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Issue 291



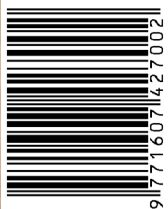
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Beating The Chills

How to Target Bass During a Cold Front | Drop-Shot Fishing | All About Jigs | About Tommy Sanders | Meet Kobus Retief
Dealing With Winter Blues | How To Deal With Angling Fears | Capitalize Catches After Another Angler's Been There
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About SA BASS magazine:

SA BASS, which is editorially and financially independent, is a monthly magazine catering exclusively for the bass angling community in Southern Africa. SA BASS is distributed country-wide to outlets, not only in South Africa, but also in Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana.

SA BASS is designed as a specialist bass fishing publication and has catered for a well-defined niche market since April 2001. It enjoys the support and endorsement of non-government organisations, but is not affiliated in any way to these bodies or to any other publishing, environmental or political interest group.

Our mission is to promote bass angling as a socially acceptable and popular outdoor recreational activity, and in addition, to encourage acceptable angling ethics. As such, SA BASS provides pertinent information on a wide range of subjects. These include providing a platform for informed debate on issues affecting the sport of bass angling, providing information on bass angling strategies and techniques, bass angling waters and opportunities, and also creating awareness of new products.

Within this editorial mix, due consideration is given to developing the sport among all the country's people (including the youth), and to the practical conservation of the country's natural resources.

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Bass fishing is as much as a mental sport as it is a physical one, learning how to maintain in shape within both body and mind will only help further set you successfully apart from the pack.
– Jay Röhm-Williams



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– Jay Röhm-Williams



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2. Keep a steady hand while the QR-code is centred on the screen.
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“Winter Blues”

Traditionally when that first cold snap of winter makes its presence felt, even the hardest anglers tend to put the rods down and pack away all those plastics.vv



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Deur baars se gedrag te verstaan, die regte toerusting te kies en tegnieke aan te pas volgens veranderende weerstoestande, kan jy jou kans om suksesvol te wees, verhoog.
– Philip Kemp



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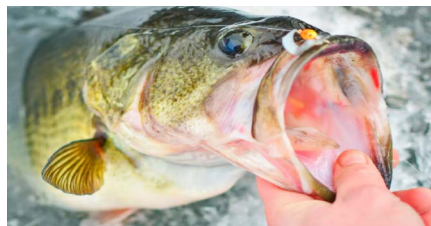
Whenever you are up for a challenge, you will not be disappointed with the sunrise and sunsets at Loskop Dam.
– Lucinda Engelbrecht



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In very cold water, a bass will move only a minimal distance for food. The bait of choice has to be something that is equal or greater than the energy expended.



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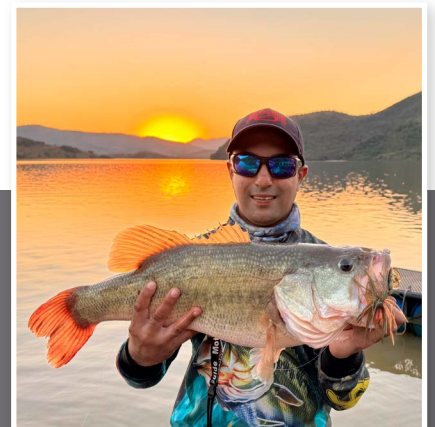
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“4.24kg, Ajay Mohunram, Bivane Dam, KZN”
Image: Ajay Mohunram



My Cast



As the chill of mid-winter settles over our waters, many anglers retreat indoors, waiting out the cold for warmer days. But for the passionate bass angler, winter presents a different kind of opportunity, one that challenges skill, mindset, and determination.

This issue of SA BASS is designed to guide, inspire, and inform during these colder months. Whether you're battling the effects of a cold front in our Crash Course in Bass Fishing, learning how to adapt your finesse game with Drop-shot Fishing, or digging deeper into power techniques with jigs, there's something here for every angler determined to stay on the water this winter.

We shine a spotlight on legends and leaders in the bass fishing world, from Tommy Sanders in our "Heldesaal" tribute, to Kobus Retief in our ongoing series on South Africa's top competitive bass anglers. Their stories are testaments to passion, perseverance, and progress.

Winter can be mentally and physically taxing, which is why we explore the psychological side of fishing in How to Deal with Angling Fears, and offer practical support in Dealing with Winter Blues and Beating the Chills. Plus, for those willing to brave the elements, articles like Loskop Dam for the Beginner and Baarshengel in die Winter will help you make the most of your time on the water.

We also explore nuanced tactics like Capitalizing on Catches After Another Angler's Been There, a must-read for

anyone looking to outthink the competition, along with the latest Industry News and Tournament Reports, including an overview of the recent Bivane Bass Challenge.

Whether you're sharpening your skills or seeking motivation to stay out there during the slowest season, this issue of SA BASS is for you.

Stay warm, never stop learning and may your lines sing with joy!

Hannes Lindeque, *Publisher*

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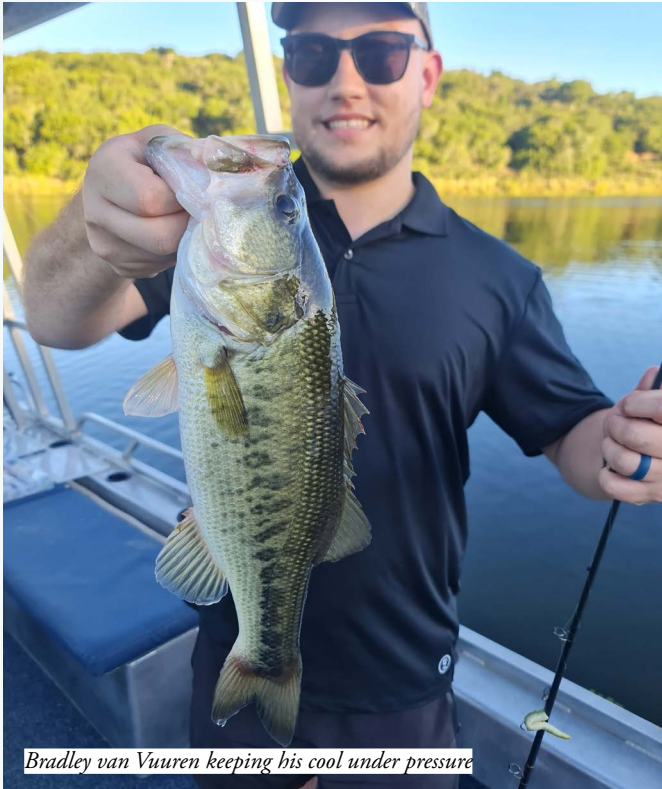


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HOW TO DEAL WITH ANGLING FEARS

Whatever you do, just don't panic



Bradley van Vuuren keeping his cool under pressure

>> *Jay Röhm-Williams*

It's a well-known fact that bass have a wide variety of creatures that they willingly attack to feed on. That being said though doesn't mean that bass will attack anything they see. So what is it about certain lures that turn bass on one day and then turn them off the next? It's one of the age-old, bass fishing conundrums that even the seasoned pro's still try to figure out each time they hit the water and even these anglers sometimes have a hard time solving the mystery. In order to get to the bottom of this lure angling puzzle we as bass anglers need to evaluate more carefully what are the characteristics of natural prey that draw bass into attack mode. Every aspect here is worth noting ranging from colours, profiles, movements and sounds for us to be able to better understand our lures drawing power on any given day.

In the bass fishing world of today, we have a multitude of various lures to choose from to aid us in our cause of catching more fish, more often. Veteran bass enthusiasts from around the globe have dedicated their lives to keep pushing the boundaries when it comes to lure selections and designs. The theory is the more life-like and realistic the lure's characteristics are the better your chances of hooking up could be. Unfortunately though just having a

great, natural-looking lure thrown out there isn't enough to get a bite every time on the majority of occasions.

To get a tighter grip on this concept of lure drawing power we need to realise that for every action our lure makes it will either have a negative or positive response from the bass we are targeting. Everything from the landing of the lure, the initial drop the lure makes through the water column, the movements it makes on retrieval and the commotion it creates once on the move are all vital.

TOURNAMENT BASS ANGLING

If you're a seasoned, competitive angler who takes their bass angling seriously where it becomes your actual career for earning a living then probably the most pressure felt falls on your shoulders. Providing an income from professional bass angling is not for the faint hearted and not only does it cost a lot to stay in the game but the winning potential has to exceed your expenditure to make it profitable. When a bass anglers falls behind on the leader board, fails to reach their bag limit or can't even break the ice with a maiden first fish then panic and fear sets in immediately. Even if you have just entered a competition to try your hand at bassing on a competitive level, the investment you have made in yourself to perform is great. Having a bad day on the water not only sets you back mentally but if you panic on top of that well your chances of competing again will only be totally wiped out.

SOCIAL BASS ANGLING IN A GROUP

Making plans and getting into the spirit of bass angling adventure mode with a group of good mates who share your passion is awesome. No it's better than that, it's almost unbeatable. The weeks build up before the trip, the banter between each other and the nightly prepping on the eve of the big getaway really gears one up to get out there and catch some bass. However things can go sour quickly once you out on the water if one finds themselves not performing to their full expectations. For example if your friends all start hooking into good fish and you can't buy a bite, panic can overwhelm you. If the day lingers on and you only have caught one, small fish compared to your buddies who have landed twenty decent specimens then your fear and panic only grows from bad to worse. In these cases one might just stop fishing altogether or become so overwhelm with negative emotions that the whole trip ends up been ruined for you.



Readjusting the game plan - The author

SOLO BASS ANGLING

Personally speaking I have fished on both of the above levels of bass angling we are discussing but the panic felt on competitive and social group events are both very different to that when compared to solo bass angling. When you are alone and panic sets in it literally will eat up any remaining time you have on the water leaving you disheartened and totally unfulfilled. When we hit the waters on our own there is usually the constriction of time that's against us. Our lives have become so clustered with responsibilities, work priorities and just day to day endeavours that keep us fully occupied Monday to Sunday in some cases. So when we do find a chance to break free and get our lines wet we want to make sure we make the absolute most of the time we have carved out for ourselves. Whether it's a race against the seasonal changes, weather elements or daylight hours, the solo bass angler always has his work cut out for them before they even hit the water. Now imagine going through all this effort to go bassing and panic sets in while you're alone? It's literally the stuff that fishing nightmares are made of it. It can happen suddenly too or become a long drawn



Shaun Swart smiling even when the bites are small

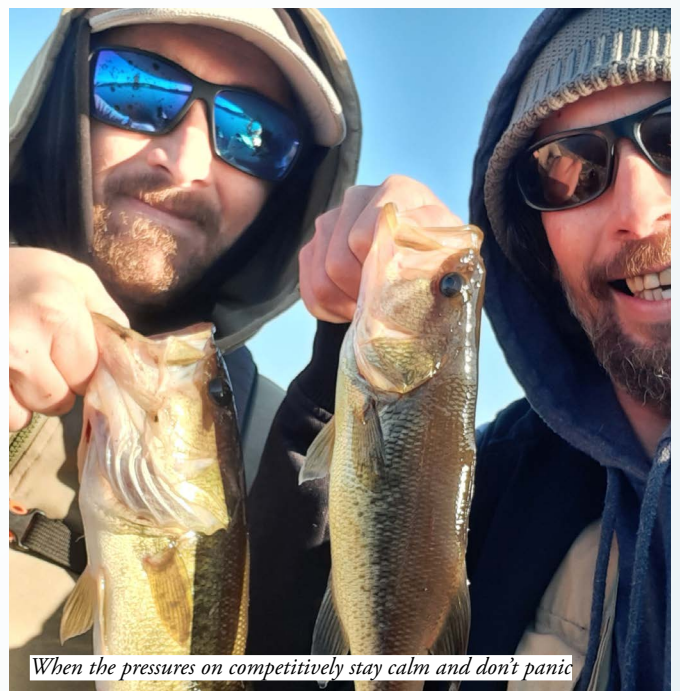
out process. For example hours tick by and no fish are biting or after ages of nothing your line breaks on a big fish. Here's another one, you catch one small fish and desperately are trying every lure under the sun to catch anything else before you have to go home but can't. It's like having a taste of the most amazing food ever then having it put out in front of you but you can't touch it again.

Either way you look at, when panic arises fear, anxiety and stress follow closely behind, all of which are a bass anglers worst partners. The best way we as bass anglers can deal with panic when we feel it coming is try and take back control of the situation. This requires the ability to humble oneself and realize the emotions as soon as they come flooding through in order to prevent the harmful damage it can cause to our confidence. What we need to do then is the following:

1. Step back from the situation and stop what we doing.
2. Take a deep breath and start working on calming ourselves down slowly.
3. Think factually and logically about how to change the situation.
4. Observe our surroundings carefully and make the necessary adjustments before continuing.
5. Do not rush and proceed with the new game plan confidently.

Bass fishing is as much as a mental sport as it is a physical one, learning how to maintain in shape within both body and mind will only help further set you successfully apart from the pack. Just try remember whatever you do, don't panic.

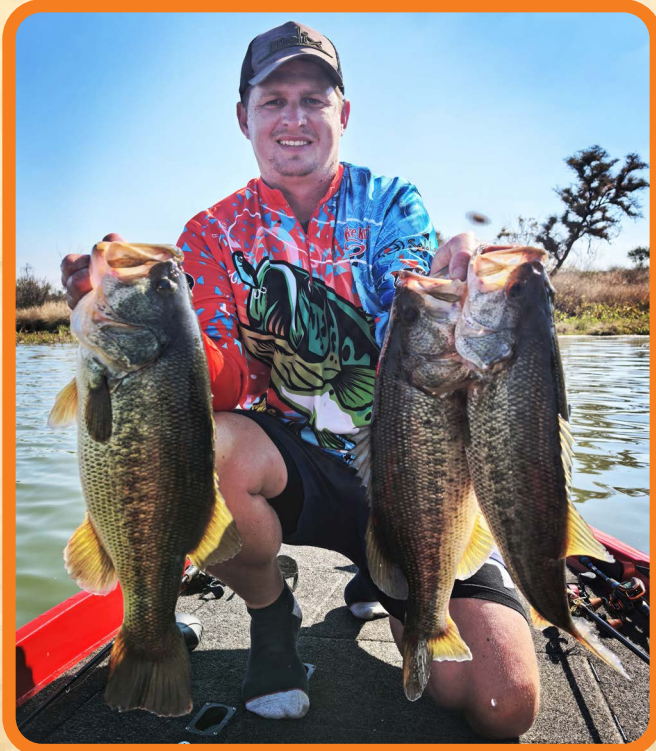
Rods out and safe fishing everyone! 🐟



When the pressures on competitively stay calm and don't panic

READERS GO BASSING

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catching fish. Catching two 2.5kg fish on consecutive casts and a few casts later I caught a 3.01kg fish on the same lure in a little pocket with some snotterbel. Izaan also changed to a spinnerbait and we caught loads of decent sized fish, we left the spot at about 14:00 and went back to the trees we fished in the morning. There we again caught multiple fish on the spinner.

We got off the water just after 15:00 after an amazing day. We were happy with the results – *Francois Joubert*



RHENOSTERKOP

First Sunday of June, my wife and I woke up and decided to hit Rhenosterkop Dam as the weather looked amazing. We only launched at 09:00 because the morning bite at this venue is generally slow. We knew a cold front was going to hit on Monday so we made use of the opportunity.

We arrived at the first spot and instantly Izaan hooked up with a few fish on a chatterbait. I noticed the bass was starting to chase and bust on baitfish so we knew it's going to get real very soon. We changed spots more towards the river. On our arrival I saw big schools of river-sardine and the bass was hunting them actively. We had a slight eastern wind and I decided to go with a gold spinnerbait to mimic the baitfish schools. From the first cast I started



KOUD

Dit was 'n koue Junie-wintersoggend in Belfast. Die hengel was moeilike en baie stadig. Gelukkig kon ek darem so drie visse kry om te byt aan 'n McCarthy 3,5 Slinky California Red Lure. Hierdie mooi 3kg hom nie die versoeking weerstaan nie – *Bennie van Tonder*



SECOND LARGEST BASS

It's been a while since I last landed a true trophy bass, but I'm thrilled to share one of my most memorable catches with you and hopefully with the readers of SA Bass Magazine.

On the 26th of May 2025, two fellow avid bass anglers and I set out for a few days of pre-winter fishing at the breathtaking Bivane Dam in Vryheid, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Our goal was to target big bass feeding up ahead of the approaching cold fronts. The day began with tough conditions: bright bluebird skies, not a whisper of wind, and the dam as still as glass. It was the kind of morning that speaks of high barometric pressure and finicky bass a classic pre-cold front pattern.

As the sun began to dip and golden hues danced across the water's surface, I made a strategic decision that changed the course of the day. I tied on a Strike King Tour Grade 3/4

oz Bama Craw Jig, proudly distributed by Fish On Africa, and decided to dead-stick it in deeper water. Moments after the jig settled, I noticed my line subtly moving away into the depths a telltale sign.

Without hesitation, I set the hook hard. What followed was an adrenaline charged battle. The bass erupted from the water in an attempt to shake free of the jig, and my heart raced as I realized I was connected to something truly special. Alone on my boat, I fought to maintain control, letting the fish tire before finally netting it.

This 4.24kg fish marks my second largest bass ever caught, and I couldn't be more thrilled a second personal best that I'll never forget.

Adding to the excitement, I've recently been selected as a brand ambassador for Fish On Africa, representing premier brands such as Strike King, Lew's, Salmo, Sada Lures, OMTD Hooks, Savage Gear, and Molix Baits. As a passionate angler still early in my journey, this opportunity is an incredible honour.

I'd be deeply grateful if you would consider featuring my story in SA Bass Magazine. I'm a loyal reader and have grown significantly as an angler thanks to the insights shared in your publication. It would be a dream come true to not only see my article in print but also to have the sunset photo of this catch featured on your cover page, the golden hour lighting and the proud moment captured in that image tell the story in a single frame.

Thank you for your time and for the continuous inspiration SA Bass Magazine offers to anglers across South Africa – *Ajay Mohunram*



ROODEKOPJES

Onshet in middel Junie 'n heerlike dag by Roodekopjesdam geniet.

Alhoewel die oggende koud was, het die son die res van die dag lekker geskyn en 'n ligte windjie het gekom en gegaan - wat tot ons voordeel was.

Ons het onderwaterklippe geteiken en het junior flukes aan "drop-shot" stroppe gebruik. Ons het 'n paar sinkers verloor, maar dit was die moeite werd. Ons het veral sukses gehad met Pearl- en Shad kleure. Alhoewel die hengel moeilik was, het ek twee mooi visse van ongeveer 1.1kg elk en ook 'n paar kleintjies tussen 400 en 700 gram gevang.

– *Lucinda Engelbrecht*

South Africa's Top Competitive Bass Anglers

KOBUS RETIEF

(13 FEB 1976)

Bass fishing in South Africa has grown into a fiercely competitive sport, with top anglers constantly pushing the limits of skill, strategy, and innovation. In this exclusive series, we sit down with some of the country's best competitive bass anglers to gain insight into their journeys, techniques, and what it takes to succeed at the highest level.

From tournament-winning strategies to personal stories, gear preferences, and industry insights, these interviews provide a rare glimpse into the minds of the anglers who dominate South Africa's bass fishing scene. Whether you're an aspiring tournament angler, a weekend warrior, or simply a fan of the sport, this series will bring you closer to the action and the people who live for it.

BACKGROUND & PERSONAL JOURNEY

1. What is your occupation?

Financial Advisor

2. How did you get started in bass fishing?

I grew up in Port Elizabeth doing rock and surf fishing and came to Pretoria to study. I first started bass fishing at Bronkhorstspuit Dam as I had withdrawal symptoms from not surf fishing regularly and the rest is history.

3. Who or what inspired you to become a competitive angler?

I have always participated in competitive sports and like the competitive side of sport. I enjoy the thrill of competition and it tends to bring out the best in me.

4. What was the turning point when you realized you could actually compete in tournaments?

In 2000 I joined Centurion Bassmasters and soon after started competing in club fish offs and usually managed to do quite well against some very accomplished anglers I decided to start fishing the divisional circuit not too long after that.

COMPETITIVE FISHING & STRATEGY

5. How do you prepare for a big tournament?

I start with considering the time of year, which will give me a clue as to the stage the fish will be in. Thereafter I will assess the dam (dam level, water clarity etc) and will look through past trips/competitions on the dam around the same time of year. That usually gives me some idea what to expect and where to start. I like to do some prep work off the water and look at charts and waypoints before I actually go to the dam to pre-fish.



This helps to be much more efficient when you are on the water and you can usually eliminate quite a lot of water beforehand. Having said this, I always try to be openminded and adapt on the water if things do not work out as I initially thought.

6. What's your go-to strategy when facing unfamiliar waters?

I would say that I am more of a power fisherman and like to cover water to find the fish. This is important during pre-fish and once I have found the fish I will then slow down and try to refine the pattern and techniques. Once I have an idea of what is happening I try and replicate what is working in order to have 3 or 4 spots and plans for the competition.

7. Do you have a favourite lure or technique that consistently produces results?

I am a power fisherman, so I have a lot of confidence in a crankbait and spinnerbaits.

8. What's the biggest challenge in competitive bass fishing?

For me the biggest challenge is time and how to balance fishing and family time. I have been fortunate to fish for many years and have competed internationally with some seriously good anglers, but to compete at that level takes a lot of time away from your family and I eventually felt that I was missing out to much and decided to cut back quite a lot from a competitive angling point of view. BUT I do miss it very much!

9. How do you handle pressure and competition on the water?

I enjoy the pressure that come with competitive sport and I perform better in pressure situations normally. I have fished competitively for many years and I think with experience it becomes easier not to get caught up in the moment. The number one rule for me is to constantly remind myself to slow things down when the pressure is on.

TOURNAMENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

10. How many years have you been competing in the SA BASS Cast-for-Cash bass angling tournament trial?

I am not exactly sure, but I think I started around 2001.

11. What has been your most memorable tournament win or experience?

Every good performance on the water is memorable, but the April Rust de Winter tournament last year stands out for me. We had a decent limit very early, but could not get better quality of fish to substantially upgrade our bag. We decided, with two hours to go, to completely change plan and moved deeper to fish the deep grass edges and slowly upgraded our bag. With five minutes to go and on my very last cast I managed to hook and land a 3.4kg fish which helped us win the tournament. It just goes to show that it is never over until the very last moment

12. What's the toughest competition you've ever faced?

I have been fortunate to be part of a number of Protea Teams and every time you compete against Zimbabwe, in Zimbabwe, you know you are up against tough competition. The toughest competition though was when I was part of the Protea Team who competed on Lake Murray in the USA. Many of the teams we competed against were very good, but also the conditions and the sheer size of the lake made it a very difficult tournament.

13. Have you ever had a major setback in a tournament? How did you overcome it?

I once fished a National Championship at Clanwilliam Dam only to find out that on the trip down something went wrong with my motor and I had no way to fish from my own boat. Fortunately with a lot of help from some friends and the assistance of a fellow angler I was able to borrow a boat and was able to fish. I had to race all over to get the boat setup my own fish finders on the loan boat and be on time for the start of the first competition day, but in the end it worked out okay.



14. What's your proudest accomplishment in your fishing career?

My proudest fishing moment was being part of the Protea Team who won a silver medal on Lake Murry during the Bass Fishing World Championships.

GEAR & TECHNOLOGY

15. What's your must-have piece of fishing gear?

Spotlock Trolling motor.

16. How important is technology (electronics, GPS, sonar) in today's bass fishing?

It is very important and is becoming even more important year by year. It is just a pity that I am still old school and do nearly use my electronics to its full potential.

17. Do you have any sponsorships? How do they influence your fishing career?

I do not have any sponsorships.

INDUSTRY & ADVICE

18. What's one thing about competitive bass fishing that most people don't realize?

To compete with the quality of anglers who compete today you have to put in the time and spend a lot of time and potentially money to be successful.

19. What advice would you give to someone considering to compete actively?

When you buy any fishing equipment buy the best quality you can afford. This is a case of "goedkoop koop is duur koop".

20. How do you see the sport evolving in the next five to ten years?

I think that technology will dominate the sport. I am still old school and I am not sure that it is a good thing.

21. What's your opinion on conservation and how anglers can help sustain fish populations?

I absolutely believe that we as anglers have a responsibility to conserve our fish stocks and grow the sport. This is not limited to the conservation of bass, but I think more importantly we need to look after our bait fish to ensure the quality and size of our bass.

FUN & PERSONAL TOUCH

22. What's your personal best bass? Where did you catch it?

A 6.61kg caught at Albert Falls Dam.

23. If you could fish with any angler, past or present, who would it be?

Jacob Wheeler

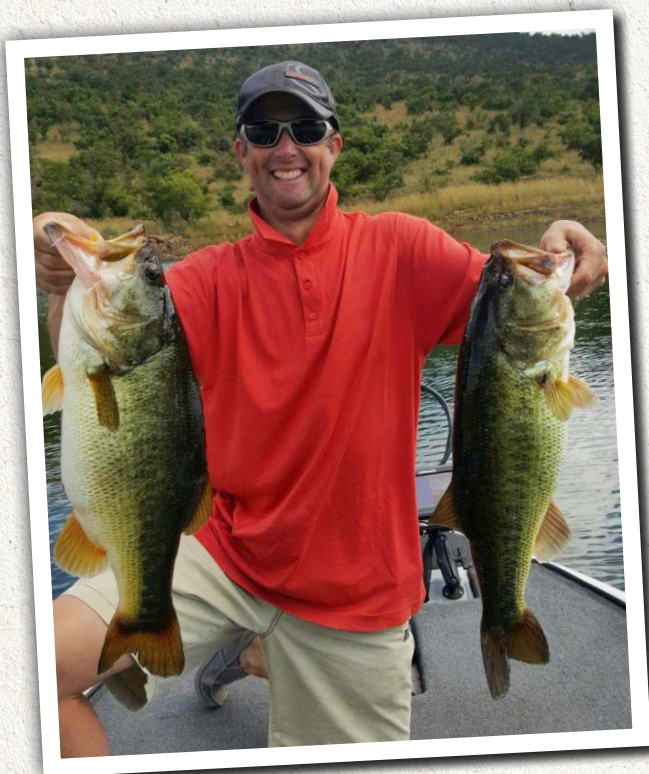
24. What's one superstition or ritual you have before a tournament?

I am not superstitious.

25. When you're not fishing, what do you enjoy doing?

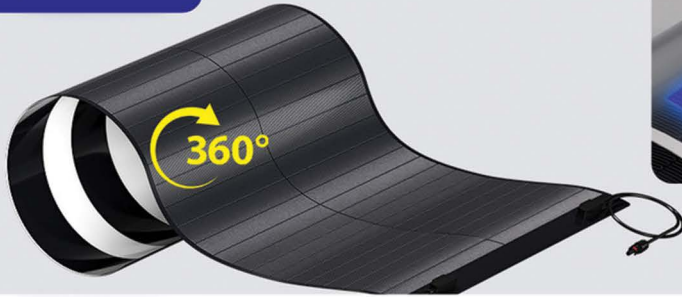
I enjoy most sports and like to spend time and playing cricket and golf with my sons. I also enjoy watching my sons play cricket.

Stay tuned as we uncover the passion, dedication, and secrets behind South Africa's elite bass anglers. In the next issue we speak to Troy Batty. 🐟



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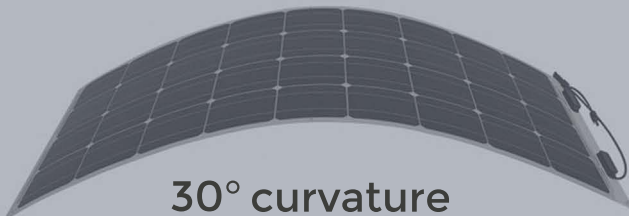
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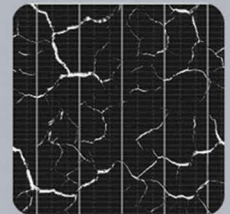
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You also might find yourself converted after just a few casts



The drop-shot rig

DROP-SHOT FISHING (PART-2)

When the bass are holding in one to three metres of water near structures, drop-shotting is a very effective way to fish for them.

Many times when anglers think of drop-shot fishing they will think of small lures, thin line and clear deep water. Personally this must be one of the best ways to catch fish in many conditions. Unfortunately most anglers only know one way to fish the drop-shot rig. The finesse way is not the only way to utilise this awesome rig.

Think out of the box - heavy cover, line and bigger lures and a rod to match it. There are two conditions when I will drop-shot in heavy cover.

Heavy duty drop-shot

When pitching or flipping you are going to almost fish vertical for the bass in grass, brush, heavy cover and different structures. If you find bass holding to cover in shallower water like heavy grass or brush you can use your standard flipping and pitching equipment for drop-shot and you don't have to spend any money on new tackle.

When the bass are holding in one to three metres of water near structures, drop-shotting is a very effective way to fish

for them. Remember the bigger fish will always have the best spot on or in the structure. I will prefer to fish bigger lures for these bigger fish. To go and target those fish with the traditional lighter rigs will cost you big time. I prefer to beef up a bit on my tackle using a seven foot to 7'6" medium heavy or heavy action rod with 14 to 20lb fluorocarbon line. This will work most of the time but when fishing lay-downs or heavy under water trees I will use monofilament line that can handle more abrasion.

Use bigger baits like Magnum Fluke, Mann's nine to twelve inch Jelly Worms, Yamamoto Stretch-80, Havoc Federal ten inch and Old Monster worms. Then match it with heavier weights of 3/4 to one ounce.

Most of the venues we fish have many types of weed. I also have had excellent fishing days using this rig in brush piles and lay-downs. Venues that has standing timber with off coloured water can also be very rewarding where this rig is been used, but if the water was clear I would then use standard drop-shot gear. The heavy tackle rig is better suitable if the water is off coloured. The clearer the water, the lighter gear you should use.

The best way to use this rig is when the bass tend to



The light weighted rig will never punch through the heavy vegetation. Remember that many grass patches will have some type of pathways under them close to the root system and most of the time when the bass use these tunnels they will not notice the small three inch lures. This is where the heavy drop-shot rig can make your day. The negative side of this is that the smaller lures will need smaller hooks on the heavy line. I prefer to use hooks that have a nice wide gap and a short shaft to fit in the shorter lures.

Drop-shot in heavy grass

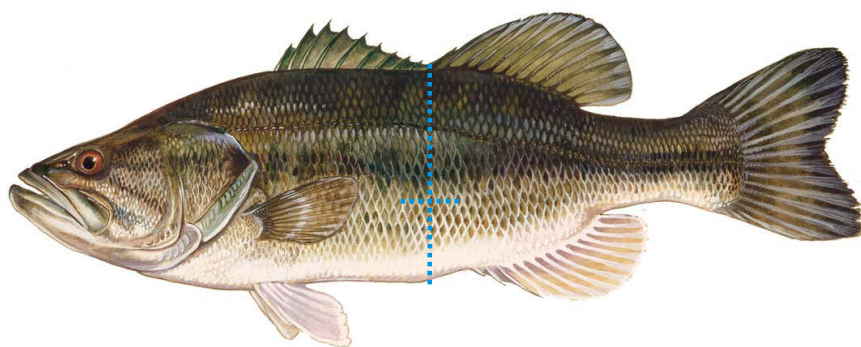
If you use this rig in thick grass mats remember that the bass will most likely be suspending just under the patch or between the grasses and bottom - not right on the bottom. By acquiring the correct depth using your sonar, the rig's weight can be adjusted to the correct length and the lure be suspended right where the bass are. You can use the lure that you normally use when pitching or flipping a Texas rig.

A Texas rigged worm will pass the bass too quickly if they are not active and they will ignore the bait. Bass are not used to see drop-shot rigged baits hanging around under the grass and even when inactive, they are curious. 🐟

suspend in the structure and are not relating to the bottom. Yes you can get to those fish with normal flipping and pitching gear but if the fish does not take the lure on the first cast you are going to miss them. By leaving the lure in the structure in one spot for longer and moving the lure in their faces you can trigger them to bite. If the bass are active they will hit any lure.

The second way I will fish the drop-shot is when the bass are hitting only small lures on light weights and they are in the heavy vegetations where you can't get to them.

Deflate a Deep Caught Bass



Why to deflate a bass

Also called "de-gas", or "fizzing," or artificial swim bladder deflation. Fizzing involves venting the excess gas from the swim bladder of a fish after it has been brought up from deep water, usually from a depth of 6m (20 feet) or more. When a bass is reeled up to the surface from those depths, its swim bladder expands due to the reduced water pressure, resulting in barotrauma. (This is similar to scuba divers who surface too rapidly.)

When a fish experiences barotrauma, it is unable to stay upright. It floats on its side and prevents it to swim back down once released. Barotrauma can also cause internal damage to the fish if it's not treated quickly. The easiest and safest is to use a fin-clip.

How to deflate a fish through its side

Firstly and very important; hold the fish gently but firmly on its side.

Draw an imaginary line from the split in the two top dorsal fins to the anal opening.

At the intersection of this line and the lateral line, move down four rows of scales and insert an 18 gauge needle at a 45° angle towards the head of the fish.

Submerge the fish (and needle) as you insert the needle, under the scale through the soft skin, only deep enough to release the gases. Bubbles will be evidence of a successful attempt. Allow the bubbles to flow until you feel the fish relax or the bubbles slow significantly. Always remove the needle before the bubbles cease to flow, leaving positive pressure inside the swim bladder.

Remove the needle and release the fish.



Winter Blues

>> *The bass addict*

I sit here cold and lonely on a frosty winters night in my garage, looking over my rods, standing at attention like soldiers ready for battle and my thoughts roll back to the ones I saw, the ones I landed and the ones that got away... it's truly a sad story...

Traditionally when that first cold snap of winter makes its presence felt, even the hardest anglers tend to put the rods down, pack away all those plastics, hang up the spinnerbaits and switch off the lights.

For the next few weeks the angler will mope around the house, at work and in traffic acting like a heroin addict needing a fix.

Then he will watch endless clips on YouTube about bass fishing and whenever a friend from the USA posts a picture of a hog caught in a backyard pond, the angler might even start drooling like a dog with rabies.

He will browse for hours looking at the photos of past seasons and if you look carefully he might even be losing some weight. Aimlessly he will wander around the house over weekends not knowing what to do as his previous weekends have been out on the water. He will stare out the window to view a cloudless, windless, sunny day only to step into the deception and feel the winter freeze biting through his clothes... his depression and withdrawal from society will deepen.

Then something happens... it's called the winter solstice and what this means is that from that point on, the days grow longer, the sun sits higher and the nights grow

shorter... simply put, summer is again on its way preceded by spring and spring preceded by... pre-spawn!

Like a grizzly bear shaking itself awake after some serious hibernation, the angler will slowly start returning to normal.

He sleeps better, dreams better and eats better. No more moping and no more shouting at the kids and the dog... no more sulking.

He will buy new line, hooks, lures and even a rod or two. This time he will be looking at tactics on fishing the pre-spawn and he will even oil his reels and ready the boat.

For now though he sits and stares at his fishing arsenal and wonders what makes him do this? What makes him act this way... always buying new gear to the point where he might have more than the tackle shops down the road? I need this rod... just in case... is his excuse. With dawning realization he knows what's wrong... and has to admit... He is an addict. Addicted to bass and hunting them, searching for them and catching them... He will feed his addiction soon and life will return to normal... Bassin' is his cure... 🐟

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Sonnige wintersdae is altyd 'n wenner

BAARSHENGEL IN DIE WINTER HOE NOU GEMAAK?

Baarshengel in die winter bied unieke uitdagings sowel as geleenthede

>> *Philip Kemp**

Deur baars se gedrag te verstaan, die regte toerusting te kies en tegnieke aan te pas volgens veranderende weerstoestande, kan jy jou kans om suksesvol te wees, verhoog. Hier is riglyne om jou te help om in die wintermaande effektief te hengel.

VERSTAAN BAARS SE GEDRAG

As gevolg van kouer water, raak die metabolisme van baars heelwat stadiger wat hul aktiwiteit verminder. Hulle is meer selektief en sal eerder kleiner prooi vreet wat stadig beweeg.

BELANGRIKE PUNTE OM IN AG TE NEEM:

- **Temperatuurvoorkeure**
Baars is meer aktief laat-oggend wanneer die water warmer word.
- **Energiebehoud**
Hulle soek areas met stabiele temperature en minimale stroom, dikwels naby diep strukture of onderwaterdekking.
- **Voedingspatrone**
Baars vreet minder gereeld en verkies maklike maaltye, wat hulle meer selektief kies.

EFFEKTIEWE WINTERHENGELTEGNIKE

Om lui baars uit te lok om te byt moet jy jou hengelmetodes aanpas:

- **Hengel so stadig as moontlik**
Gebruik tegnieke soos “dead-sticking”, mikro-bewegings of sleep die aas stadig op die bodem. Die doel is om die stadige bewegings van natuurlike prooi na te boots. Selfs die prooi beweeg heelwat stadiger in koue water.
- **Kies die regte aas**
Gebruik kleiner, neutraalkleurige aas. Die effektiewe aas sluit in:
 - Jigs (¼ tot ¾ oz)
 - Drop-shot stroppe
 - Chatterbaits
 - Jerkbait wat suspendeer
 - Senko's wat met 'n Wacky-strop gehengel word
 - Kleiner flukes



• Vertikale jigging

Gebruik lepels of “blade-baits” vir vertikale aanbiedings. Hierdie tegniek is veral effektief in dieper water en is snaaks genoeg nie baie gewild in Suid-Afrika nie.

Winterhengeltoerusting

Die regte hengelgerei vir winterhengel sluit in:

- 'n Medium-ligte tot medium-swaar visstok met 'n ekstra-vinnige aksie-punt.
- 8 tot 10lb fluorocarbon lyn is baie sensitief en minder sigbaar.
- Elektroniese hulpmiddels soos visvinders en GPS toestelle is van onskatbare waarde om strukture en baars te vind.
- Trek verskillende lae klere aan wat maklik aan- en uitgetrek kan word.

Weerstoestand

Die weer het altyd 'n beduidende impak op baars (en hengelaars) se gedrag.

Die vis is gewoonlik meer aktief gedurende die warmste deel van die dag en ook wanneer die atmosferiese druk stabiel is. Sodra die atmosferiese druk effens daal en dan stabiliseer, sal die baars ook meer geneig wees om te vreet.

Tydens bewolkte weer kan baars ook meer bereid wees om rond te beweeg en te jag.

'n Ligte wind kan help om wateroppervlak te verhit, maar sterk winde mag hengeltoestande uitdagend maak en watertemperature laat daal.

Wanneer om hengeltegnieke te verander

Pas jou benadering aan op grond van waarnemings en let op al die bogenoemde faktore. Ook, wanneer baars belangstelling toon, maar die aas nie vat nie; of vat en los; oorweeg dit om kleiner aas te gebruik en/of stadiger te hengel. Nog iets om te doen wanneer die vis nie wil byt nie is om die aas se kleur te verander.



Maak seker jy trek warm aan

Addisionele wenke

Die baars is baie sensitief vir watertemperatuur verskille, veral in die winter. Daarom, gebruik 'n termometer of elektroniese visvinder om warmer water te soek. Hengel die areas dan stadig en deeglik.

Die geheim in die winter is “geduld”... verwag minder byte...maar onthou... gewoonlik vang baie hengelaars hulle persoonlike bestes in die winter.

Deur baars se gedrag beter te verstaan, die regte toerusting te gebruik en om aan te pas by omstandighede, kan jy jou winterhengel verbeter. Onthou, geduld en aanpasbaarheid is noodsaaklik.

Lekker hengel! 🐟

**Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaarshengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.*



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CRASH COURSE IN BASS FISHING

HOW TO TARGET BASS DURING A COLD FRONT

Targeting bass during a cold front can be tough, but not impossible. Cold fronts typically bring clear skies, falling temperatures, high barometric pressure, and sluggish bass.

>> *Hannes Lindeque*

Here's how to adjust your strategy to still get bites:

1. Understand bass behaviour during a cold front

Bass become lethargic and tight-lipped due to the pressure change. They often retreat to deeper water, tight cover, or stay suspended off structure. Their feeding activity drops dramatically, especially in the 24 to 48 hours after the front hits.

2. Tactics to trigger strikes

- **Use finesse techniques:**

Use drop-shot, Ned rig, wacky rig, or shaky head rigs and retrieve VERY slowly and pause often. Let the bait sit, it may take a few seconds for the bass to react.

- **Downsize your baits:**

Use smaller profile baits to match the less aggressive feeding mode. Downsize to 3 to 4" worms, small creature baits, or compact jigs with trimmed skirts.

- **Fish deep and tight:**

Target steep drop-offs, channel edges, rock piles, or brush piles in deeper water. Bass often stack on these areas for security and stable conditions.

- **Stick to heavy cover:**

Cold-front bass may bury themselves in thick vegetation, under boat docks, or around lay-downs. Use pitching or flipping techniques with jigs or creature baits to reach them.

- **Go subtle:**

Use natural colours like green pumpkin, watermelon, or smoke tend to outperform bright or flashy colours in clear, high-pressure conditions.



The Ned rig

3. Prime spots to target

- Docks and shade lines (especially if near deep water).
- Isolated structure like a single rock pile or stump.
- Points with quick access to deep water.
- Submerged grass lines or hydrilla edges in clear reservoirs.

4. Best lures for cold fronts, and why it works

- **Drop shot:** Finesse lures, stays in strike zone longer
- **Jig:** Finesse jigs can be flipped into heavy cover or worked slow
- **Ned rig:** Subtle and natural-looking
- **Suspending jerkbait:** Can pause for 5 to 10 seconds to trigger lazy fish
- **Small swimbait:** Can be slow-rolled near bottom or cover

5. Bonus Tip - Timing matters

Avoid early mornings if the air temps plummeted overnight. The midday bite is usually best during a cold front after the water has warmed slightly and bass may be more active.



A suspending jerkbait

In the next issue we look at **How to target bass during the pre-spawn period** – don't miss it. 🐟

BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

>> Hannes Lindeque



Winter

Cold-water bass relate closely to structure.



Bass Behaviour

In stained or murky water, bass rely more on vibration and movement to locate prey, so lures with bright colours, flash, or noise can be effective.



Angles

Fish the same spot from different angles.



Baitcaster Reel

Setting up a baitcaster reel requires patience and practice.



Glide Baits

Glide baits provide a visual and auditory stimulus that triggers predatory instincts.



Jigs

Finesse jigs with their compact profile are perfect for pressured fish or cold water.



Texas Rig

A big Texas rigged soft plastic paddle tail worm can at times out fish any other bait.

SAME LOCATION, DIFFERENT ANGLER

How to capitalize catches after another angler's been there



Hudson Spence changing bait presentations and been rewarded.

clean house in area I just fished. It baffled my mind to see them picking off some good, sized fish and to be honest frustrated me a bit that I didn't stay longer in that spot. No use crying over lost opportunities though but it did set my angling brain thinking how I too could maybe capitalise on the situation if the tables were turned in the future.

What we must remember is that bass move around more often than we give them credit for. Bass can also be very picky, depending on the conditions so what might feel like an award winning strategy to us might not necessarily be received well by the fish in return. Then comes along another bass angler with a different approach and bang, the waters light up and it is fish after fish for them. Another behavioural factor worth making a note on is that if something or someone spooks off a bass that fish will just normally head for deeper water and then come back to its original location later. Conditions might well change too, sometimes rapidly and in other cases subtly. Either way what might not have been the ideal approach or technique at the moment you were present might be the perfect setup for the next angler who comes in after you.

So how do we learn to read the signs and make catches after another angler has been in your next target location? Well, there are a few things one can try so let's run through our options here.

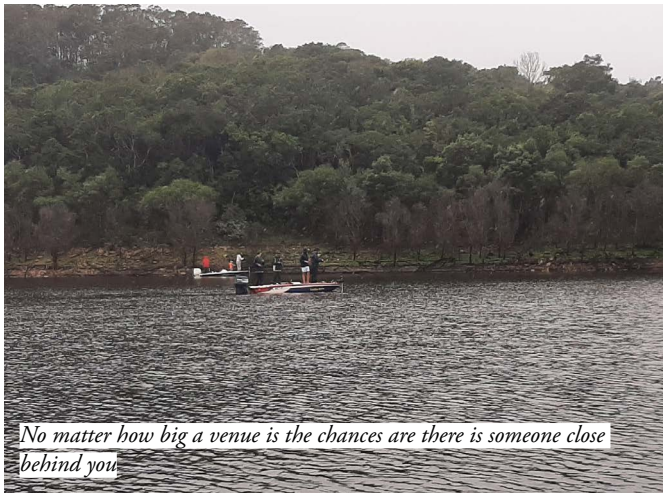
>> *Jay Röhm-Williams*

On pressured bass fishing venues it can be quite tough to get the bite going. It is even harder to catch a bass once someone has been there before you but it's not impossible. Sometimes it can actually be quite rewarding in the sense when someone has set them up only for you to come in afterwards and mop those uncaught fish up. This particularly unique situation is by far not uncommon although generally speaking bass anglers tend to avoid an area that's just been fished. The reasons are pretty obvious but mostly because whatever fish were present in that location have could now either have been caught, scared and spooked off or have been made aware that there is perhaps a danger present.

It used to be one of my own golden rules when out bassing that if I saw someone fishing a particular area, I would move as far as possible away from them. Either I would try get ahead of them or just abandon that stretch altogether and hit another area. That theory as I have witnessed countless times over has kind of been shot to shreds after I have seen guys come up behind me and



Quinton Eterhuizen picking off a bass right behind me



No matter how big a venue is the chances are there is someone close behind you

CHANGE YOUR APPROACH

If you are fortunate enough to witness the angler ahead of you and can see what technique they are using great, if not don't stress either. What one wants to do is pretty much the opposite too what the previous angler was doing or if you don't know change the technique you were using beforehand. Sounds a little flawed in theory especially if you were onto something before you arrived in the area but that been said you might have to work a little bit to figure out a strategy. Normally speaking a finesse approach works well in these kinds of situations. Slowdown that retrieval, fish cautiously and have a tad bit of patience.

CHANGE YOUR BAITS UP

Bait change ups are crucial in a scenario like this so take some time to alter between either bigger or smaller lure presentations. I once cruised through a submerged timber forest throwing power baits and burning water with fast moving lures to try picking off any active fish. I didn't get one hit needless to say although the area was crying out to me that there's fish here. A guy came behind me not only minutes later, was throwing a weightless Senko and was into three biggins before I could turn around out the channel. It can literally happen that quickly. A bait change up does not necessarily refer to size only, it can be colours or different lures altogether. You just won't know unless you go through the process.



Sometimes a different angle can make all the difference

CHANGE YOUR ANGLE AND DISTANCE

I believe this particular altered strategy works really well in most cases. Like I said bass move around a lot so sometimes all it takes to reap the rewards after someone has been through an area is changing the target location to where you casting. Work the edges or deeper water section adjacent to the spot where another angler just fished. If that does not yield results try coming in from a different angle to the norm. Sometimes bass will just be facing another way than expected and having your lure come in from the right angle or at the correct depth is all that was needed to get their attention.

It doesn't matter if you banking or boating the concept is the same and sometimes all it takes is a some careful thought, a little bit of patience and slight change up. Bass often react to a different lure moving through their area after another angler has been fishing there using something else. They become intrigued, agitated and even fired up once a bass angler has made a pass through which is why often an angler can return to a spot where they caught a few fish earlier then hook into a few more later.

Winter is here and there's no escaping it in South Africa so any advantage one can make use of to get stuck into some fish is always welcome. Remember, never give up, always try something new and just keep fishing your heart out. You will be rewarded and could be the game changing tactic you have been waiting for.

Rods out and safe fishing everyone! 🐟



The author capitalising with a different approach

QUIZ

FIND

THE WORD

THERE ARE 16 DIFFERENT NAMES HIDDEN IN THIS PUZZLE, SEE IF YOU CAN FIND AND ENCIRCLE ALL OF THEM.

- Backlash
- Bottom
- Cattails
- Coves
- Drag
- Fishing
- Gear-ratio
- Jigging
- Live-bait
- Natural
- Plug-knocker
- Rain
- Salamanders
- Skittering
- Stocking
- Technique

S	K	I	T	T	E	R	I	N	G	S	T	U	G	W	X
H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	N	Q	R	S	T	E	V	W
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K	L	M	N	O	C	Q	U	S	T	U	V	G	R	Y	Z
F	M	N	O	O	Q	Q	S	T	D	R	A	G	A	B	A
V	I	X	T	Z	I	B	C	D	E	A	X	I	T	A	B
N	O	S	Q	N	S	T	U	K	W	I	Y	N	I	C	C
J	K	L	H	N	C	P	C	B	S	N	U	G	O	K	Y
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P	I	S	A	L	A	M	A	N	D	E	R	S	U	V	W



Op my houtbordjie

DIE DONKIE-STROP

>> *Philip Kemp**

In hierdie reeks deel ons graag 'n paar truuks, of beter bekend as "hacks", met ons lesers

Baars maak gewoonlik jag op skole vissies. Nadat ek so 'n paar jaar gelede met die donkie-strop, waar twee plastiese kunsvissies mekaar in tandem jaag, het ek onlangs 'n nuwe manier ontdek om twee plasties kunsvissies op een hoek te haak.



Jy benodig net plastiese 2mm pypies wat vrylik by hardware- of troeteldierwinkels bekombaar is, twee plastiese swemvissies, die een 4-duim en die ander een 'n 4.5-duim vissie, 'n #5 EWG hoek en 'n skêrtjie.



Haak eerstens die langer vissie deur die neus soos wat jy normaalweg 'n kunsvissie sou ophaak. Moet egter nog nie die agterkant van die vissie ophaak nie.



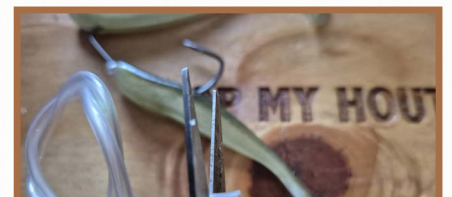
Sny 'n 4mm stukkie van die pypie af.



Draai die pypie dwars en ryg dit oor die hoek se punt. Skuif die pypie oor die hoek sodat dit soos op die foto geïmposisioneer is.



Ryg nou die korter kunsvissie oor die hoek soos aangetoon. Stoot die neus van die kunsvissie tot teenaan die plastiese pypie op die hoek. Die hoek moet die korrekte lengte bo by die rug van die vissie uitkom.



Sny nog 'n 4 mm stukkie pypie af.

Skuif die pypie ook nou oor die hoek en skuif af soos op die foto aangetoon.



Haak nou die boonste, langer vissie se agterkant oor die hoek en skuif af tot op die plastiese pypie. Die pypie help om die vissie nie teen die hoek te laat afskuif nie.

Die tegniek is juis vir daardie groter baars wat 'n groter happie nie kan weerstaan nie. 🐟

**Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaars-hengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.*

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BASS FISHING 101: JIGS

What, when and how to use them

When it comes to versatility and year-round effectiveness, few lures in bass fishing rival the jig. Whether you're flipping heavy cover, dragging the bottom in deep water, or skipping under docks, jigs are a staple in every serious bass angler's tackle box. But knowing what type of jig to use, when to throw it, and how to fish it can mean the difference between a blank and a personal best.



Football Jig

WHAT IS A JIG?

A bass jig is a weighted hook (often with a skirt) designed to imitate crawfish or baitfish. It typically comes with:

- A skirt made of silicone or rubber for added bulk and movement.
- A weed guard to deflect debris.
- A trailer (soft plastic or pork) to enhance action and profile.

Common types of bass jigs:

What makes bass jigs different in design depends primarily on their shape, weight and purpose.

1. **Football Jig:** Ideal for dragging over rocky bottoms in deeper water.
2. **Punch Jig:** Built for flipping or pitching in heavy cover like grass, brush, and timber.
3. **Swim Jig:** Designed to be retrieved through open water or light cover, mimicking baitfish.
4. **Finesse Jig:** Compact profile, perfect for pressured fish or cold water.
5. **Skipping Jig:** Flat head for skipping under docks and overhangs.

WHEN TO USE A JIG

One of the biggest advantages of jigs is their year-round versatility. With a few adjustments to your tactics based on seasonal bass behaviour, jigs can be effective in any conditions.

Winter:

- Finesse or football jigs work best when worked slowly on the bottom.
- Target deep structure and vertical breaks.

Spring:

- Use flipping jigs in shallow water near beds and cover.
- Bass are aggressive and defending spawning areas.
- Great time for swim jigs through emergent vegetation.

Summer:

- Use football jigs to target deeper structure, ledges, and offshore humps.
- Fish slow and deep during the heat of the day.

Autumn:

- Swim jigs shine as bass chase baitfish in the shallows.
- Cover water quickly and focus on grass edges and creeks.

HOW TO FISH A JIG

There are multiple ways to use a jig. Here are the basic techniques on how fish a jig.

1. Dragging:

Slowly drag a football or finesse jig across the bottom to imitate a crawfish, especially around on rocky points, ledges, or gravel flats.

2. Hopping or Bouncing:

Keep the jig on the bottom but gently lift the rod tip to "hop" the jig off the bottom and let it fall. This technique can triggers reaction bites from inactive fish.

3. Swimming:

Cast the jig beyond your target area and retrieve it steadily to mimic a baitfish. This technique is ideal with a swim jig or lighter flipping jig.



Punch Jig



4. Flipping or Pitching:

Use short, accurate casts to fish in heavy cover by letting the jig fall naturally. Pay close attention to line movement as many bites come on the fall.

Tip: Use a heavier jig with a stout hook for strong hooksets.

5. Skipping:

Use a skipping jig and low-angle cast to reach hard-to-access spots under jetties or trees. This technique requires a lot of practice but can be deadly on pressured fish (because not many anglers use this technique - Ed).

Tip: It is best to use a spinning rod and reel with this technique.

TIPS FOR JIG SUCCESS:

Take note of the following key issues when you use a jig

- **Match the hatch:** Use natural colours like green pumpkin, brown, or black/blue based on water clarity, the area you are fishing, and the colour of the bottom. For example; if you fish a rocky area with a brownish bottom then the best colour to use will be green pumpkin. If you fish an area with water grass and a greenish bottom, then the best colour to use will be watermelon green.
- **Trailer matters:** Add a craw, chunk, or swimbait-style trailer for action and profile.
- **Use braid or fluorocarbon:** For better sensitivity and hook penetration, especially in heavy cover.
- **Don't rush:** Jigs excel when fished slowly so let the bait sit and "soak" in the strike zone.

BEST BASS JIG TRAILERS FOR FISHING



Keep in mind the different trailer affects the behaviour of the jig. It mimics the baitfish species, the appearance, and the shape of the bait. For example, a jig trailer is a flexible hard plastic bait tied down using jig hooks. It enhances action around jig tails which complete the overall shape.

Each trailer seems different because it triggers an action when in the water. However, most trailers move or push water, while some don't. Generally, the warmer the water, the bigger the action you rig. And the clearer or colder waters, you should put your efforts into reducing the size and shape to create a smaller overall profile. It is always best to use trailers every time you fish a jig in either condition.

Here are common types of jig trailers.

Chunks

Generally, they seem like something else that's like a hybrid. These are usually lesser than the craw size but larger than the grub because of their square, rectangular bodies. These are fantastic at covering thick vegetation or slicing boulders, dam walls, or rocks.

One other use for chunks is when using swim jigs as well. This smooth float makes for an excellent presentation through the water. But again, we remind you that most bass bites are on moving jigs. Therefore the motions you create are essential.

Grubs

A grub may just be considered an amateur trailer or basic add-on. Grubs are plastic worms with sectors or tails attached to cover your horizontal hook. Most anglers start with a grub but remember that they still work. Use light colours to mimic water clarity and the day of the morning, as it is vital to get success.

Craws

There have been instances where anglers choose craws to chase a fish as it spawns, and they can see the appearance in the water. You can also use it if you are targeting deeper water, as crabs swim on the bottom, which presents a great opportunity.

FINAL THOUGHT

Jigs are one of the most effective and reliable lures in bass fishing because they are versatile, subtle, and deadly all year round. If you're serious about upping your bass game, mastering the jig is non-negotiable. Pick the right one, fish it with patience, and you'll be surprised at how many giants you bring to the boat. 🎣



Vryheid Luremasters Bivane Bass Challenge 2025



Beautiful Bivane Dam Sunday after the competition



Vryheid Luremasters Bivane Bass Challenge Banners

The Vryheid Luremasters hosted their 17th Annual Bivane Winter Bass Challenge on 13 to 15 June 2025. The event was well supported with a total of 32 boats entering the competition.

On Friday, all the competitors arrived, some staying in the chalets and some camping. Chatter and laughs could be heard from all over, many familiar faces, also some first-time entrants. Friday night after the pre-tournament meeting, everyone enjoyed roast lamb and pork on a spit, with salads, pap-en-sous. It was an early evening for most serious anglers.

Saturday morning, 07:00

All boats were launched, and ready to start. As the siren went off, boats were leaving one by one in search for the Big Winning Fish.

The morning started slow, but as Bivane Dam never disappoints, the weigh station started getting busier. First 3kg for the competition was weighed in at 12:50 by Graig de Sousa. By 17:00 the siren went off again, and it was time to get all fish weighed in and everyone off the water.

For Saturday, we weighed in one fish over 3kg, three fish over 2kg and a total of 75 fish were weighed in, with a total fish weight of 69.45kg for the day.

Saturday evening; campfires, laughter and plans for Sunday could be heard all over the campsite.

Sunday morning, 07:00

The Siren went off, and everyone started a new

>> **Michelle Cannon** challenging day. The pressure was on as 64 anglers were still searching for a winning fish. By 13:00 all tags had to be on the board.

On Sunday, we weighed two fish over 3kg, one over 2kg and a total of 56 fish with a total weight of 46.39kg.



Graig de Sousa - Heaviest Bass Overall Winner - 3.6kg



Kelvin Bland - Heaviest Bag Second Place Winner - 11.26kg



LeRoux Joubert (16y old) - Heaviest Bass Third Place - 3.3kg

Results

The finale results for the Vryheid Luremasters Bivane Winter Bass Challenge:

Overall Winner	Graig de Sousa	3.6kg
Heaviest Bass Second Place	Zane Formo	3.37kg
Heaviest Bass Third Place KG	LeRoux Joubert (16years old)	3.3kg
Heaviest Bag Overall Winners	Shane Estran and Jonathan Kirk	11.53
Heaviest Bag Second Place Winners	Zane Formo and Kelvin Bland	11.26

Congratulations to all our winners

Thank you

Thank you to all our tournament sponsors and a very big thank you to Bivane Dam for their amazing facilities, plus their very helpful and friendly staff. We are honoured to host this annual event at Bivane's facilities.



Shane Estran and Jonathan Kirk – Heaviest Bag Overall Winners - 11.53kg



Boats waiting for the start



Zane Formo - Heaviest Bass Second Place - 3.37kg



My New PB caught at Loskop 1.96kg on a Junior Fluke on drop-shot

LOSKOP DAM FOR THE BEGINNER

>> *Lucinda Engelbrecht*

We have all heard that fishermen who is at the top of their game always go chase the giants at Loskop Dam. Looking at the photos and on Google Earth you realize that it is not a small dam and it has a reputation for not being an easy dam. On top of that, fish does not bite well in winter. If you are a beginner and want the challenge, then go for it.

We (my partner and I) recently went fishing at Loskop Dam just after a cold front came through. Our expectations were low although we did put in a lot of research. We stayed over at a place called Marulani. They have a decent launch pad and comfortable accommodation, (I will definitely recommend them).

We launched daily at 06:30. (Tip: Make sure you pack sufficient drinks, refreshments and dress warm!) We started

the day with jerkbaits that can dive up to 1.5m deep and used different colours. Although we did not catch bass on them, other fellow anglers did well using jerkbaits with fish ranging between 1.5kg to 3.5kg. They targeted the reeds and shallows.

We then tried the famous drop-shot rig in deeper water around the island (an area which most anglers will know about) and got some bites. At first we found it difficult to get a proper hookset. We hooked finesse lures wacky style and Junior Flukes through the nose. We mainly used Green Pumpkin colour.

We fished on the right hand side of the dam wall and due to the number of anglers on the water we could not fish the "Kloof". By 16:30 we fished shallow, between 1.5 to 3m deep, and targeted the rocky edges as we headed home.



We found a school, all around this size, using Live Scope



My partner's 1.94kg fish caught at Loskop on a finesse worm on a drop-shot rig



Bittersweet sunset after a long hard day of casting

My partner and I had a double-up as we both hooked two beautiful females (a 1.96kg and a 1.94kg). The fish were caught on a drop-shot rig using a finesse Green Pumpkin worm and an Itty's Secret Junior Fluke.

Day 2 was overcast and windy. The bite was not on at all. Due to having the benefit of LiveScope we managed to find the schools of fish early morning. We tried fishing weightless; however they preferred the smaller profiles of our drop-shot rigs. We managed to catch a few small fish and had a few bites on KVD lures; however we think the fish was just too small to hook.

Technology helped us finding the fish easier, however we have not mastered the full extent of it yet and we stuck to the basics of looking for baitfish swimming off, or the more common places where bass can be found such as rocky areas, trees and other structure.

I never expected to break my PB at a challenging and

technical dam such as Loskop Dam as I have only started bass fishing this year in late February. And, being a lady angler I find it a lot more challenging for me.

Whenever you are up for a challenge, you will not be disappointed with the sunrise and sunsets at Loskop Dam. 🐟



Cold mornings

BEATING THE CHILLS

Fishing for bass during the late fall and winter months can be a daunting task. During the summer season, you have identifiable structure to fish, vegetation is in bloom and the sun offers you shaded areas which will produce fish during the heat of the day. Winter however does not give you any of those visible signs.

So what do you do? Well once again, you must turn to your understanding of the bass and its lifestyle during these “lean months”. When I use the word lean, I am referring to the food chain which can be drastically reduced by the elements. Exceptionally cold weather can kill smaller fish and aquatic life leaving the bass only a limited diet for three or four months. You will often hear bass fishermen talking about the “big feed” prior to winter, when bass will eat anything and everything to carry them through to spring.

Bait selection at this time is critical. In very cold water, a bass will move only a minimal distance for food. The bait of choice has to be something that is equal or greater than the energy expended.

South African anglers are so in tune with this finesse and small lure syndrome just to get a bite that they have almost forgot that bigger baits will almost certainly catch bigger fish. Instead of using a three or four inch lure, try upsizing to five to eight inch lures. Why would any bass chase down three or four inch small meals when one fair size meal would do the trick? The key to be successful in winter is slowing down and sometimes leaving your lure motionless on the bottom for seconds, if not minutes. It’s tough fishing, which requires lot of self-conditioning, an excellent mental preparation and full concentration on the job at hand.

A jerkbait is also one of my key lures during this time of the year. Most anglers get so accustomed to the normal



Bass need to feed, no matter how cold the water gets

“cast, retrieve, repeat” approach, that they forget to match the presentation with the mood of the bass. My rule of thumb for jerkbait fishing is simple; the colder the water, the longer the pause and the slower the retrieve.

The big question is where those bass go in winter. In reality not too far from where they normally stay in the warmer months.

If you’re fishing a body of water that is featureless, has a flat mud bottom, or is generally shallow, then this is for you. During winter bass will often will draw back and lay in the lowest, deepest spot they can find. If you’re fishing a small body of water this probably means the middle of the deepest coves. If you’re fishing big venues like public waters this sanctuary could be the middle of a bay or even the centre of the lake, miles offshore. The key to this pattern is to understand that the fish are NOT orienting to cover, its more about depth and the presence of food so don’t be afraid to go look in the middle of nowhere.

If there are rocks in the dam, this will be a key winter feature. Rock offers safety to smaller baitfish during the cold water months and attracts bass like a magnet. If the rock is deep, the bass will lay along the bottom edge where the water is warmest. If the rock is shallow, on the sunny days they’ll move right up against the shallowest rocks that protrude above water. Either way, this is a key place to look for big winter bass.

Always remember, bass need to feed, no matter how cold the water gets. 🐟



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INTRODUCING THE ALU-RANCE

The ultimate dual stack fish finder bracket for bass boats

>> *Lowrance South Africa*

Position, position... it's always about position! Bass anglers agree, one of the most important spots on their boats - and where they spend the most time, is right in front of their finders. Often, depending on boat size and layout, this is the smallest space onboard. Positioning units on the bow (and within close proximity to a trolling motor), is a challenge every angler faces.

In today's high-tech fishing world, where information is everything - the more screens you can run, the better your chances of staying ahead of the competition. So how does one manage multiple fish finders in limited space?

Lowrance SA is now offering a practical and affordable option; specially designed to maximise space in any boat and our Technical Manager John Minnie gives the low-down...

The new ALU-RANCE bracket is a sleek, space-saving dual stack mount - built for serious anglers who demand performance, organization, and style.

Built for the Bow, Engineered for Advantage

The ALU-RANCE is a purpose-designed dual stack bracket that securely mounts two fish finders in a vertical configuration. By stacking your units, it gives you full visibility of both screens - perfect for running a forward-facing sonar like Active Target up top, and mapping, 2D, or down imaging below.

This smart design eliminates the need for side-by-side mounts that can overcrowd your bow and restrict movement, making ALU-RANCE a game-changer for space-conscious anglers.

Sleek, Organized, and Professional

One of the standout features of the ALU-RANCE is how clean and professional your setup looks. No more messy wiring or crowded consoles, just a streamlined, balanced mount that keeps everything right where you need it. The vertical orientation also reduces glare and makes reading both screens easier in all lighting conditions.

Crafted from High-Grade Aluminium

Durability meets design with the ALU-RANCE. Each bracket is made from marine-grade, high-strength aluminium, precision-cut and finished with a weather-resistant powder coat. It's built to take a beating, resisting corrosion, vibration, and the elements trip after trip.

Whether you're running through rough water or trailering to a tournament, ALU-RANCE holds steady and keeps your investment protected.

Universal Fit and Easy Install

The ALU-RANCE bracket is compatible with 5 to 12-inch screens. It comes with all the necessary stainless steel mounting hardware and is designed for quick, solid installation on the bow. No special tools, no complicated setup, just a rock-solid bracket ready to perform.

Why ALU-RANCE?

- **Dual stack design** to save space and increase screen visibility
- **Marine-grade aluminium** for unmatched strength and longevity
- **Clean, professional aesthetic** that enhances your rig
- **Simple installation** with universal compatibility
- **Built by anglers, for anglers**

If you're running multiple fish finders and want a setup that's as smart and tough as you are, ALU-RANCE is your answer. Designed to perform under pressure, it's the bracket trusted by weekend warriors and tournament pros alike. 🎣

For more information visit your nearest Lowrance dealer or visit www.lowrance.co.za



The ALU-RANCE bracket



Die Heldesaal

TOMMY SANDERS (1954)

Tommy Sanders is 'n Amerikaanse sportuitsaaiër wat veral bekend is vir sy werk in die buitelig- en visvangbedryf. Hy is op 20 April 1954 in Magnolia, Arkansas, gebore.

>> Philip Kemp*

Sy ouers het gedurende die Groot Depressie op plase grootgeword, wat 'n invloed op sy opvoeding gehad het. As die oudste van vier kinders het Sanders 'n redelik normale kinderlewe gehad, maar sy liefde vir die buitelewe is vroeg in sy lewe gevorm. Hy het baie saam met sy pa vis gevang, wat 'n groot jagter en hengelaar was, en sy belangstelling in die natuur is verder versterk deur sy deelname aan die Boy Scouts, waar hy die rang van 'Eagle Scout' behaal het.

Na sy matriek het Sanders aan Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, studeer, waar hy in 1976 'n graad in Engels en teater behaal het. Tydens sy universiteitstudies het hy gehelp om die kampusradio-stasie, KHDX, in 1973 te begin. Hy het daarna na New York verhuis om film en televisie aan die New York Universiteit te studeer. Sy loopbaan in televisie het begin as 'n skrywer en vervaardiger vir Arkansas Educational Television van 1979 tot 1980. Hy het daarna as vryskutskrywer en aanbieder van industriële en opvoedkundige films gewerk. In 1987 het hy 'n vennoot geword in The Works, 'n opnamestudio in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Sanders het in 1990 by ESPN aangesluit toe die netwerk die ESPN Outdoors-blok van vier uur buiteligprogrammering begin het. Hy het elke program en die kort insetsels wat tussen die programme uitgesaai is, gelei. Hy het ook die Stihl Timbersports Series, die FLW Tournament-reeks en die Bassmaster Classic-hengelkompetisies aangebied. Hy is veral bekend vir sy werk as aanbieder van The Bassmasters, waar



Tommy Sanders links saam met bekendes soos Brandon Palanuk in die Bassmaster ateljee



Tommy Sanders deel gereeld die kamera met bekendes soos Kevin VanDam

hy verskeie toekennings ontvang het. In 2009 is hy in die Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame opgeneem.

In 2018 is Sanders in die Bass Fishing Hall of Fame opgeneem, wat erkenning gee aan individue wat 'n merkwaardige bydrae tot die visvangbedryf gelewer het. Hy is saam met ander ikone van die visvangbedryf, soos viermalige Bassmaster Classic-kampioen, Kevin VanDam, en voormalige Bassmaster Angler of the Year, Gary Klein, opgeneem.

Buite sy loopbaan in televisie is Sanders ook aktief in gemeenskapsdienste. Hy is getroud en woon in Little Rock, Arkansas. Hy het in 1988 'n Outstanding Volunteer Award van die Arkansas Public Broadcasting Service ontvang en dien sedert 1991 op die direksie van die Quapaw Council van die Boy Scouts of America. Hy is ook betrokke by United Cerebral Palsy.

Tommy Sanders se loopbaan is 'n voorbeeld van toewyding aan die visvangbedryf en die buitelewe. Sy bydrae tot televisie en sy betrokkenheid by gemeenskapsdienste het hom 'n gerespekteerde figuur in die Amerikaanse visvanggemeenskap gemaak. 🐟

**Philip Kemp is 'n gesoute swartbaars-hengelaar en assistent-redakteur van SA BASS.*



Tommy Sanders met sy spesiale toekening in die Haldesaal



Tommy Sanders met die gesogte blou baadjie as 'n lid van die Haldesaal



Tommy Sanders saam met sy goeie vriend Mark Zona

Pre-spawn Hotspots

Here is a quick, tournament ready reference you can keep to find staging fish moving toward spawning areas:

1. Location and structure

Secondary points – Inside main dam coves, halfway between deep water and spawning flats.

Channel swings – Where river channels swing close to shallow banks.

Hard bottoms – Gravel, rock, or shell beds that warm quickly.

Isolated cover – Brush piles, stumps, lay-downs near migration routes.

Protected bays – South banks that get more sun.

2. Depth and Positioning

Start: 6 to 15ft on points or channel edges.

Move to: 3 to 8ft flats as temperature rise during the day.

Avoid: Very deep water unless a cold front pushes them back.

3. Search baits to cover water include:

- White/chartreuse spinnerbait with willow leaf blades
- Suspending jerkbait
- Liplless crankbait

4. Timing

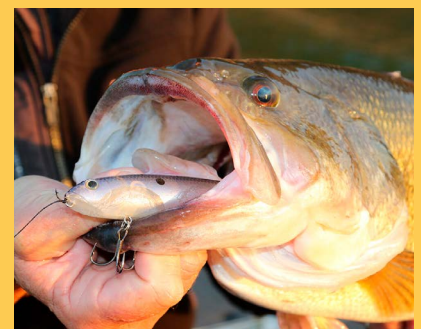
Early morning – Use reaction baits on points

Midday – Slow down and target sun-warmed cover

Late afternoon – Move shallower as fish up

BONUS TIP:

If one spot goes cold, don't abandon the patter, run the same type of spot elsewhere. Pre-spawn bass move in waves, so the next point or bay might be loaded.



GEAR UP

THE LATEST FISHING ADDITIONS

The latest fishing additions on the market.



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1. EVOLV FISHING REEL COVER

>> Available from Evolv Fishing

The EVOLV Fishing Reel Cover is engineered for serious anglers who demand premium protection for their gear. Made from high-quality thermoplastic elastomer (TPE), this sleek and fitted cover is designed to shield your baitcasting reel from impact, scratches, and environmental damage - without the bulk of traditional neoprene covers. The cover is clasped together with two magnets.

The reel cover has been tested and confirmed to fit many styles and brands of reels.

2. STRIKE KING TUMBLEWEED

>> Available from Strike King South Africa

When fish have seen the average finesse baits a million times, the Strike King Tumbleweed provides a completely different presentation that has the power to coax fussy bass into biting. Featuring a rounded ten-sided soft-plastic construction, the Strike King Tumbleweed is adorned with ten long skirt-strand appendages that quiver and flow even when no movement is imparted by the angler. Offering plenty of buoyancy, the floating Strike King Tumbleweed is perfect for fishing on a Neko rig, drop-shot, jig head, or even on its own for a seriously unique topwater presentation. Ideal for your pressured local fishery, the Strike King Tumbleweed offers a new take on the typical dice bait.

3. GEECRACK BAOBAB HOG EX

>> Available from leading fishing tackle outlets

The Geecrack Baobab Hog EX 3.8" has been a Japanese fishing staple for the last several years and now it's available in the US! Designed to be a compact creature bait that's ideal for flipping and pitching, at 3.8" the Baobab Hog EX also doubles as an effective jig trailer.

This bait is designed to be compact, but special features from end to end help it move more water to draw fish in more effectively. These features move water, but are moderated to prevent the bait from being too easily tangled or hung around heavier cover like wood. Its body is designed with rings that trap and hold water for a more enticing action - while the texturized nubs on the tail also help impart additional movement.

This bait boasts the SAF material you already know and love from Geecrack - salt, aminos, and flavour! This proprietary formula is perfected and applied to meet the unique needs of each bait designed. The salt, aminos and shrimp flavour combine to create a distinctive scent that fish hold onto longer. The special formula also helps impart the right level of buoyancy and action into the bait.

All of these features deliver a versatile bait that excels no matter how you choose to rig it: Texas rig, Carolina rig, weightless rig, Jiga rig, or as a jig trailer.

4. 6TH SENSE RIGGING MAT

>> Something new to look for

Designed for anglers who take their gear seriously, this high-quality rigging mat is the perfect solution for maintaining, tuning, and customizing your tackle and reels. Featuring built-in magnets, it securely holds split rings, hooks, reel components, and other small metal parts, keeping them in place and preventing frustrating roll-offs.

Crafted from a durable, non-slip material, this mat provides a stable and cushioned work surface, protecting your reels, baits, and tools while you work. The oil and water-resistant design makes cleanup effortless, ensuring your workspace stays organized and efficient.

The magnetic zones that keeps small metal parts like hooks, split rings, and reel components secure and within reach.

5. PERFORMANCE INNOVATIONS TANDEM SPIN

>> Available at the most leading fishing tackle shops

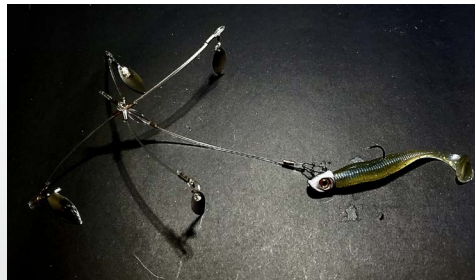
Sporting a similar design and built to be virtually indestructible like the Solo Spin, the Performance Fishing Innovations Tandem Spin provides the added attraction of a second blade for double the attention-grabbing flash and vibration. Built using 150-pound Seaguar Blue Label Fluorocarbon along with minimal hardware for less weight and a more natural appearance, the Tandem Spin features durable crimps, a



5

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strong 50-pound VMC Duolock Snap, and a #3 silver willow blade and #2 gold willow blade riding on handmade clevis-style swivels.

Great for fishing in stained water, the Tandem Spin can be retrieved at any speed and excels anytime you want to increase the “drawing power” of your soft swimbait to help you rapidly cover water. Whether fishing it on a finesse spinning rod or an XXH casting rod, the Performance Fishing Innovations Tandem Spin is the perfect complement for baits from small too big.

6. STRIKE KING ANDY MORGAN FLIPPING JIG

>> Available from Strike King South Africa

A Tackle Warehouse exclusive bait, the Strike King Andy Morgan Flipping Jig is specifically crafted with purpose-built features for probing dense, gnarly cover where big bass love to hide. Engineered to cleanly slip in and out of cover, each Andy Morgan Flipping Jig is built with a special head design, low-profile line tie, and a fibre weed guard that protects a sticky sharp Owner hook in a highly unique 4.5/0 size. Adorned with a silicone skirt for a bulky profile and tantalizing pulsing action with every angler input, the Andy Morgan Flipping Jig is available in several productive colours suited for waters ranging from clean to dirty. Able to withstand the demanding duties of flipping and pitching with heavy line, the Strike King Andy Morgan Flipping Jig also comes with

a barbed bait keeper to securely hold your favourite soft plastic trailer.

7. PERFORMANCE INNOVATIONS QUAD HOVER RIG

>> Something new from Performance Innovations

Not your typical umbrella rig, the Performance Fishing Innovations Quad Hover Rig is built using minimal hardware for a very slow sink rate that’s ideal for hover and mid-strolling with forward-facing sonar. Assembled using clear 150-pound Seaguar Blue Label Fluorocarbon, the Quad Hover Rig sports a centre arm and a proprietary hub and spoke armature that enables the four outside arms to freely spin around an axis like a helicopter’s rotor. Equipped with robust double crimps, the Quad Hover Rig is also adorned with four small #3 willow-leaf blades mounted to handmade 50-pound fluorocarbon clevis-style swivels, allowing for a uniquely wide blade rotation producing increased thump and lift.

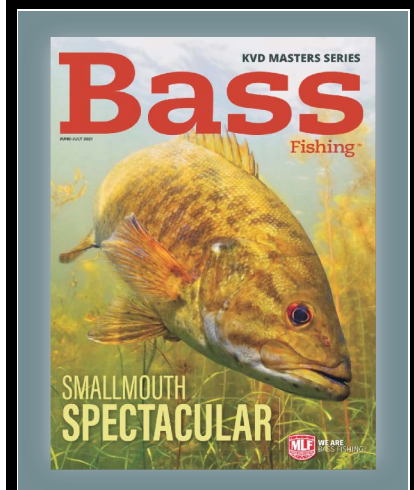
Delivering a more natural, unrestricted movement compared to the average wire umbrella rig, the flexibility of the Quad Hover Rig provides a greatly enhanced swimming, pulsing, undulating action that closely emulates a school of baitfish. With an unrigged weight of just 1/4 ounce, the Quad Hover Rig can be paired with everything from a small swimbait for use on a finesse spinning rod to a much larger swimbait or hardbait for fishing on a heavy stick. From blind casting to targeting suspended bass on your sonar screen, the Performance Fishing Innovations Quad Hover Rig provides the refinement and versatility that gets results.

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South Africa

Dam Levels



Here is a list of the latest water levels of some of South Africa's biggest water reservoirs.

Eastern Cape	73.0%	↑↓
Beervlei Dam	0.0%	0.0%
Bridle Drift Dam	102.0%	-1.6%
Darlington Dam	39.1%	-9.1%
Impofu Dam	50.6%	-2.3%
Wriggleswade Dam	100.1%	-0.1%

Gauteng	100.9%	↑↓
Bronkhorstspuit	101.4%	-1.8%
Roodeplaat Dam	100.4%	-0.1%

Kwa-Zulu Natal	98.0%	↑↓
Albert Falls Dam	100.1%	-0.5%
Bivane Dam	100.1%	-1.4%
Goedertrouw Dam	99.0%	-1.1%
Inanda Dam	101.3%	-0.5%
Midmar Dam	97.8%	-2.2%
Ntshingwayo Dam	93.9%	-0.2%
Pongolapoort Dam	95.9%	1.7%
Spioenkop Dam	97.4%	-2.8%
Spring Grove Dam	96.4%	-4.1%
Wagendrift Dam	99.5%	-1.1%
Woodstock Dam	97.3%	-4.8%
Zaaihoek Dam	97.3%	-4.8%

Limpopo	86.9%	↑↓
Albasini Dam	98.2%	-1.5%
De Hoop Dam	100.2%	-0.3%
Ebenezer Dam	100.2%	-0.1%
Flag Boshielo / Arabie	101.8%	-1.8%
Doordraai Dam	100.4%	0.7%
Mokolo Dam	31.8%	-7.4%
Nandoni Dam	96.2%	-4.0%
Rust de Winter Dam	100.9%	-0.5%
Tzaneen Dam	52.3%	-2.8%

Mpumalanga	99.0%	↑↓
Da Gama Dam	97.4%	-2.9%
Driekoppies Dam	93.1%	-2.0%
Grootdraai Dam	99.9%	-2.2%
Heyshope Dam	100.3%	-0.6%
Injaka Dam	98.2%	-1.4%
Jericho Dam	98.2%	-3.9%
Kwena Dam	100.2%	-0.4%
Loskop Dam	100.5%	-0.8%
Middelburg Dam	97.5%	-3.8%
Morgenstond Dam	100.2%	0.4%
Nooitgedacht Dam	99.8%	-0.8%
Rhenosterkop Dam	100.2%	-1.4%
Vygeboom Dam	100.1%	1.0%
Witbank Dam	100.9%	0.2%

North West	103.4%	↑↓
Boskop Dam	102.5%	-0.7%
Buffelspoort Dam	100.5%	-0.3%
Hartebeespoort Dam	99.8%	2.0%
Klerkskraal Dam	108.2%	0.4%
Kosterrivier Dam	100.2%	-0.4%
Molatedi Dam	108.4%	-0.8%
Roodekopjes Dam	104.5%	3.0%

O.F.S.	100.8%	↑↓
Allemanskraal Dam	96.9%	-3.1%
Bloemhof Dam	107.6%	2.8%
Gariiep Dam	99.4%	0.8%
Kalkfontein Dam	100.8%	-2.3%
Knellpoort Dam	99.5%	-0.2%
Koppies Dam	101.3%	-3.4%
Sterkfontein Dam	99.4%	-0.7%
Vaal Dam	106.9%	-1.2%
Vaalrivier Barrage	97.0%	-11.1%
Vanderkloof Dam	99.6%	-0.4%

Western Cape	79.8%	↑↓
Berg River Dam	100.5%	39.7%
Brandvlei Dam	63.0%	20.7%
Clanwilliam Dam	97.0%	67.6%
Kwaggaskloof Dam	61.3%	19.0%
Theewaterskloof Dam	77.6%	18.8%
Voëlvllei Dam	79.5%	21.8%

Levels on: 15-Jul 17-Jul
Average: 93.7% 92.2%



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First weekend of the month;
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Register on the day at the venue;
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Buddy tournament – fish with your friend, family member, or alone;
Fishing is from small watercraft (less than 4.6m in length) - No outboards allowed;
Limit is 3 fish per team;
Big cash prizes + trophies to be won;
Lucky draw prizes

**New season starts
September 2025**



Call 082-416-5524, or get all the rules, dates and venues on our website

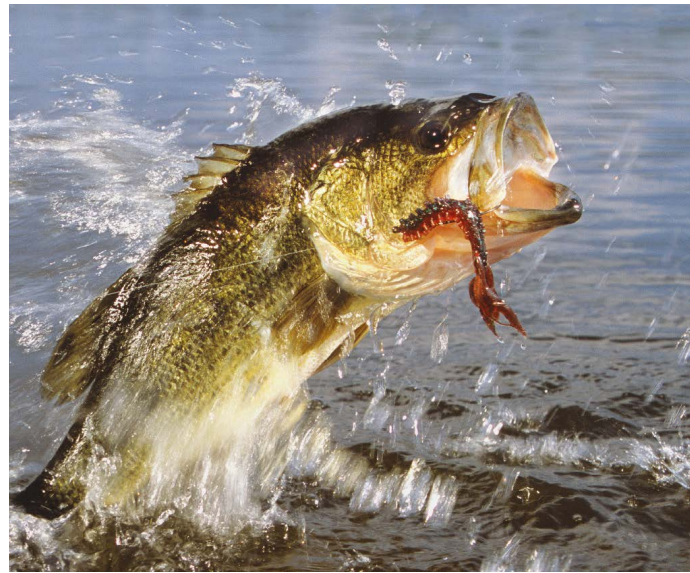


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