

When it all goes right.....By Trev Cooke

It's crazy really, a 50lber less than 3 miles from my home; and what is even crazier is that I have never had a dangle for him before!. I decided to have a little go during the winter months of December and January, probably fishing six trips. Nothing happened at all, which was not surprising with the winter we have all had to endure! I did get a little feel for the place though, fishing around the lake and looking for all the likely spots & climbing trees that I hoped would give me a head start when things started to wake up.

I spent lots of time collecting as much information on him as possible. Where his favourite haunts were and where he had been caught from in the past. I also gathered as many photos of him as I could, which I hoped would motivate me in the months to come.

April the 1st came around and I bought my ticket. First trip down was a 24 hour trip where I did manage an 18lb common on the xxx which I was well pleased with; first blood, pressure off. I didn't feel very close to him that trip as the weather was terrible, freezing cold winds and rain and the visibility in the water was near on zero.

I had to work all bank holiday weekend, so I ordered some ingredients from Ian. I really wanted some fresh, lovingly rolled hook baits to angle for him with, so I rolled up some XXX cork ball pop ups with a few other, choice bits & pieces included. All nice and dry, I added a few drops of salmon oil and the same amount of marine amino compound. They looked and smelt the one! I needed to have a go with them so risked the wrath of my girlfriend and went to the lake on the Saturday night for an overnighter in between work. It didn't take long for the new hookers to kick in, 15 minutes in fact, bizarrely another 18lb common. My friend has fished the place for years without a single common to his name and here's me with 2 in two trips. Confidence was high in the bait. My plan was always to find the big fish and fish as close to him as possible with either single hookbaits or small traps.

I had a 3 nighter planned, starting on the bank holiday Monday. The weather looked excellent for my stay; spring was finally in the air and he was well overdue. There were a few on when I arrived after work so I had a chat with a few of the lads and found out he had been seen up the snaggy end of the lake during the day. I set off on a lap of the lake spending half an hour up the tree that looked across the snags. I didn't actually see him as the light was fading but I did see a few out in front and that was good enough for me. A few moments later and I was all set up with my 2 freshly tied on XXX cork ball pop ups fished on fairly long chods. 20lb Bristle filament and a size 6 Atomic Grabba completed the rig; these were fished helicopter style on 6 foot lead core leaders. A 1/4 ounce (yes that's a quarter of an ounce) leads completed the set up.

One was fished up alongside one of his favourite snaggy homes to the left of the swim and the other was under armed in front where I had seen the couple earlier. The night passed with no action but I was the first up at 5.45am up and down the tree in between cups of tea. About 6am I couldn't believe my luck when I saw him, looking massive and all excited. He looked like he had a 'skip in his swim' and his big white lips were flaring. He was doing circles from the snag around a little weed bed and disappearing back into the snag. All this was happening right above my left hand rod!!. I realised then, I had a very good chance of catching him on the first proper trip of the year. I sat in my broly worried if the dusk-chucked hook bait had landed perfectly, I knew it was in the right area, but I couldn't be sure it was bang on. It was then I heard a "plop" and another, someone was casting the other side of the snag where she was and where I was the closest I'll ever be to catching a 50lb carp. It was one of those WHY ME moments! A quick shout over to the angler and that was that sorted. I took the opportunity to plop my own quarter ounce lead on the money with a freshly tied on XXX.

It was then going to be a nervous day of sitting on my hands and praying he was not spooked off by all the commotion.

I didn't have to wait long, 7.30am the indicator hit the rod and stayed there, I was on it like a flash instantly knowing what it was I had hooked- you can't mistake the dead weight of a fish like that. I nearly had it in the net before he knew too much about it, but he then woke up and went on several powerful runs, kiting underneath my other rod. Now I take a lot of care over my tackle, but not that day that second rod was literally slung over my shoulder and into the bushes leaving a nice area to commence the fight with what I knew was a beast.

Seeing a near on 4ft, 50lb carp rolling in the margins is enough to make the coolest of characters turn to jelly and I was no different; my knees were knocking like hell. A few moments later and he was in the net. A sight I will never forget; the sheer size of him was immense!



On the scales, they read a new, jaw dropping, personal best of 50lb8oz. Party time!

The pictures were expertly taken by Matt Jackson (thanks mate)

I have never been a lucky angler but my luck was in here big-time and I still had another 48 hours to go fish another venue!

Good times indeed

Tight lines

Trev Cooke