

## **Fall Crappie; Way Better Than Spring No Way** by Steve Welch

I am just returning from the lake and thought I would share some of my thoughts. It is now November and I bet most of you wouldn't even think about fishing now for crappie they are a fish that you chase in the spring. Well if proof is what you need give me a call and I will make a believer out of you. November is always the best month, big fish and limits to boot. We usually catch about six or seven limits of fish over ten inches and maybe another fifty or so to short to keep. What does that spell, action and plenty of it. I am still pulling fish out of no more than a foot of water and will be looking to start fishing deep by month's end. I like to do either but my big Ranger is much more at home hovering over a deep brush pile than trying to keep it from getting stuck in a foot of water, speaking of that I had to get out and push yesterday and believe me it was cold in fifty degree water. Embarrassing for sure but these tournaments have me going where the johnboats are much more at home than a twenty-foot Ranger. I bet they are surprised when they see this big boat miles up in the rivers that feed Shelbyville. Luckily I didn't have clients with me.

My tackle consists of a nine foot pole, one I have set up with a spinning reel with six pound test of hi-vis line and the other is an eight foot pole that I have a zebco underspin on it because I pitch a jig under a slip bobber with it and the spinning reel tends to get loops on the spool and you don't have to watch the zebco since it is a closed face reel. I put the spinning reel on the other pole because I never cast with it. I fish vertically over brush and the spinning reel has a better drag so I leave it loose and just pull out more line when I need it. I use either a sixteenth ounce jig on my slip bobber pole or an eighth ounce jig on my tight line pole when fishing deeper. I use tubes from Midsouth and they are also available at Mike's Tackle in Decatur. I like the brighter chartreuse and the tougher heads on them and they make a large two and a half-inch tube that I swear by for big fish. Colors this question is asked by my fellow fisherman all the time. I truly believe that color doesn't have as much to do with it as boat control and the proper presentation. I use only three colors and have no favorite. I use red and chartreuse or white and chartreuse or black and chartreuse. If the water is dirty then I use the red or black more. I also use a lot of power bait nibbles when the bite is slow they do work.

I mentioned the importance of boat control. One time with me and you would see what I mean. I never spook a brush pile by running in to it or throwing past the deep-water end of it to get to the thick branches in the middle. Patients is what I preach you might of just spooked the biggest fish in the brush pile because you thought you saw a better place. You must attack all shallow brush from the down wind side and fish deep to shallow checking the whole brush pile. When I am fishing deep my trolling motor depth finder is so important that I would have to cancel a guide trip with out it. I always know where the brush is at all times and hold the boat just over the top of it no matter what the wind. My boat has a huge front deck and when we are fishing deep I put two folding chairs behind my butt seat and we all fish over the front of the boat so you must keep the boat in one place and not drift much forward or backward or everyone is hung in the brush. Very critical that only slight movement of the boat is all you do. Back when I first started fishing all my buddies were getting these high sided multi specie boats and I wondered why there were so few crappie fishermen with them and they all had bass boats. Now I know why bass boats set so low in the water that they don't catch wind making it much easier to hold your boat in one spot and with today's high powered trolling motors you can fish in anything. This new boat that I have will take about anything old Mother Nature has to offer here in central Illinois.

Next month I will tell you how my tournaments went this fall I have four of them and just hope for a decent showing top five will suffice. I have many good dates left if crappie heaven is your liking because Lake Shelbyville is as close as you will get. So give my guide service a call and we will go get some of those tasty slabs.

Steve Welch

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