.

"The most critical aspect of pitching," believes Brauer, "is developing an awareness of what your lure is doing. In flipping, most of the lure movement is vertically, but in pitching the lure moves horizontally."

"Actually, once your jig or worm lands after a pitch, most of the time you crawl it along the bottom or through the cover just as you would after a regular overhead cast. What pitching does is let you put your lure in the same

spot as casting, but without any noise or splash, and with more accuracy."

Unlike flipping, notes Brauer, anglers often pitch a lure repeatedly to the same spot, a technique frequently necessary to tempt spooky bass into striking.

"I can remember several tournaments on Florida's Lake Okeechobee that have been won by pitching," says Brauer. "The water there is very clear and the bass often hold around small clumps of grass in water less than three feet deep."

"We'd pitch worms to them four or five times, crawling the lure through the grass, before we'd finally get a strike."

"You couldn't move closer to the weeds to make a flip, nor could you make a regular overhead cast, because either one would spook the fish."

Boat control is extremely important in pitching, says the Evinrude Motors pro, because an

angler has to realize when he's close enough to make an efficient pitch. This comfort range of fishing develops with practice, and as an angler becomes more and more efficient, his pitching distance will increase.

Brauer recommends anglers work their lures with rods pointed high because of the increased sensitivity this gives. He also believes pitching fishermen should become dedicated line watchers.

"You won't always get a bone-jarring strike," he says. "Often, you won't even feel anything, but if you watch your line and develop an awareness of what your lure is always doing, you'll see strikes."

"As you're learning to pitch and work a lure, don't hesitate to set the hook if you think you may have a bite. It doesn't cost anything to swing your rod, and it only takes a split second to learn if you're right."

## Deadline Set Sept. 19 For Wetlands Conversion

Farmers are reminded that Sept. 19 will be the last opportunity for landowners, operators and others to apply for a commenced determination under the sodbuster-swampbuster provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill.

A commenced determination means a determination made by the county committee of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service that land had begun being cleared before Dec. 23, 1985.

Any individual who has farmland that was partially cleared prior to that date and wishes to finish the clearing for the purpose of crop production must receive a commenced determination before the crops grown on the land are eligible for program benefits, price support and other offerings of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Producers who clear land and plant a row crop or program crop on the land will not be eligible for any of the aforementioned benefits without a commenced determination from the county

committee. All farms will be checked in the near future by the Soil Conservation Service for compliance with regulations.

Farmers are encouraged to apply for a determination if they had land they began clearing before the target date.

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### Scouts Beginning Annual Fund Drive

This week Vanceboro's Boy Scout Troop 58 launched their annual TomWat sales project.

Each scout in the troop will be given a sales kit loaded with gifts appropriate for Christmas, birthdays, and anniversaries. They will take orders which will be delivered in November. The scouts use the money from their sales to pay for their summer camp at the Camp Bonner Scout Reservation at Blounts Creek and to defray other expenses of the troop throughout the year.

If you would like to have a scout show you the kit, call 244-0508 and an appointment will be made for you to inspect the kit.

### New President Of AMA Speaks At East Carolina

GREENVILLE—A speech by the newly elected president of the American Medical Association and a discussion of the nation's health care allocation crisis was the highlight of the 10th Annual Health Law Forum Wednesday at the East Carolina University School of Medicine.

During the morning session, participants in the allocation crisis — including representatives of hospitals, physicians, private and government insurers, and federal regulators — tackled sensitive issues involved in how to budget the nation's health-care dollars. The session began at 8:45 a.m. in the auditorium of the Brody Medical Sciences Building.

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