

TIPS FOR TEMPTING THE TROUT

■ Adding a bit of flash to a fly can transform a frustrating day into a bout with fiesty trout

Early in the year — January and February — my dad was fishing a couple of our few lakes that had open water and he was frustrated. His friends were catching more and bigger fish than he was, by two to one.

A person can chock that up to luck and say, “That’s just fishing,” but a person can also do something about it.

I asked him, “Dad, do you want to catch more fish than your friends?” To which he said he did.

“Then you need to put an Action Disc in front of your fly.”

Dad immediately placed an order from Wigglefin.com, figured out how to rig the disc and barely a week later, he sent me a picture of a 23-inch rainbow he caught out of Prineville Reservoir. He was catching more and bigger fish than his buddies and last time I checked, he hadn’t told them about the Action Disc either.

That gave me an idea. One of our local lakes kicks out big fish in February and March and I knew there had to be a good one there for me. I thought if I could get there early enough on a Saturday, I might catch a fish at the inlet. When we pulled into the parking area, another guy was walking down to the water ahead of us. As it turned out, he walked to the wrong spot.

Dad and I crawled down the cliff and perched on a narrow ledge



ON THE TRAIL
GARY LEWIS

above the fast water where it empties into the lake.

I knotted on a Mack’s Lure Smile Blade Fly, in rusty orange. The Smile Blade is a small mylar spinner at the head of the fly, which gives the fly action and flash. To up the ante, I dressed the fly with Pro-Cure crawfish gel scent. I fed line into the current and wham! It broke my leader with one grab and a headshake.

I cut the 4X tippet off, trimmed it back to about 8-pound test and tied on another Smile Blade Fly, dressed it with crawfish scent and three casts later, had another grab. It came to the surface so fast, it was dancing just off my rod tip a moment later and then it headed toward the bottom, where it tried to saw the line in the boulders then started a long run out into the lake. Dad was so excited, I thought he was going to fall off the cliff. Eventually, I was able to calm the fish and dad enough that he was able to net the gnarly 21-inch broodstock trout for me.

There are times when trout will follow our flies and peck at the tails or otherwise short-strike. Some-



Gary Lewis/Submitted Photo

Don Lewis caught this 23-inch rainbow on a bluebird day in March.

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times trout follow out of curiosity and don’t bite at all. That little bit of chaos that an Action Disc or a Smile Blade imparts to the fly is sometimes the difference.

In places like Wallowa Lake, Phillips Reservoir or Willow Creek Reservoir, where the fish can run a little bigger, the Mack’s Smile Blade Fly is a great trolling option. Where the fish are 8- to 12-inch legals, a better choice might be a white, olive or black beadhead Woolly Bugger. Other good leech patterns for casting and trolling include blood red, black and olive tungsten or beadhead Mohair Buggers. Leeches should be weighted at the head so that they sink or wobble when the fly isn’t moving. If you have to catch more and bigger fish than your buddy, rig with an Action Disc.

The fish-catching principle at play here is that as the fly is drawn through the water, pressure builds on the concave front surface. When the pressure builds, the disc turns and releases it, which turns the tube into a lever, bending the line in the opposite direction, kicking the fly with it. The fly, representing a leech or baitfish appears to be wounded or injured. And that makes it hard



Gary Lewis/Submitted Photo

Lewis hooked and lost the first one when it broke the line. Cutting back to heavier leader material paid off. The trout measured 21 inches and weighed 4 pounds.

to resist for a curious predator like a big rainbow or brown trout.

Slide the Action Disc up the leader with the concave side pointed toward the reel. Next, slide on a small bead or stopper to protect the knot from abrasion. Dad’s little extra trick involves a blood knot and a short tippet section of six to eight inches, which results in a slower action and wider swim path.

Last night we fished another of our local lakes and dad’s new favor-

ite lake rig definitely outperformed the standard fly on leader. Finally I took my own advice and caught a nice trout at sunset.

There. A little trick to put a limit of trout in the boat. Just don’t tell any of my dad’s friends.

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Gary Lewis/Submitted Photo

This trout took a slow-trolled white beadhead leech pattern behind an Action Disc.

Wrapping up air gun series with an overview of options

This week we’re going to wrap up the four-part series on air guns. This article will be a wrap-up/summary on air guns.

If you need further convincing that air guns have hit the modern shooting world with a big splash and are not just a fizzling fad among a group of old senile bald-headed men looking for a new source of entertainment, check out the offerings at your favorite outdoor store. Or go online and



BASE CAMP
TOM CLAYCOMB

look at all of the air gun offerings. Or check out Pyramid Air, which is a large online air gun store.

Or check the true litmus paper — the free market. I test a lot of air guns, sponsored on hunts and conduct seminars by air gun companies. You’d think I knew all

of the air guns companies out there but I learn of a new company every time I open a catalog. If air guns weren’t popular, then why would so many companies be jumping on the air gun bandwagon?

So let’s get started. We’ve learned that there are three good platforms to choose from.

- CO₂
 - PCP (Pre-charged Pneumatics)
 - Break barrel (BB)
- They are divided down into

these three classifications due to their power source. You’ll have to choose which one works best for your desired application.

To help you make a decision here are my thoughts. What I am about to say is not totally true but generally is.

- CO₂s — good to train kids. They’re not as powerful so you can set up a shooting range in your garage with the proper backstop and targets.
- Break barrels — These are the most economical, the

most powerful and a great option for hunting. If you get a mid-priced BB like the Umarex Synergis (yes, it is an under lever but I’m putting it in the break barrel category) you will have a shooter that is accurate and powerful enough for small game hunting. If you buy a BB with a magazine then you’re not digging pellets out of your pocket every shot. But, over time you will have malfunctions with the plastic magazines so you preppers may want to go with

the single-shot BB. Although you can still slip in a pellet by hand.

• PCPs — are the most expensive to shoot due to the fact that you’ll need auxiliary air tanks, pay to fill them, etc. I’d suggest buying a Umarex Readyair air gun compressor. It’s the most economical compressor that I’ve found. I have no doubt, in due time if you really get into air guns that you’ll end up buying a PCP.

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