

# Dave Graybill

## The Fishin' Magician

**Nickel Ads**  
Classifieds

Spring has definitely arrived here in Central Washington. We are getting lots of sunny weather, with the occasional sprinkle. There are some blustery days, but anglers that get on the water early are enjoying a variety of early season fishing. Everything from kokanee to walleye and trout are being chased at a variety of lakes in the region.

I usually head down to the Columbia Basin Wildlife Refuge and make a swing through the many lakes that open here on April 1st. Since I was going to be in the area I asked my buddy Brian Nielson of BJ's Guide Service if he would like to try for walleye on Potholes in the morning. He was eager to go and had his friend James LeBow join us. We launched at the east end of the dam and motored the short distance to Perch Point, where I had heard the fishing had been good.

When we arrived we joined a small fleet of boats that were all trolling off this point, which is down lake from Medicare Beach. There was a good reason for all of them to be there. As soon as we got our gear down we started getting bit, and it turned out to be a terrific day for walleye on Potholes.

We were trolling in about 40 feet of water and tried to keep our speed at six to eight mph, using Nielson's new Lowrance Elite 7 fish finder. There were a variety of offerings being used to tempt the walleye to bite. LeBow put on a small spinner rig that consisted of a transparent Smile Blade and a tapered bead to a Slow Death hook. The fish loved this one and he didn't change all day. I started with a white blade, switched to a white hoochie, and ended the day with a large purple and chartreuse blade from North

Fork Custom Lures. They all caught fish, but the North Fork blade did the best. Nielson stuck with the Macks Lure white Cha Cha Squidder. It produced from start to finish during our day on the water. It was one of those days where it didn't seem to matter much what you put down there. If the spinner and nightcrawler rigs went by a fish they hit it.

We observed others landing fish, and decided to count every fish we boated. There were a lot of juvenile walleye caught that day, but a very good number of the fish went 12 to 17 inches. We only kept the ones that were at least 16 inches. We landed a total of 33 walleye and put eight dandies in the cooler. Come to find out, the minimum size for walleye on Potholes is 12 inches! It didn't matter. We all took home some nice fillets and had the best day of walleye fishing on Potholes that any of us had ever had.

I am trying to polish my walleye fishing skills in anticipation of the Triple Fish Challenge coming up on April 26th and 27th on Banks Lake. This tournament will have anglers compete to catch the biggest rainbow, smallmouth bass and walleye over two days of fishing. There will be prizes awarded each day for biggest fish of each species and the total stringer weight. The heaviest total combined stringer for two days will win an Achilles four person inflatable boat and motor from Bob Feil Boats and Motors. There is both a youth and adult division in the tournament, so this can be fun for the whole family. The entry fee is just \$20.00 for kids up to age 14. For those ages 15 and up the entry fee is \$60.00 for the two day tournament. Coulee Playland in Electric City is the headquarters for the event. The blast off is at 9 a.m. and weigh in at 3 p.m. on both days. Those who are interested and want more information you can call Coulee Playland at 509-633-2671 or the Grand



Coulee Dam Area Chamber of Commerce at 509-633-3074. You can also visit the Chamber's web site at [www.grandcoulee.org](http://www.grandcoulee.org).

Eric Granstrom and I are going to be fishing at Banks Lake with Keith Jensen, of Big Wally's Guide Service, and we will be fishing for all three species. We will be shooting a new episode for the Fishing TV Show. You can learn how we did and get some tips on fishing Banks for all three species in next week's issue of the Nickel Ads up here and the Nickel Nik in Tri-Cities.

This Saturday is the first kid's event that I participate in this year. This one is put on by the Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District, and I have to say that the staff here really works hard to assure families have a great time. It takes place at Connelly Park and the fish are planted in

the launch bay. There are prizes awarded to lucky anglers in each flight, and they have other things that the kids and families can learn about while they are there. There will be hot dogs and soft drinks provided by the major sponsor of the event, Weinstein Beverage Pepsi Cola. Folks should thank the MLIRD for providing such a great day for families, and the continued development of Connelly Park as a feature for the community in Moses Lake.

Saturday, April 19th is the annual Kids Free Fishing Day at Rock Island. This has been happening for over 15 years. This is a "bring your own gear" event, however, thanks to the Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association there are rods and reels to borrow, and bait for everyone that needs help catching fish. The Department of Fish and Wildlife always makes sure there are fish planted in the Pit Pond for the event. Volunteers from the community of Rock Island greet everyone with coffee and donuts in the morning and serve hot dogs at mid day. Pepsi provides soft drinks for everyone. This is a great day to break out the tackle box and get things sorted out for the big opening weekend on the 26th and 27th.

Well, I sure am looking forward to the trip to Banks Lake and will let you know how we do. I may even try to get to Chelan, too. I hear the kokanee are on the bite again!

Reach Dave at:  
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