

Dave Graybill

The Fishin' Magician

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This past week was a terrific fishing week here in North Central Washington. I got out on Banks Lake and practiced for the Triple Fish Derby that is coming up toward the end of the month. There was a very successful kid's derby on Moses Lake, and another very successful derby on Lake Chelan for kokanee. Things are really looking up this spring! It just gets better and better.

Last Wednesday Eric Granstrom and I met Keith Jensen, of Big Wally's Guide Service, at Coulee Playland. We had planned to do a new TV Show on fishing for walleye on Banks Lake, but the Triple Fish Challenge is coming up on April 26th and 27th on Banks, so we decided to see how we could do fishing for rainbow trout, smallmouth and walleye. Jensen was up for the challenge and we didn't have to go far to get started.

He ran us across the bay from Coulee Playland to a point and we put our bottom walkers and spinners down in about 40 feet of water. We were marking fish and Jensen put a nice 20-inch walleye in the live well pretty quickly. We were still getting bites and even landing a few short fish, but we left this spot and headed down toward the main lake. We fished on the back side of Steamboat Rock and even ran over to Barker Flats and tried that for a while. We were still just getting small fish, so we decided to see if we could find any smallmouth bass.

Jensen took us just inside Devils Punch Bowl to a shallow flat that he felt sure would have some fish on it. It did. We were casting crank baits and on his first cast he caught about a 2-pound smallmouth. Not long after I hooked a slightly bigger one. Then he got a couple more, even one that he thought may be the biggest one he has ever



caught on Banks. Granstrom put the video camera down and got a couple, too. I am not sure how many smallmouth we caught on this small flat, but it was a bunch. We got them all on a Flicker Shad or a Bomber in the crawfish pattern. This was some of the hottest smallmouth fishing that I have ever had for bigger fish. I think anglers are going to do very well fishing smallmouth for the Triple Fish Derby.

We hadn't tried for rainbow yet, and Jensen was headed full speed to the top end of the lake, but decided to make a detour. He said that there was a rip rap bank that he has always wanted to fish for rainbow and now was as good a time as any. He pulled out a pair of Fetha Styx kokanee style rods, put some Rippin' Minnow plugs way out behind the boat and started trolling. He was so close to the bank

I thought we were going to scrape the rod tips on the rocks, but that is where the trout were holding. We hadn't gone 20 feet and the inside rod folded over and rainbow broke water. It was a nice 16- or 17-inch fish, and we celebrated getting our third species. We put the gear back out and once again we hadn't gone far when another rainbow of about the same size smacked the plug. We ran out of shore line here so we headed up to the dam at the very top of Banks, and started doing the same thing. It worked here, too. We got more rainbow, but not as big as the ones we landed down below.

We had our three species, but just one keeper walleye. It was worth another look at the point where we started our day, and when we got there the screen lit up with fish. Jensen put two more keepers in the live well before we called it a day. What a day it was, too. We got all three species and the one I was worried about was the smallmouth. I hadn't ever fished for smallies this early in the season and this was our best fishing of the day! I think that there are going to be some impressive catches turned in for the Triple Fish Challenge this year. If you want to learn more about this derby you can find all the details and even register on line by going to grandcouleedam.org. You can also just go to my web site and click on the ad at the top right of my Home Page. It will take you right to the derby page. There is a video of our day on Bank on my Fishing TV Page.

The Columbia Basin Kids Fishing Derby at Connelly Park was the best ever this year. The Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District hosts the event, which is sponsored by Pepsi. The fishing was terrific, so the kids had a ball. There were a lot of 2-pound fish turned in. The first fish that was caught turned out to be the biggest fish of the day, weighing 2 pounds, ten ounces, and won the youngster that caught it a night's free camping and a half-day pontoon boat rental at the Cove Resort on Fish Lake. Boy, was he thrilled. I am really looking forward to the Rock Island Kids Free Fishing Day that takes place at the Pit Pond on Saturday. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has loaded the pond with trout and I hear they put some whoppers in there this year.

The "Something Catchy" Kokanee Derby at Lake Chelan was a success, with over 275 fish turned in. There were forty anglers in the derby this year, and they really got the fish. The winning team of Aaron Kelly and Dan Beckwick landed a total weight of 45 pounds of kokanee over two days. They won \$750.00 for their effort. The biggest kokanee weighed in the derby was 2 pounds, four ounces. There was a competition between the Eastside and Westside guides and the Eastside guides came out on top. Everyone is excited about next year.

I have a great week of fishing lined up and I hope you do, too. Get your yard work done. There is some terrific fishing going on and you don't want to miss it!

Reach Dave at:
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or Fishboy@nwi.net

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