

My season so far on N-Gage XP

By Ashley Ward

Last season was very frustrating for me as it had the potential to be a good one, especially after securing a field-tester spot on the N-gage XP team, but it never really happened and I spent very little time on the bank. Work commitments, finishing my degree in teaching and a very poorly close family member put it all on hold, so I was really looking forward to this year; the only trouble was where to go. I didn't fancy fighting the crowds on the local day ticket water which left my usual club water in Grantham; but it wasn't lighting my fire particularly as the travelling to and fro from a 'day only' water can be hard work. (We really don't have many lakes in the Lincoln area). It was around that time I heard that a local private lake which holds 20-25 fish in 8-9 acres was going to open on a small syndicate. After a bit of digging I managed to secure a spot on the 10 man syndicate, and was really looking forward to fishing for a 40 pound common that it holds.

June 16th came and I knew it was going to be tricky with just overnights at my disposal, especially with a low stock, but I was happy to put in the work as I new I had summer holidays coming and would have plenty of bank time then. I had been putting quite a bit of the N-gage XP in with CC Moore Betaine H.N.V pellets and was feeling pretty confident, but I really wasn't prepared for what was about to happen over the next 3 and a bit weeks.

My first session was a quick overnighter and if I had any doubt I was doing something wrong it was firmly put to rest when my middle rod screamed off at 3am resulting in one of 4 small pretty commons that are like peas in a pod. At 13.08 it was small but any fish is a result on this lake; I was certainly happy to be off the mark first night.



13.08

I recast the rod and it landed with a good donk. They must have been feeding hard on my spot because it felt well cleaned off. I got my head back down knowing I didn't have to pack up until 9o'clock-ish in the morning.

Morning came without any more action so I started getting packed up. With everything packed away apart from the rods, I was just putting my second rod in the sleeve when the 3rd rod that was lent over a bush absolutely tore off. After a very good battle I slipped the net under another common of 23.13 which was absolutely built to scrap.

With photos done I went home very happy with my first nights work



23.13

The second and third overnights resulted in someone fishing next to me. A blank session told me that it was probably too many lines in a small area that was the cause of no action. They were defiantly cutting me off from the fish but I just kept the bait going in.



13.02

The fourth overnighter and I had the lake to myself. I was certainly more confident, and was right to be as the right hand rod on my other spot tore off at 2am resulting in a plump mirror weighing just ounces under 20lb. The only trouble is I had left my camera at my Mum's after my sisters 18th birthday. I was a little disappointed as I would have liked a decent picture; any fish from this lake is worthy of a picture in my opinion. My girlfriend was with me for the night so I got a bad phone picture at least. At 8am the same rod was off again this time resulting in another one of the little commons at 13.02.

Again a couple of quick snaps on the phone and off to get ready for work.

My fifth overnighter resulted in a missed stalking chance. On arrival when I found 7 fish in a little corner and managed to get a baited rig in without spooking them..... I then decided I was going to hit a liner. I was disappointed at my incompetence and moved round onto my baited area for the night.

I had no night-time bites but I was up at first light looking for opportunities. I saw one show close in a bit further along from my swim and managed to get a bait to it. They carried on showing every so often but no action was forthcoming. I reeled in the rod and it was fine.

Once back in the area it didn't take long and I was soon landing the same 19 pound mirror. At least I got some decent pictures this time.



19.14

It was going well: five overnights and five fish from the low stocked lake, but I just had a feeling the big ones weren't getting in my area.... I felt it was time for a move.

I chose to move just one swim down to my right but I had seen some of the bigger fish here including the big mirror and leather, which were two of my targets. I chose to bait a couple of spots that I could wade my bait out to. So I baited with a mixture of fresh N-Gage XP boilies along with some air dried to make sure the birds didn't get them all. Also I put in a good spread of the Betaine Ultramix as I knew they like their pellets in here.

Saturday 9th July and I had another overnighter at my disposal but had to be away early for work. I got there and had a good look round but could only find 1 fish on a hot day and that was over the other side of the lake. To top things off, the lake I'm fishing has been used by the public for years as a place to swim as it has sandy banks on one side. So not only could I only find one fish I also had the people on lilos, swimmers and dog owners throwing sticks in to contend with, NIGHTMARE! I thought to myself, this is the last Saturday I fish on a hot day.



Big Common 35.04

I set up on the area I had been baiting which was a little way away from the crowds, of course they found me wading my baits out highly amusing and thought I was some mad man. Rods in position and no confidence whatsoever..... at least I would get a good night's sleep I thought.

At 11pm, just as I was thinking about bed, my left hander ripped off and on picking up the rod it carried on going. It felt good but I had made this mistake a week earlier when I thought one of the little commons was a big fish. After a little while it rolled in the shallow water before powering off again. I thought it was the leather as it looked a good size, but then when I got it to the net and it rolled again I realised it was the Big Common. It went in first time of asking and I couldn't quite believe I had got my target fish within six overnights.

Due to recently spawning it had dropped weight but at 35.04 I was still a very happy man.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Ian Moore and his team for the opportunity to field-test an absolutely top quality bait, I've never used a bait that gets results like this.

Obviously I got little field-testing done last year but I will certainly be enjoying a very successful year this year on the N-gage XP especially as its now my summer holiday.



The big girl going back

Tight Lines

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