

THE GAME CHANGER



Jacob mimicked a crayfish using a prawn to bank this 6lb 9oz chub.

“I got my chub campaign off to a flyer... thanks to prawns!”

JACOB STONE – 6Lb 9oz CHUB

“CHUB are famous for eating pretty much anything, but with the extra pressure on our rivers these days, using something a little unusual on the hook can pay off.

“Many years ago I remember my grandad fishing prawns in winter for chub, but they’ve become a bit of a forgotten bait, other than for perch on commercial fisheries.

“On the Great Ouse in Milton

Ernest there’s been a rise in angler numbers since lockdown, most of whom use pellets, boilies, bread or cheese paste. With my summer barbel campaign coming to an end, I fancied a crack at the chub and, wanting to do something a bit different, I decided to try prawns.

“I was also influenced by a recent explosion of signal crayfish in the river, and during the summer I watched the chub and perch absolutely destroy them! They’re clearly something the fish are used to, and a prawn imitates these pretty well. The bait also gave me a chance of connecting with one of the Ouse’s famous big perch.

“I thought, ‘if I’m going to get a bite anywhere, this is it!’”

“I got two bags of bait ready – one containing small prawns, the other king prawns. I glugged both overnight in Spotted Fin Liquid Red, infused with its Smoky Jack flavour, and left them overnight. I have real confidence in the colour red, and I’m an advocate of doing what you believe in.

“My plan was to fish a light leger, roving between swims throughout the day. I kicked off by feeding around four small prawns into an area I fancied and left them for a few minutes while I tackled up.

“I hair-rigged a king prawn using a Quick Stop because a clear hook gives me a better chance of hitting bites. The set-up was strong but simple – 10lb line, an 8lb fluoro hooklink, a size 8 hook, and a 0.5oz bomb. I didn’t want to go too light as this stretch is snaggy and there’s always the chance of a barbel.

“The day started well, with

a chub of a couple of pounds coming right away. But soon after, the crayfish became a problem. They’ve been in the river for years, but while you once only used to catch a couple per session, these days you can reel in with two attached to the hookbait at once!

“I worked my way down the stretch, but the crayfish made it impossible. I was thinking about moving stretches when I came to a good-looking swim, where the river narrows down a quick run with overhanging trees at the tail. I thought, ‘if I’m going to get a bite anywhere, this is it’, and fed a few small prawns into the flow. I waited a few minutes before dropping my hookbait in, and as it fell through the water, I had a few taps on the tip – definitely not crays, as these came while the bait was mid-water.

“Eventually, the tip crept round, and I hit into something that jagged hard. Initially, I thought it was a big perch, but as a pair of thick, black shoulders rose from the surface, I realised I was into a chub, and a good one, too. At 6lb 9oz, it’s a cracking start to my campaign, and fell to a bait many anglers forgot about years ago.”

JACOB’S TOP 5 TIPS

BOOST YOUR BAITS

I have real confidence in baits that are dyed red. Try different options and see which works for you.

USE LIGHT TIPS

A soft, 2oz glass quivertip allows you to read bites clearly. Often, these can be subtle.

STAY ON THE MOVE

I like to fish as many swims as possible and will generally spend no more than 30 minutes in one spot before moving.

RETURN TO AREAS

If I’ve had an indication in a swim but no fish, I like to bait it and return later in the day.

TRY HAIR-RIGGING

Although many like to bury the hook in a chub bait, hair-rigging works well for me. I feel I can strike faster and connect with more bites.

BEST-EVER PERCH SEALS PERFECT RETURN TO VENUE

AFTER a run of quality perch from a big Midlands stillwater last winter, Carl Hill was understandably keen to return this autumn – and was glad he did so after catching this impressive 4lb 12oz fish on his first attempt.

It set a new PB for the Leicester angler, and is the latest in a string of big perch landed over the past month by the nation’s predator fishing fans.

Carl banked two other perch weighing 4lb 2oz and 3lb 10oz in the same session, with all three falling to drop shot tactics. From past experience, he knew the fish liked to hang around near structures, so he ditched the short and wispy rods typically used when drop shotting and instead went for a 12ft model with a soft action. He rightly figured that this would give him the necessary ‘grunt’ to get any fish he hooked quickly up off the bottom, while still being soft enough to cushion any lunges they might make near the net.

Wary of the water’s pike stocks and the risk of getting bitten off, he used an 18ins trace made up of 10lb wire. Some anglers may be put off using this stiffer material for perch, but Carl believes that using a decent length of the stuff gives the lure more mobility than it would have with the typical 10ins-12ins lengths most anglers use. Judging by his results, the perch certainly didn’t mind!



CARL HILL – 4lb 12oz perch



HOW TO ENTER THE DRENNAN CUP

1 CATCH a coarse fish by design. Take a picture (no blurred or altered backgrounds please) and forward it to us.

2 DRENNAN picks its favourites. For your first award you win £80, plus a Drennan Weekly Winner’s cap and badge.

3 AT the end of the season, readers pick their favourite catches, and the winning angler scoops a cool £2,000!

Running since 1985, the Drennan Cup is Britain’s No1 weekly catch competition which rewards anglers who target big coarse fish by design.