

DAVE VINCENT Ultimate presentation

2 INCHES makes all the difference

Superior bait presentation is vital to maximise your swim's potential. **Shooting patterns, float shapes** and **line diameters** all combine to offer the ultimate rig to fool the shyest of fish. Browning Hotrods star **Dave Vincent** explains more...

profile



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Ultimate presentation **Dave Vincent**

We all think our pole rigs offer brilliant bait presentation that fools most of the fish in our pegs. But have you ever thought just how many roach could be swimming around your hookbait – almost literally laughing at your attempt to fool them into taking it?

The reality is that when we catch fish from our swim, there's a massive percentage of them that are feeding, yet deciding to ignore our hookbait. These are the ones you need to fool in order to really maximise your swim's potential.

Dave Vincent knows only too well how important it is to ensure his rigs are perfectly shotted and incorporating the right line and floats. He's fished at top level for more years than he cares to remember, and has been part of the England set-up. He is a man with an enormous amount of knowledge and experience, especially when it comes to understanding how fish feed, and how a rig behaves underwater.

Dave, along with many other top anglers, believes that presentation and feeding are the most important elements of any type of fishing, regardless of target species. So, over the following pages he reveals his theories and secrets on bait presentation, which keep him one step ahead of the competition.

Experience matters

Over the years I have fished literally hundreds of venues, many in other countries all around the world. I have also fished with the best anglers in England and overseas, and have therefore learned a few tricks that can help put fish in the net on harder days, and catch better-quality fish than those around me.

Today I have come to Browning Tingrith Fisheries to hopefully demonstrate how a well-presented bait will catch quality fish. While anglers fishing with a poorly-presented bait may still catch fish when on a shedful, the size difference will be noticeable. The venue is immaterial; the tricks I use to achieve good presentation are often vital on any water.

I am going to explain how to achieve good presentation on the pole, as it is the most widely-used method on most of the venues I fish. Besides, a book could be written if we went into detail about other methods.

Fish to the conditions

One of the most important things I have learned in my fishing is to tailor the way you fish to suit the conditions. Before picking up your favourite rig, have a look at the water clarity and the weather. If it is windy, or the water is coloured, the fish will normally come a little closer to the bank



Dave spends plenty of time ensuring he is fishing at the correct depth. He knows that one inch can make a massive amount of difference.

than if the water is clear and the surface mirror-like. So it's pointless waving 13 metres of pole, perhaps past the fish and in a gale-force wind. Presentation will be difficult to achieve, and therefore the catch rate will be much lower than if a more sensible, close-in approach is adopted.

It sounds simple, but do your homework on the weather – although the forecast can sometimes be incorrect, it's a good guide, especially if you watch several reports. It takes only five minutes the night before a match or pleasure session, but will enable you to understand how the weather is going to progress during the day. This is vital to ensure bait is not put too far out, and at a distance you won't achieve if the wind gets up.

Likewise, if it's windy when you get there but it is going to totally die by midday, it's important that you don't get caught out by not covering your options. Ultimately, good planning will make the session more enjoyable.

Plumbing the depth is also of paramount importance, yet many anglers put a plummet on, ship out to the distance they feel is right, lower the plummet in, and move the float up or down as required in one or two goes. There's far more to it than that, in my opinion. I would rather pay more

attention to what's actually going to catch me fish before a match than wasting time during the contest. By that I mean paying attention to getting all my rigs spot-on, and plumbing up all areas around the peg for as long as possible.

It's important to think about the conditions and try to bring past experiences to the front of my mind to

aid my decisions on where to fish, and what sort of rigs to have set up – not waste time making sure my carryall looks good in the position it is on the bank. If need be, I can organise these less important things after I have my rigs perfect and my elastics lubricated to work properly. An hour before a match may seem like a long time to set up, but

it soon vanishes when perfecting four or five rigs.

The plummet I use is different to the norm. It's a flat weight with some sponge glued to the top. The hook is then passed easily through the sponge without damaging it. The sponge will part with force, so if the plummet snags there is no risk of losing the hooklength, or, worse still, the whole rig. It's also important to mark the depth on the pole so you can change depth throughout the day without having to re-plumb each time.

Rig selection

When it comes to selecting a rig you need to take many things into consideration – mainly the fish and the bait you are using. Do you need a large float tip to support a large bait? Or do you need a fine bristle to register a bite from a small fish eating a delicate bait?

Float length and stem is a main consideration of mine when wanting to present a bait correctly. A short float with a carbon stem is going to be far less stable than a long float with a heavier wire stem. A float with the main bulk of the body a long way from the tip is also going to be more stable than a bodied float with a short tip. This is because the surface area of the body is larger than the stem, and any wind or tow will get hold of it and move the rig through >



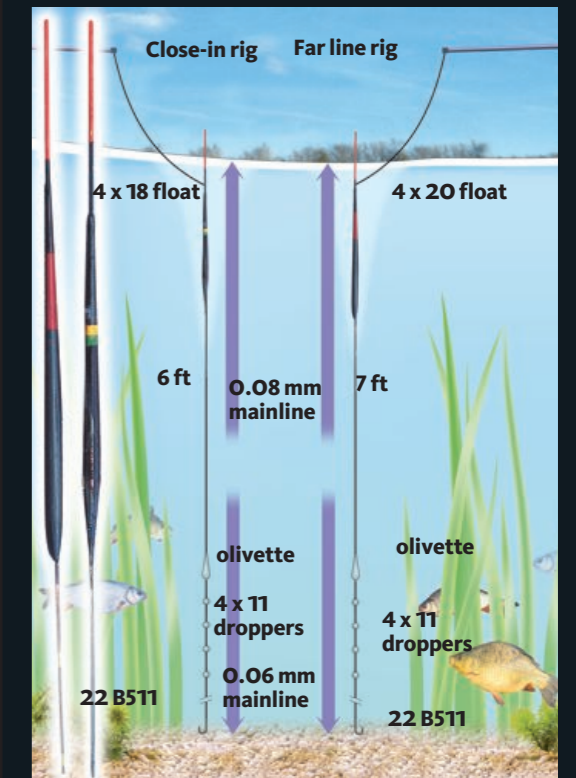
Having a perfectly presented rig should increase the size of fish you catch.

Dave's ultimate rigs

For close-in work I love using my home-made slim float pattern in 4 x 18 capacity. My further line usually incorporates a 4 x 20 float of the same pattern to compensate for the extra foot in depth.

I start on a rig with an olivette two feet from the hook and four No 11 shot spread out at equal distance, with the last shot being on top of the 6 ins hooklength. When I start to catch better I bulk the four No 11s on the hooklength knot, and move the olivette down so it is only 18 ins from the hook. This allows me to present my bait positively, and the rig registers a bite quicker than when I have to wait several seconds for it to settle, as I would with a spread-out shotted pattern.

If I am getting fewer bites I would definitely consider spreading the shot out even further, to attract the attention of the odd passing fish. However, pushing the shot together can be a good ploy when catching a lot of fish. I actually think that a double bulk gets quicker bites on days when the fish are competing, as they will often snatch at a bait that falls quickly past them to avoid the risk of another member of the shoal eating it. I normally fish as fine as I can get away with, but would also consider scaling down if no bites were forthcoming.



Ultimate presentation **Dave Vincent**

the peg in an unnatural fashion. Always use a float that is heavy enough to present a bait correctly to the fish in the conditions, but still as light as you can get away with. It's a balance between the two, but presentation must never be compromised.

Try and think how your rig is behaving underwater. As an example, even if the fish are feeding on-the-drop, it's often pointless using a 4 x 12 rig on a windy

day in 8 ft of water. You may be getting a nice slow fall, but as soon as the float settles, the wind will pick it up and drag it through the peg unnaturally. In that situation it's much better to use a heavier float with a bulk to stabilise it, and then spread the droppers out to achieve good presentation, while still giving a natural fall in the killing area.

If you find your rig is being dragged out of place, the shape or shotting

capacity of the float is wrong. If you are fishing away and you are either not getting bites, or they are not registering, then trying a lighter float is a must.

For today's feature I am using my favourite lake floats. They are long, adapted floats, much longer than most floats available on the market. I make them by taking the bristle and stem out of an old bleak-style float. I then add a longer wire stem and a three or four

inches long, thin tip. The fatter part of the float is near the stem, so there is nothing to get in the way of any tow or wind.

These floats are far superior to many on the market for beating the drift that the wind can cause, and often enable a lighter one to be used than if a more bulbous, short float body were selected. Because of the long tips, I can also fish overdepth by two inches. The bite will

register very positively, with the length of the tip being lifted out. The same is true if the bait is intercepted on-the-drop. This can often be the difference between catching fish regularly and not.

Because the eye of my special float is four inches or so from the top of the tip, when shotted correctly the line will be sunk behind the float, eliminating the need for a back shot. If you are finding the wind is catching the line behind the float and dragging it unnaturally, then a back shot can be used to good effect.

Terminal tackle

Holding the rig still for a while is sometimes vital to getting bites, so do not use a line that is too short for the conditions between pole-tip and float. A stiff pole will help, and enable a shorter line to be used than if an unwieldy, floppy pole is chosen. My new Browning 995 helps me achieve a still presentation.

Line diameter and hook pattern also have to be considered carefully. Even though I am fishing a densely-stocked water for today's feature, I have still chosen a 0.08 mm mainline and a 0.06 mm diameter hooklength and fine wire hook. Today the fish I expect to catch are roach, perch and maybe the odd crucian if I am lucky, so I am fishing as fine as I think I can get away with. As a rule, pick the line to suit the fish you are fishing for, and any obvious snags if fishing for bigger fish. You don't want to risk losing potential match-winning fish, but you do want bites in the first place.

Laying in the rig

This may seem simple, but requires its own section, in my opinion. Laying your rig into the water incorrectly, even when on a pile of fish, could mean you don't get a bite, or wait far longer than if you laid your rig in correctly in the first place.

Experience has shown me that on certain days lowering in the rig in vertically can be very effective, while on others, laying the rig to the left or right on a tight line can work best. Putting the rig into the water in a heap rarely works, and can cause tangles with all but the simplest of shotting patterns. The way you lay the rig in should be experimented with on the day. Fish will feed differently from one day to the next, so it's hard to say what will work on all occasions.

If fishing on a gin-clear water when you can see down the edge, experiment with shotting patterns down the margins of the venue. This will enable you to build up a picture of how your rig is behaving underwater. As an example, it could show that a bulked shotting pattern may fall more naturally when 'lowered' into the peg than laid in at an angle. It will also give an inkling into how fast or slowly your dropper shot may be settling. This high level of thought may seem excessive, but is invaluable information for the angler. To sum up, it's important to play around with how you present your bait. When you find the most effective method stick with it, and keep catching.

DAVES VINCENT'S view

Tingrith's Fringe Pool is a real mixed fishery containing many different species of fish. In the summer it's not uncommon for 50 lb bags of silver fish to be caught. However, in winter the fish can be a little harder to fool. But, with the right presentation, good nets of fish are still manageable.

On the day of the feature, high winds had been forecast throughout. I picked a peg with relative shelter, but it was still a nightmare at times.

After extensively plumbing up the peg, I found that it sloped away very gradually, the further out I went. I decided on a close line at five metres, as the water was coloured and the surface rippled. I also chose a line at 10 metres in case the fish backed off from the close target area.

I fed both lines with two balls of Sensas Black Lake, laced with pinkies and a few maggots.

I caught from the word go, with roach and perch coming to the net. It wasn't easy,

but by changing the depth I fished, and my shotting pattern, I kept fish coming regularly. After about an hour the fish really started competing for food in my peg. I bulked my shot to form the double bulk rig and began catching a fish almost every cast.

Towards the end of the session Lewis kicked me off my box for a go, because it looked so easy. Five minutes gone and he hadn't had a bite! This really does highlight the importance of understanding how the fish are feeding and how to lay the rig in.

The way in which you lay your rig into the water can make a massive difference to the number of fish you catch. Experiment during the day.



Dave's adapted bleak float (above) is part of the key to success, but how you lay the rig into the water is equally important. Think about all aspects of presentation and you'll catch more.



ADVANCED TIPS

Conditions If the weather is windy, and the water coloured, you may be able to catch closer in than if the conditions are flat-calm. Always fish to the conditions.

Light mainline Always try and use a thin mainline; thin line is softer and more supple than thick, and should offer a more natural fall. Because of its thin diameter it also behaves better in the wind.

Float choice This is vital to ensure your bait is presented properly. If you are not happy with the floats on the market then make your own, using the components of different floats.



Double bulk Changing your rig so all the droppers are on top of the hooklength knot while having an olivette further up the line is called a double bulk. This is a very positive shotting pattern and can add pounds to your weight in the net by the end of the day. When fishing a double bulk, aim to fish the distance between the hook and the bulk of shot overdepth. That way, as soon as a fish picks up the bait, it will register on the float.

Laying in the rig Think about how your rig is falling underwater, and tailor the way you lower your rig in to suit this. This can literally be the difference between a bite every cast, and no bites at all.

Always mark your depth on your pole.



Dave's home-made plummet.



Plumbing up Take your time over plumbing up, making sure you plumb all areas of the peg accurately. It's vital to ensure your hookbait is where you think it is. Mark the depth at which you plumb up on the pole. This will enable a quick check during the session without having to re-plumb.

Use a rest In windy weather, using a rest for the pole in front of you will act as an extra arm, supporting the pole. This will enable it to be held much more steadily against the force of the wind.