

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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This was a week of hot weather and some hot fishing, too. Things are looking up for anglers that are after summer run salmon on the Columbia River. Just in time, as the big Budweiser-Lowrance King Salmon Derby in Brewster is coming up this weekend. It looks like conditions are just right for a very successful three days of salmon fishing.

All it takes is for the water temperature in the Okanogan River to hit 70 degrees or better. When this happens the salmon refuse to leave the Columbia. They keep coming into the Brewster Pool and will go no further. They will mill around in the cooler Columbia until the temperature drops in the Okanogan, which may not happen until September. This means we're in for some great fishing for at least the next four weeks. I will be at the derby on Sunday to see how everyone does this year. I am anxious to see what size king takes the prize for the biggest fish.

I gave fishing below Wells Dam a try last Thursday, with guide Austin Moser, of Austin's Northwest Adventures. He agreed to have myself and Eric Granstrom on board to shoot video for a new Fishing TV Show. I have never done a show on the fishing below Wells Dam and Moser was up for the challenge. We met him at the launch in the afternoon, which can be a good time to fish this area. We spent a good amount of time getting the details on how to approach fishing below Wells and he shared his tackle and techniques. We decided to start off fishing for sockeye, so we headed over the far side and fished the big eddy over there.



It didn't take long to put some sockeye in the cooler. Moser showed us the dodger and hoochie combo that has been working great for him this season. He uses double hooks and a "sickle" style hook that really helps keep sockeye on long enough to get them to the net. He baits the lead hook with a shrimp to really get solid hits.

After we had our sockeye we switched to fishing for kings. We stayed right there in the eddy and trolled circles on its edges. Moser likes using long rods, and favors the 10 1/2-foot Fetha Styx Chrome salmon rods. These rods are super light, but still have enough backbone to handle big kings. He also likes to use the Pro Troll flashers that are being used by most serious salmon anglers. These have a fin on the bottom edge that really makes them turn over in the current. Below the flasher he was using Super Bait Plug Cut lures. He says he always starts with one red

and one green, and then he will start experimenting if these colors don't produce. The lures were stuffed with tuna and scented, of course.

We made a few circuits around the eddy and then—Wham! The rod went down and Austin handed me the rod while he cleared the other gear. The fish never stopped taking line the whole time he was doing this. It finally turned, and I was able to get it up to the boat and to the net. We got some photos of the fish and celebrated a great night on the water. Everything came off just the way Moser planned it and we had a blast. You'll be able to learn everything I did about fishing for kings below Wells this month. Just go to my web site, click on Fishing TV and check the schedule for the show with Austin.

I had another super morning of salmon fishing last Friday. Louie and Sue Hagland had purchased a Jetcraft Discovery 2025 HT from Bob Feil Boats and Motors, which is just like my boat except with a half hard top. They were new to salmon fishing and asked me to spend the morning with them to see if they were getting the hang of it.

We met at the launch at Chelan Falls and headed out. Sue had Plug Cut Super Baits already rigged and ready (she tied the double hooks on the lures herself), and even had the tuna fish and scent mixed. I showed them how far behind the rigger to put the flashers, how deep I like to run them in this area, and told Louie how fast to troll.

We made our way up from the launch, toward the

other boats working the river, and—Kaboom! The right side rigger bounced and I grabbed the rod and set the hook. I handed the rod off to Sue and started clearing gear. All I could hear was Sue screaming and drag burning off the reel. We had a good one on, no doubt. The fish ran from one side of the boat to the other, it dove under the boat and even got on the kicker motor just to make things exciting. Sue never let up and kept her rod high and the line tight, and I managed to stuff the fish into the undersized net. When it hit the deck the hooks fell out and the three of us did high fives all around. I figured the fish weighed 25 pounds.

This was the first ever salmon for Sue and a great way to break in their new boat. Louie said the smile on her face made his day. I can see the two of them are going to have a lot of fun days in their Jetcraft. It was a thrill for me to be there for their first fish.

The Wenatchee River opened for summer run Chinook fishing on August 1st, with a limit of two adults a day. Conditions are perfect for great fishing. Anglers should also be aware that the sockeye season opens on Lake Wenatchee on Saturday, August 2nd.

The good news just keeps on coming. I can't wait to get back out there!

Reach Dave at:
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