

Alternative Hookbaits, A Little Edge

...By Adam Smith

In recent weeks I have found myself trying to gain a little edge over the other anglers on my busy syndicate water. As always on places like this, any little tweak or adjustment can pay dividends and is worth experimenting with to see if it brings results.

The aspect of my angling which has been experimented with recently is my hookbaits. I have been rolling unusual little pop-ups to be fished as singles or over bait to try and induce a more positive response from these very heavily pressured fish.

Early on in the season I started using pink and white, two-toned, cork ball pop-ups. This was achieved by mixing up two different coloured paste combinations using the excellent CC Moore ingredients with the pop-up mix as the base. The idea really appealed to me and to my knowledge the Christchurch carp hadn't seen this before. I couldn't wait to give it a go!

I wanted to make these baits super buoyant; the rigs I like to use on this lake are made all the more effective by the hookbaits having excellent buoyancy properties. To achieve a 14mm bait I roll the pop-up paste around a 12mm cork ball. It requires a fair sized bit of putty to weigh them down, perfect! I can relax, safe in the knowledge that after 48hrs immersed in the lake, my baits will be just as buoyant as the moment I flicked them out.



Sometimes, if the situation calls for it, I like to use a snowman hookbait instead of my usual pop-ups. I do exactly the same as before but use a smaller, 8mm cork ball to create a 10mm bait. This balances a 16mm N-Gage bottom bait perfectly.

The flavour combination I started with and continue to use to this day is 5ml of CC Moore raspberry flavour with 2ml of Condensed milk flavour to round off the taste package nicely. (This is used in a 1 egg mix).

Some of the Ingredients I use for my little Specials

The results on these pink and white baits were great right from the off. I had a string of big fish captures which was very satisfying and it seemed my theory was being proved right!



A 26.12 Linear caught on the pink and white combination

As the season wore on I tweaked them slightly and rolled a batch of yellow and brown two-toned baits. My theory behind this was that the Christchurch carp still love a bit of yellow to this day. I wanted to fish over a fair bit of bait most of the time up there, my bait of choice this year being the deadly N-Gage XP which is dark brown in colour. So half of the bait matched the colour of my foodbait and that little fleck of yellow would be a much more subtle “eye catcher” than a blatant bright yellow pop-up which these fish must have seen day in, day out for years.



“Baby Pooley’s”

It was a buzz to see that these baits worked just as well as, if not better, than my pink and white ones! One particular capture that stands out was when I found a good group of fish, feeding very enthusiastically, on my prebaited margin spot.

They really liked the N-Gage, that was more than obvious from watching these fish, and only proved what I already knew. I managed to lower a 1.5 inch “choddy” in amongst them without disturbing them too much and within 20 minutes it rattled off- the result being a lovely, dark, 30lb common.



A long, dark 30lb Common

I’m really looking forward to using these “special” hookbaits in the colder months as well. I think they will prove to be a major edge, especially when used in conjunction with the Milkimin pellets and some flavoured maggots. What carp could possibly resist?!

During my last six nights on Christchurch, I’ve put the snowman’s through their paces. The 16mm N-Gage hardened hookbaits being balanced out just right by my pop-ups. Again, using the yellow and brown combination, over plenty of the N-Gage XP, my landing net has got up close, and personal, with 6 of the lake’s stunning residents; my personal favourite being a cracking mirror of 30lbs 6oz with the rest weighing 18 - 27lbs.



An angry looking 30lb mirror



A beautiful Scaly 26 Linear

I'm back home now, I have a fresh batch of cork ball pop-ups all rolled and ready to go, and I can't wait to get back up there!

All the best & tight lines

Adam Smith