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Angler: Jay Noble

Species: Dusky Flathead

Lure: ZMan 3" MinnowZ / Colour - Pinfish

Jighead: TT Lures 3/8oz 3/0 Head Hunter Extreme

A young man with brown hair and a slight smile is holding a large bass fish. He is wearing a green t-shirt with yellow text that reads "BANG IT!!" and "MUDRAS.COM". The background is a lush green forest. The text "INTO A SPIN" is overlaid in the top right corner.

**INTO A
SPIN**

Bass on Jig Spinners

By Cameron Cronin

From the moment I first tied it on, the TT Lures Jig Spinner has become an irreplaceable part of my bass fishing arsenal. Although not a lure itself, the Jig Spinner consists of a Colorado blade that spins on a swivel, to create flash and vibration, that is then attached to spinnerbait style wire frame so that a jighead or lure can be connected via a small clip. The Jig Spinner is available in two colours (Gold and Nickel (Silver)) as well as three different sizes, accommodating for almost any bass-sized lure.

Before I first trialled the Jig Spinner, I was admittedly doubtful of how this attachment would catch me more bass. I was more than satisfied with soft plastics, rigged on a standard jighead, and as a result my small collection of Jig Spinners spent a lot of time sitting in my tackle box, waiting for the day where I would finally put them to use.

The time finally came on a routine trip down to Shoalhaven River, above Tallowa Dam on the NSW south coast. The month was April and a bout of unusually cool weather and heavy rain had dirtied the water, leaving the bass shutdown and very difficult to catch. After an hour of chopping and changing lures for no results, I came across a gold, size one Jig Spinner, attached to a 1/6oz weighted ZMan GrubZ, at the bottom of my tackle box.



The author with a Jig Spinner bass in less than perfect conditions.



Could a Jig Spinner be the key to triggering a bite in this snaggy creek?

With nothing to lose, I tied it on and sent it hurtling towards the same snag that I had just peppered with a small soft plastic. Believe it or not, I barely had time to wind the handle before the lure was crunched by a healthy bass. By the end of the session I had managed around 15 bass on this combination, while my brother fishing other 'go-to' lures beside me failed to produce a single fish. Needless to say, I was blown away by the difference such a simple attachment could make in such difficult conditions, and I was excited to have a new technique under my belt to try in some of the smaller creek systems back at home.

Since that day I have spent many successful sessions throwing Jig Spinner rigged plastics around my local creeks. Out of all of these sessions, two particular sessions stand out as the best demonstration of a Jig Spinner's ability to turn on a shutdown bass bite.

Arriving at a small creek system that we had never fished before, we scrambled down the bank at the first sight of water and began to throw around cicada topwater lures. The water was murky and cold, but cicadas hummed noisily and anticipation levels were still high. An hour passed with only a single fish landed and doubts began to creep into my mind as to whether we had chosen the right creek to fish.

After switching to a ZMan GrubZ and landing a few fish, we came across a large pool on a sharp bend and decided to sit down and have lunch. As I fumbled through my bag looking for some food, my hand closed around a packet of Jig Spinners and instantly I remembered my success in similar conditions back at the Shoalhaven River while using this lure. I quickly cut off my Motor Oil ZMan GrubZ, clipped it onto the gold, size one Jig Spinner and pitched it deep into a shady undercut on the opposite bank. After a few cranks of the handle I was hit by a wave of deja vu as my Jig Spinner was slammed by an energetic little bass. Once again this simple lure change marked the start of an awesome session, with our handful of Jig Spinners accounting for double hook-ups at almost every pool and a total of over 80 bass by the end of the session.

Returning for another session the following day, we trialled crank baits, soft plastics, surface lures and hybrids like Bent Minnows, for next to no result. More than once we were amused by bass smashing a fouled up Jig Spinner, spinning clumsily across the surface, while a top of the range cicada imitation worked only a metre away received not a touch. By the end of the day we had totalled another 81 bass and once again I had been blown away by the sheer fish catching ability of a Jig Spinner rigged plastic.



Another quality smallwater bass on a Jig Spinner rigged plastic.



The reason I believe that Jig Spinners are so effective, is that they allow you to present a lure that is essentially a miniature, lightweight spinnerbait. The wire frame rapidly decreases your snag rate, while the metallic blade adds flash and vibration to the presentation, triggering an aggressive reaction strike from inactive fish in dirty water.

Fishing the Jig Spinner is a fairly simple matter. Using it on the lightest jighead possible, cast in tight to structure, allowing the lure to flutter down into the strike zone. Just before the lure hits the structure / bottom, commence a slow rolling retrieve, adding in the occasional pause if the depth permits.

Although without the exciting surface strike that accompanies many popular bass lures, the noisy, flashing action created by the Colorado blade lends itself to drawing a brutal strike from native fish, which I reckon is just as exciting in its own right.



When I first started using the Jig Spinner, I was initially worried about the thin wire giving way with the strikes I was receiving from larger fish, but this is not the case. On the trip mentioned above, I used one Jig Spinner for an entire day and landed over 50 bass, without signs of breaking, despite locked drags and constant strikes all day. Although Jig Spinners are designed to be used with plastics, clued in anglers are beginning to use them in conjunction with a variety of popular bass lures, with lipless crankbaits and small vibes being particularly effective.

With winter coming up and bass beginning to get harder to catch, Jig Spinners will become an increasingly effective option for those looking to finish the bass season with a bang.

Although they aren't the 'be all and end all' of bass lures, let me end by saying this. If you love your bass fishing (or any freshwater native fish for that matter) and haven't used a TT Jig Spinner, grab a few different colours and sizes, head down to your favourite bass spot and give them a shot. If you're anything like me, you'll probably end up wondering how you had ever fished without them!

The author's go-to TT Jig Spinner and ZMan 2.5" GrubZ combo.



Diamond Trevally



By Shaun Taylor

One thing I love about fishing the reefs with plastics is the wide range of species you're likely to encounter. As well as the resident bottom fish like trout, grassy sweetlip, nannygai, emperor, etc., etc., there is also the possibility of some pelagic action from Spanish mackerel and tuna (longtails, macks and yellowfin), along with the big bruiser cobia that often arrive like a school of mongrel dogs eager to snaffle your Jerk ShadZ and attempt to destroy both your gear and your spine!

Trevally are of course an often encountered species, with the big goldens that Hervey Bay is famous for a regular occurrence. When these fish exceed 10 kilos in size they are an extremely hard fighting fish, with plenty of stamina, and with their markings and colour they are also a welcome capture for many fishos.

It is another trevally however that has captured our imagination of late, with its amazing colours and shape, freight train runs and more infrequent visits. I have encountered diamond trevally quite a few times, over many years and they have always surprised us as somewhat of an oddity and an unexpected capture. Over time we have earmarked certain spots as haunts for these awesome fish and we are nutting out a bit of a pattern with them.



The author with a quality diamond trevally on a ZMan Scented Jerk ShadZ.

A solid diamond on a blade.



Although we have caught them on 5" Scented Jerk ShadZ worked close to the bottom, like other trevallies they seem to be a sucker for a blade and in our area we use blades between 1/2oz and 1 1/2oz. I have had most success with bright colours like orange and pink, although I recently lost an absolute horse on Gold Noggin!

My favourite spot runs very hard, so fishing is restricted to about an hour and a half each side of the tide changes. Large schools of brassy trevally inhabit this spot and by working off the edges of these schools we seem to pick up the diamonds.

Often, after hook up, you would be excused for thinking you had hooked a large cod or something similar as these powerful fighters move off in a determined run. They really use their size and shape to their advantage as they stay deep and move side on to the current.

When they come into view, with their mirror like finish and impressive size it is always a buzz, and I must say I am a bit addicted to them at the moment!

Sharks have been a bit of a problem lately and we have lost several large specimens to the taxman. Once this happens we generally take off to another spot as we are not keen to feed these great fish to the Noah's one after another!

Some days are diamonds!



A second spot, situated in closer to Fraser Island, also seems to be a regular haunt of these dynamic diamonds, although they are generally smaller in close. A change down in line class is often employed and you can also fish smaller blades and plastics rigged lighter, as well as being able to fish a greater part of the tide.

I hope to post more pictures of these great fish on the TT Lures / ZMan Lures Australia Facebook pages in weeks to come, so keep an eye out for them and I hope it inspires you to get out and do battle with these dynamite diamonds!

Get out there!!!
Shaun Taylor



Quality by-catch is also on the cards.



Deep Water Plastics

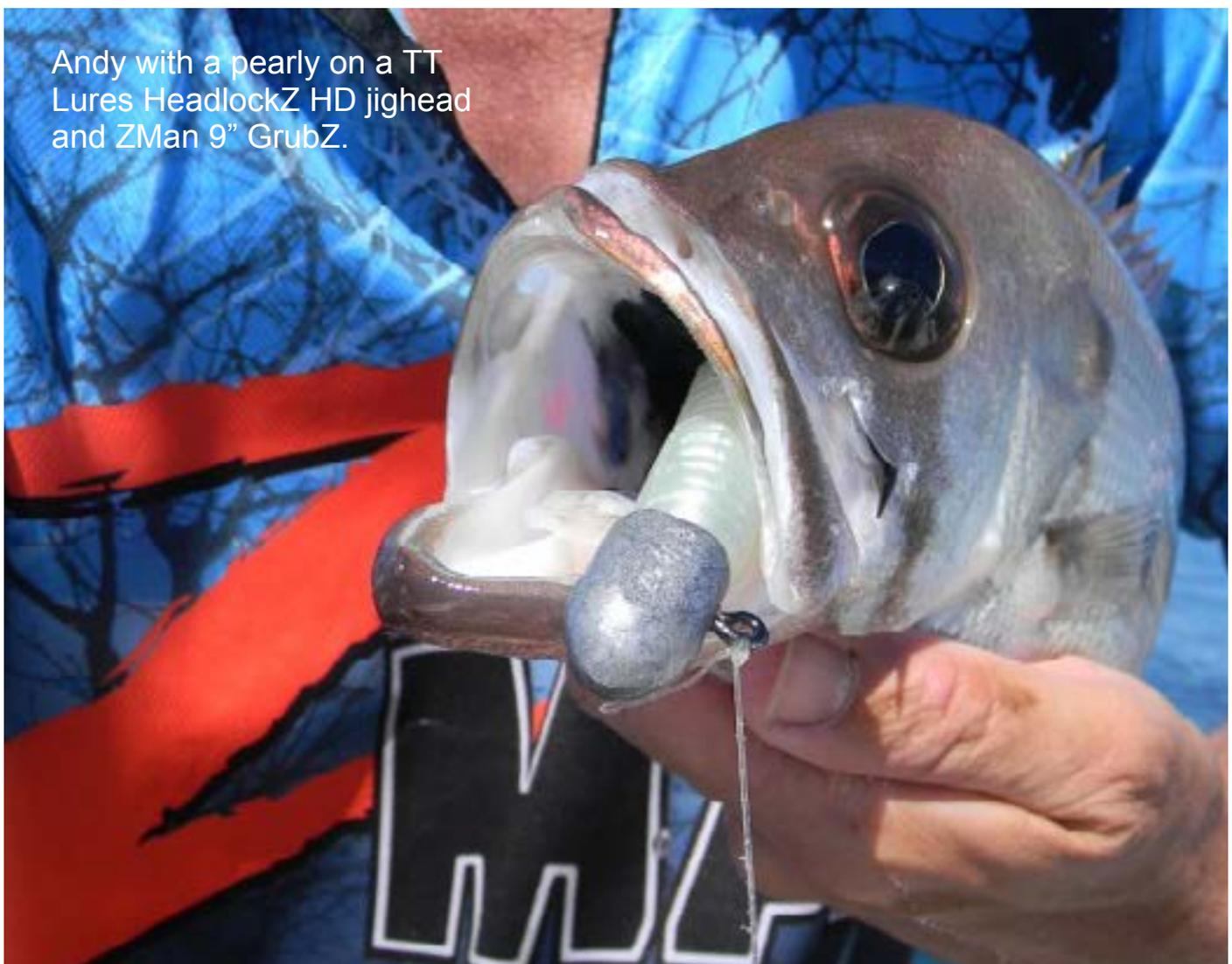


By Andy Gunn

After many years of chasing reefies in the shallows on plastics and having great success, I have turned my attention to the deep water, fishing in depths from 50 metres through to 90 metres. When it comes to fishing deeper water not only do you have the depth of water to deal with but also any currents that are running. While on good days it is possible to drift water of this depth with the aid of a sea anchor, it can also be done from an anchored boat.

I generally use rods around the 10kg range, matched with around a 5000 size reel. Depending on your preference you can use spin or overhead reels spooled with braided lines.

When fishing the deeper water you still need to pay close attention to the size of the jighead you are using. Too heavy a jighead and the plastic will just rocket straight to the bottom and the fish won't be interested. On the other hand, too light a jighead and you may not get your plastic down to where the fish are holding. I prefer to use the larger size plastics for this style of fishing.





Pearl Perch are an awesome deep water table fish - no wonder Andy is all smiles!

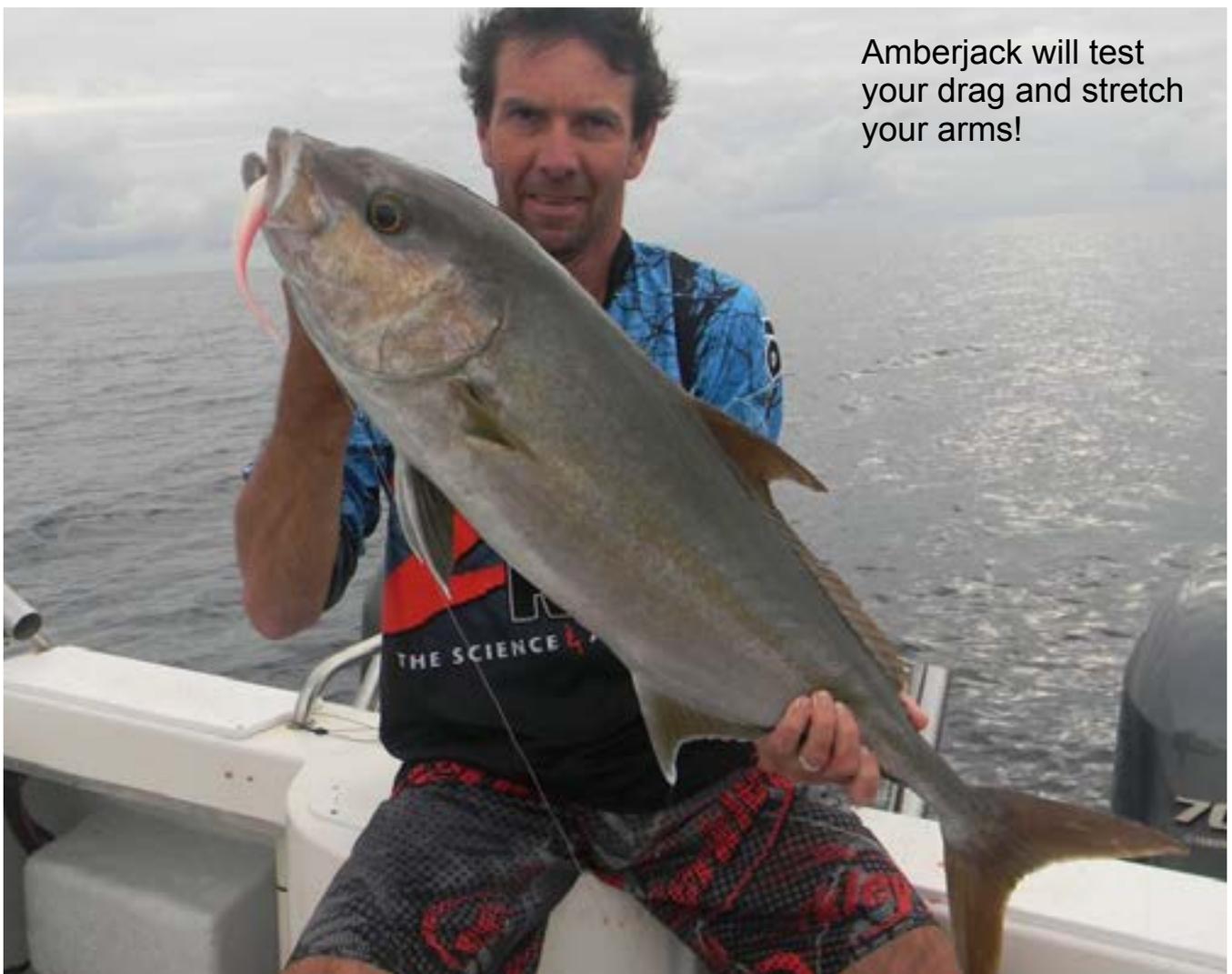
On a recent trip out to Caloundra Wide, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, we anchored the boat over a good show of fish on the sounder. I rigged a ZMan 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ on a TT Lures 1 1/2oz HeadlockZ HD jighead, before slowly sending it to the bottom in around 70 metres of water. Once the plastic was around 40 metres down, I stopped the plastic every 5 metres and gave the rod tip a couple of flicks to get the plastic moving and see if I could draw a strike from any fish in the area.

After sending the plastic down a bit further I felt the line start ripping out between my fingers. Flicking the bail arm over, I felt the rod load up on a nice fish and after a short fight I had a nice pearl perch at the boat. The next drop down got a solid strike just up off the bottom and this time the fish felt a lot better. Again a short fight and I had another nice pearl perch on the boat. Using this technique I was able to land a few more pearlies this trip and also some nice snapper.

A couple of days later we were heading up to fish off the bottom end of Fraser Island. Again using the ZMan 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ rigged on a 1 1/2oz TT HeadlockZ HD jighead, I sent the plastic to the bottom, stopping it on its journey to see if I could attract any attention. It wasn't long before I had line stripping out from between my fingers. After flicking the bail arm over I set the hook on a nice squire (snapper) and it wasn't very long before the fish was at the side of the boat. Two more drops for two more squire and I was impressed with the action of the ZMan Scented Jerk ShadZ.

On the next drop it felt as though something had spooked the fish that had been down there on previous drops. The plastic this time made it to the bottom without being hit. Once on the bottom I flicked the bail arm over and started flicking the plastic off the bottom. After getting no strikes doing this, I wound the plastic up about five metres off the bottom and started the process again. It wasn't long before the rod doubled over and line started peeling off the reel. There were a few anxious moments, with the fish almost getting me back into the reef, but I managed to get the fish's head turned and coming towards the boat. A few more good runs and I had colour on the fish but still deep down. Not sure what species the fish was, I backed my drag off knowing it was well up off the bottom and not wanting to pull the hooks. Before too much longer I had what turned out to be a 10kg amberjack at the side of the boat.

Not long after this we moved on to one of our pearl perch spots and that was where I had my best ever session on pearlies on plastics with over 12 fish on the one plastic and it's still rigged for my next trip!



Amberjack will test your drag and stretch your arms!

Kayak Fishing the Estuaries

By Josh Dunn



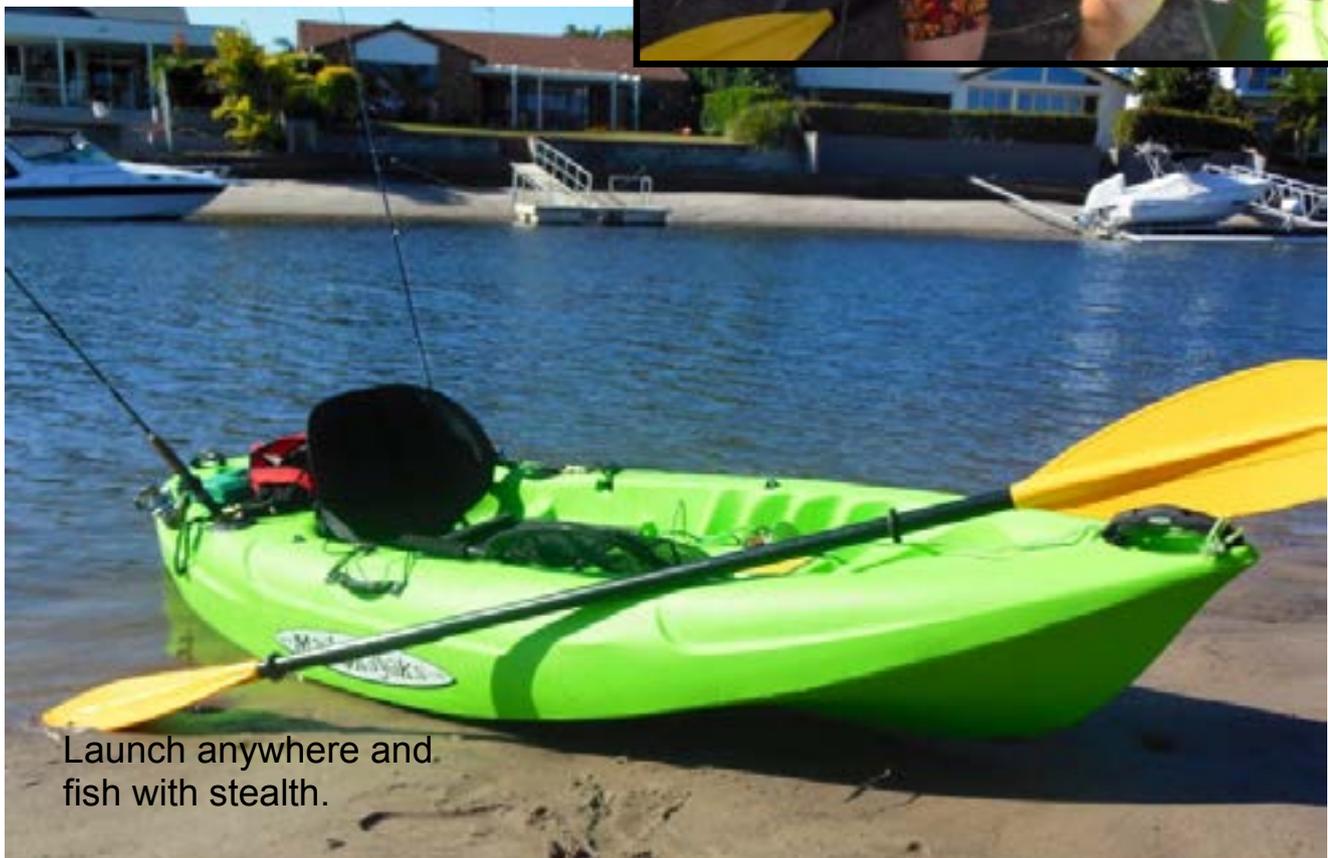
Josh methodically works the pontoons and moored boats.

Kayak fishing can offer plenty of adventures and the fishing can be unbelievable at times! The stealth, the hunt, what lure you tie on next and which direction you choose to go, all add to the adventure. I've had some unforgettable moments and milestones in my kayak, including catching my first jewfish, big cod, first jack on lures and the serenity of whatever you see while out on the water just tops it off. Seeing dolphins on a glassy morning at 5am and when the absolute perfect conditions, with pristine water quality, just screams fish!

I go fishing in the kayak almost every weekend and have a lot of success, even if that's just a few bream, jack or even a trevally. I try to get up at 4:45am, get on the water at 5:15am and fish the surface until the sun rises. I will then fish for bream or mid-water jacks and trevally, along with flathead when they are on. It depends on the day I've found, in terms of tides, overcast or sunny conditions, time of day and the water quality.



Josh & Jack.



Launch anywhere and fish with stealth.



There are so many options when kayak fishing; you can fish surface one minute, then fish the bottom for flathead or mid water for jacks the next. The only plastics I carry and they have never let me down, is ZMan plastics and TT Lures jigheads and I am so confident that I will nearly always catch a decent fish when using this gear. The easy thing about kayaks is no fuel needed and you can drive along the bank and drop your yak in anywhere you like! It is also good for your fitness, so you can tell your wife that you need to go fishing next time she comments on your weight!

In June, bream will be out and about and easier to catch. Big, 40+cm specimens will be heading into my home waters of the Gold Coast and into the canals as the cooler weather brings bream into spawning mode. Here they will feed up before they spawn around this time. One of the best things to experience in the yak is a big bream of around 40cm trying to engulf you plastic! To up your chances of this happening you will need to fish the right times (tides, weather and water temps). Fishing a ZMan 2" GrubZ, rigged with a TT Lures 1/40oz #2 Hidden Weight System jighead, on the surface on a cool day and slightly overcast is deadly. Cast into structure like jetties and their sub structure, as well as sand banks and jetties that come out from sand banks as these are where I have had the best results. You will get these fish year round on lures, not just in winter, though winter is the season for them and they will be in larger numbers. Using this technique you may also land barracuda, tailor and the odd cod as by-catch.

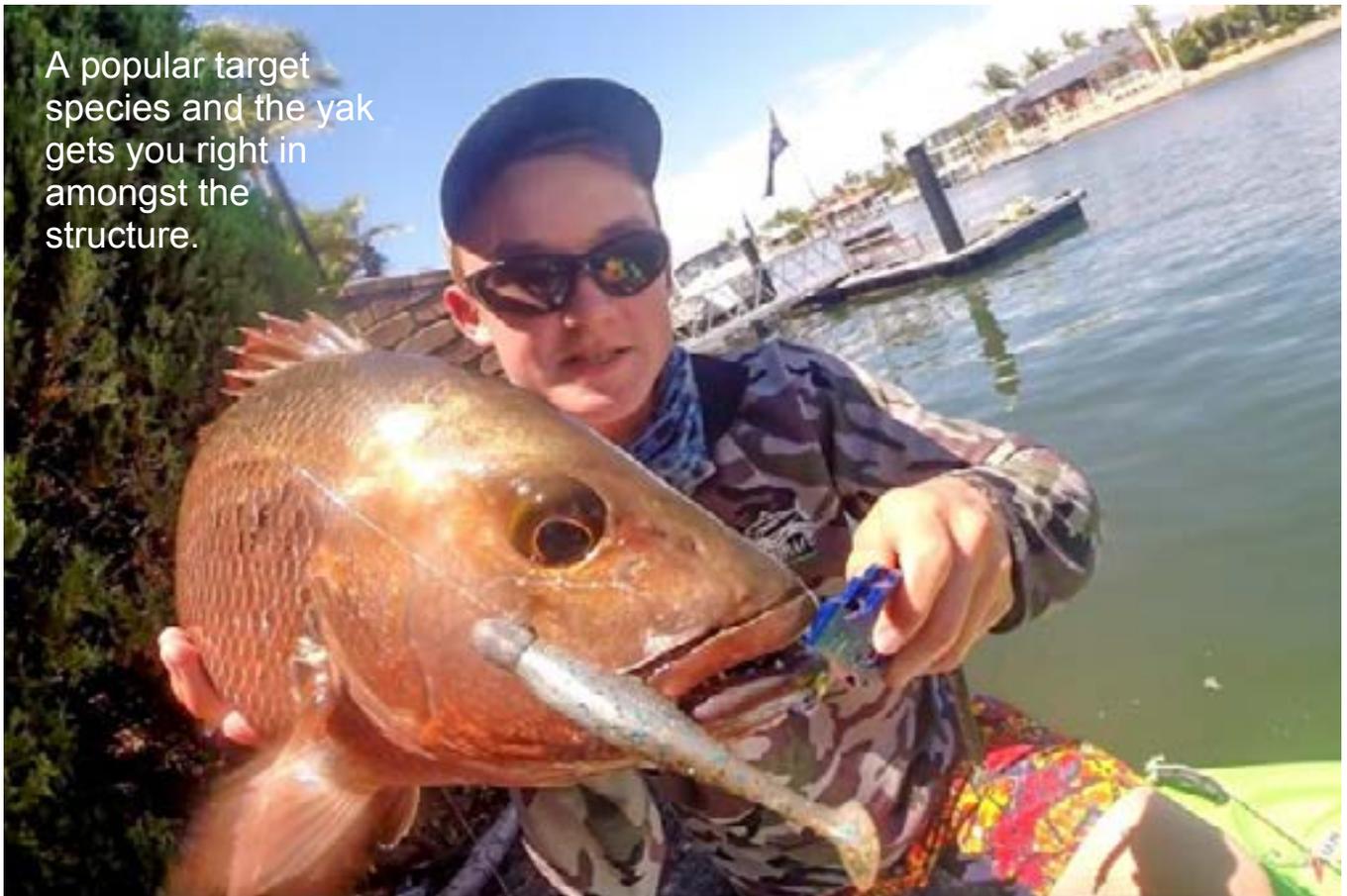
I've also caught trevally as by-catch when jack fishing, so don't be surprised to see silver when you go to net it... before it swims back to the depths for one last run! Jacks will take almost anything that swims past them, if it's presented right and won't stop annoying them. A well-presented plastic for me involves

tying on a TT Lures 3/8oz 3/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead rigged with a ZMan plastic and casting to the desired structure. I simply use a medium - fast paced wind, as soon as it hits the water, until it arrives back at the yak (unless a Jack attacks it!). A few of the lures that I'm confident with include ZMan 4" DieZel MinnowZ in Pearl, Pearl Blue Glimmer, Opening Night and New Penny, along with the ZMan 3" MinnowZ in Pinfish, Mood Ring, Motor Oil and pretty much all of the colours in the 4" SwimmerZ range.

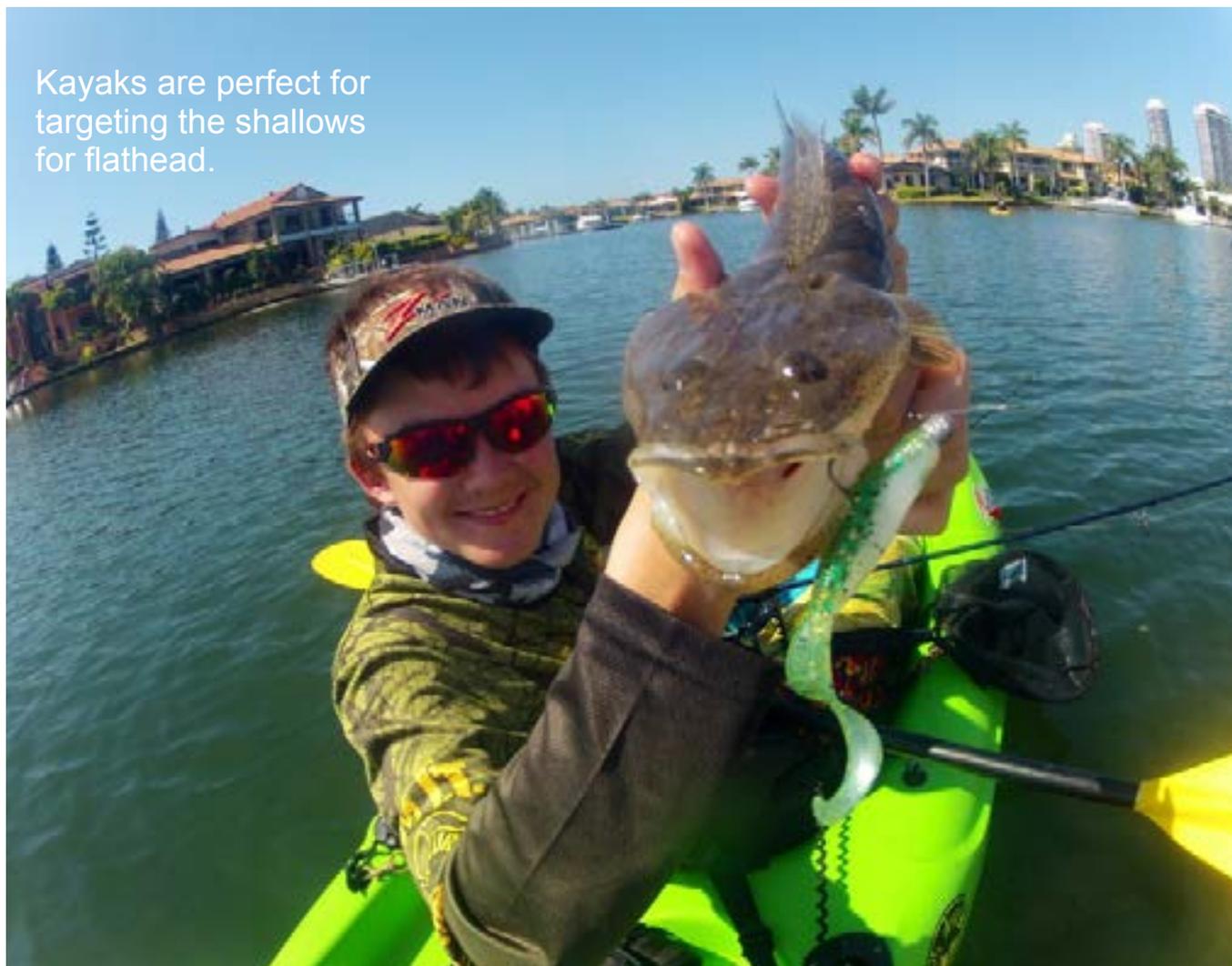


10X Tough ZMan plastics are the go for these brutal predators.

A popular target species and the yak gets you right in amongst the structure.



Kayaks are perfect for targeting the shallows for flathead.



Flathead are another awesome species to target, as they are often easier but still plenty of fun! It's as simple as buying a decent anchor and chucking it out where you think flathead will ambush the bait, including sand drop-offs and deep holes. Once anchored I will flick lures in all directions and the key with kayak fishing is persevering and covering a lot of water.

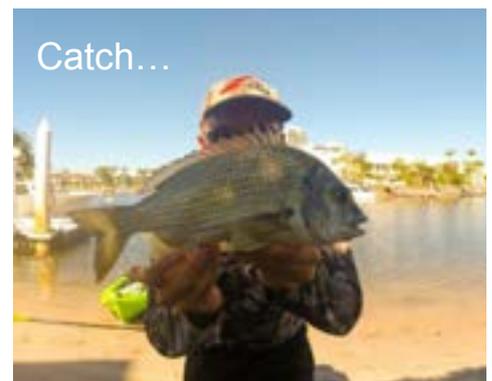
Some of my favourite plastics in dirty water include the ZMan 3" MinnowZ in Mood Ring, Gold Rush and Pinfish, while in clean water I use the ZMan 2.5" GrubZ in Bloodworm, Pumpkinseed and Hardy Head, along with the ZMan 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ in Baby Bass and Motor Oil. I rig them on my trustworthy TT jigheads and in deep water, 3m+, I use the TT Lures 3/8oz 3/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead as I'm confident that the lure won't be 'pantsed' because of the unique locking grub keeper on the HeadlockZ jighead. In less than 3m of water I use the same set up, though with a lighter 1/4oz jighead (#1 or 1/0 for the 2.5" GrubZ). All you have to do is cast, let the lure hit the bottom and flick it up off the bottom, then allow it to sink to the bottom again, using a retrieve that you're confident with.

If you're new to kayak fishing you should think about a new or second hand kayak. You can pick them up cheap these days, with kayaks from \$300, though I do recommend anything in the \$600-\$1,000 range as you can deck them out with fishing gear and they will last you quite a few years, before you upgrade! If you have a bit of money in the bank for a kayak, I would strongly recommend checking out a Hobie as these pedal kayaks are one of the greatest kayaks out there for anglers.

Accessories you will need when kayak fishing include, a landing net, pliers, braid scissors, sunscreen, plenty of water, leashes to connect your rod and paddle to your kayak so they won't fall in and long sleeve UV protection clothing - Sun2Sea UV protection 50+ clothing is a good option. Long pants that will protect you from the sun and snakes, along with a camera - preferably a waterproof model and durable shoes, such as Crocs, that will protect you from oysters or any dangerous objects are a few more good options to add to your kit for your kayak fishing adventure!

Overall, kayak fishing can offer plenty of great adventures for you and/or the family. Hopefully you like the sound of kayak fishing and the next thing on your shopping list is a kayak! You don't have to travel far when kayak fishing the estuaries in search of a decent fish, they may well be in your backyard! I've mentioned just a few cool species that kayak fishing has to offer in the estuaries and the techniques to catch them, but there are plenty more fish out there. So stay safe and good luck on your next kayak trip!

www.joshdunnfishing.com



Catch...



...and the release.



Motor Oil is a popular ZMan colour that responds well to UV light.

Natural Presentations

By Jay Noble

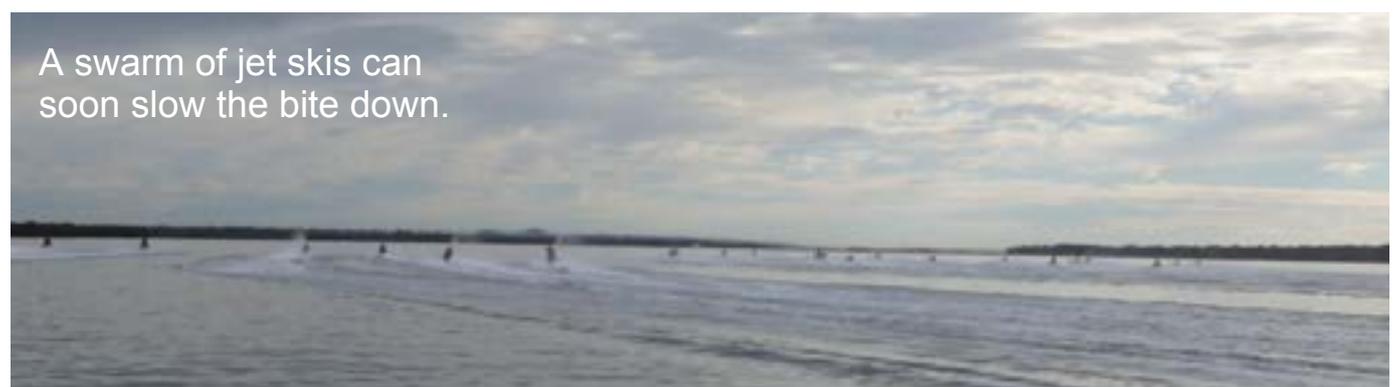




Jay with a monster jack on an Opening Night coloured ZMan 5" Grass KickerZ and TT Lures Rev Head jighead.

In my local area of the Gold Coast in southeast Queensland we are lucky enough to have a large range of local fresh and saltwater systems in which to target a good number of fish species. These areas also offer many different opportunities in terms of fishing styles and available structure to target these sometimes finicky and lure shy fish. From deep weeded sand banks, many bridges, rock walls, underwater pipe lines, pontoons and the natural rock bars and fallen trees that litter the river banks. All of these areas are home to really good numbers of baitfish, including mullet and herring, along with prawns and crabs.

Being a highly regarded tourist destination the Gold Coast is a popular place to holiday and live. This area has a lot of pressure on it but not just for the fisherman, there are hundreds of jet skis, wake boats and other users on this beautiful waterway on a daily basis. This can make finding a decent fish difficult at times and this is why I believe that natural coloured lures have helped me to get a few fish in the boat by effectively matching the hatch.



A swarm of jet skis can soon slow the bite down.

ZMan have a huge range of lures and with so many to choose from it can be difficult to decide what to throw next. There is one lure though that I have found to be a great all-rounder and that's the 3" MinnowZ, with its tail beating body roll action often proving to be too much to resist in the fresh and saltwater for most species. Two other great, proven baitfish profile lures are the 4" SwimmerZ and the 4" DieZel MinnowZ. All of these lures mentioned match the bait fish perfectly in my area. They seem to fish well, even when the area is under a fair bit of pressure and the fish have shut down, with the natural style and colours working really well.

The ZMan SwimmerZ are one of the most natural looking mullet imitations on the market and if you haven't seen the Black Back Shad colour I'm sure you will quickly become a fan of this plastic. They match the hatch perfectly if you are fishing an area with schools of mullet, for species such as mangrove jack, jew, trevally and flathead, just to quickly name a few.

The 3" MinnowZ and 4" DieZel MinnowZ come in a huge range of colours to match just about any bait or small fish you could find. The Houdini, Opening Night, Pinfish, New Penny and my favourite Pearl Blue Glimmer are all designed to resemble a bait fish fleeing from danger.



Bass...



taylor...



cod...



trevally... ...all suckers for a natural presentation

Often when I'm fishing an area with a lot of bait and I find myself using the natural colours, I like to mix up my retrieve if the slow roll doesn't produce a bite after a while. Mixing up your retrieve can often increase your chances of attracting some extra attention to your plastic. Slow hops off the bottom, a steady roll with small raises of the rod tip to impart the look of an injured and fleeing baitfish, or just a quick retrieve can often grab the fish's attention.

So in local areas like mine, that are pressured environments, I have found it very beneficial to keep my lure presentations as natural and as close to the resident bait in the area as possible. Select a plastic that has a natural baitfish profile, a realistic action and in colours that match the bait in that system.

This is just a quick overview of what has worked for me and hopefully some of these tips on flicking the correct lure and the information about matching the bait in your local area will have you locked into a cracker real soon!

Until then, see you out there...



Jay with a nice trevally from the estuaries, caught matching the natural colour of the bait fish.

Pro-Cure...

an unfair advantage



By Ryan Dixon

Fishing has always been a favourite pastime for many families throughout Australia, with everlasting memories of significant catches and tales of the one that got away fuelling the fire for future adventures! Nothing beats leaning back on a fully loaded rod as you watch it bend over from the weight of a newly hooked fish. Not knowing what is on the end of your line can be just as exciting as slipping a landing net under your prize catch!

I always cast my mind back to when I was a young boy, catching whiting, bream and flathead with my family over the school holidays, using freshly pumped yabbies or prawns that we had caught in the bait net the previous day. We never used lures and rarely saw anyone use them. In fact I remember thinking, why would a fish eat a small piece of plastic over well presented live bait? How wrong I was!

Today lure fishing is the most popular type of fishing throughout Australia, with just about every tackle store stocking a wide variety of different lures. Soft plastics, blades, hard bodies, spinnerbaits, ice jigs, poppers - the list goes on! And although they all work for different species in different applications, they can all be made even more effective with the addition of a scent or bite stimulant.



With 9 flavours available you can match your Pro-Cure to your lure or target species.

Bait scents not only make your lure smell good to the fish, they also taste good to fish, making your catch rate sky rocket. When a fish grabs your lure without scent on it and they don't find the hooks, they will rarely come back for a second look. When a fish grabs your lure with bait scent on it, they keep eating it until either every last bit of scent has been sucked off it, or until they find a hook stuck in the side of their mouth.

Although there are many different types of scents on the market, there is one that stands out well above the rest for me, for many different reasons and that is Pro-Cure Super Gel. Pro-Cure is actually made from real ground bait. What a perfect scenario for a fish when they see a lure that looks real and it also smells and tastes like the real thing.

Most brands of scent that I've used over the years normally only have one flavour of scent in their range. With Pro-Cure this is not the case as they have nine different flavours that are all pumped with supercharged amino acids, bite stimulants and are UV enhanced. The flavours are Garlic Plus, Bloody Tuna, Blue Crab, Mullet, Squid, Inshore Saltwater, Shrimp, Nightcrawler and Crawfish, all of which have been extremely successful across a massive range of species.



Bream respond well to scent. Here's a solid live well full of bream prior to release.



Scent encourages fish to bite, bite more aggressively and hang on longer, giving you more time to set the hook.

By having such a wide range of flavours it means that you have the ability to match your lure of choice with one of Pro-Cure's nine flavours, to better your chance of catching the species of fish you are targeting.

I always carry a few different flavours with me when I go fishing as what fish are eating can vary from day to day. I honestly think that you can't put a better presentation in front of fish than something that looks, smells and taste like the real thing! And with ZMan's 10X Tough ElaZtech you won't be continually buying and replacing baits. For example a ZMan SwimmerZ alone is a perfect mullet imitation, but once loaded with Mullet Pro-Cure Super Gel what chance does a fish honestly have? A prawn or crayfish imitation loaded with either Shrimp or Crawfish Pro-Cure is also unstoppable, with the endless options right throughout the Pro-Cure range.

Pro-Cure is super-sticky and suitable for soft plastics, hard bodies, spinnerbaits and all other lure types, including blades.



Pro-Cure is not only intended for use on soft plastics, it is also as effective on hard body lures, blades, poppers, spinnerbaits, in fact any style of artificial bait can be made more appealing to fish with the application of a bit of Pro-Cure. Coming in a pocket size bottle with an easy application nozzle, Pro-Cure is mess free and extremely easy to apply.



Personally I like to give the whole lure a generous coating and I reapply after roughly 8-10 casts or after a fish is caught. Although Pro-Cure has a gel consistency that sticks for quite a long time, I find the more often you reapply the more you improve your catch rate. When a soft plastic has a belly slot or cavity I like to fill it with Pro-Cure as much as possible as I find it stays inside the cavity for a very long time.

For those people lucky enough to have a boat, the best way to keep your range of scents is to attach a small Velcro dot on the back of your tube with another Velcro dot on the inside of your boat. By sticking all of your bottles upside down with the nozzle closed it will ensure that even when your bottle is close to empty your Pro-Cure will always be



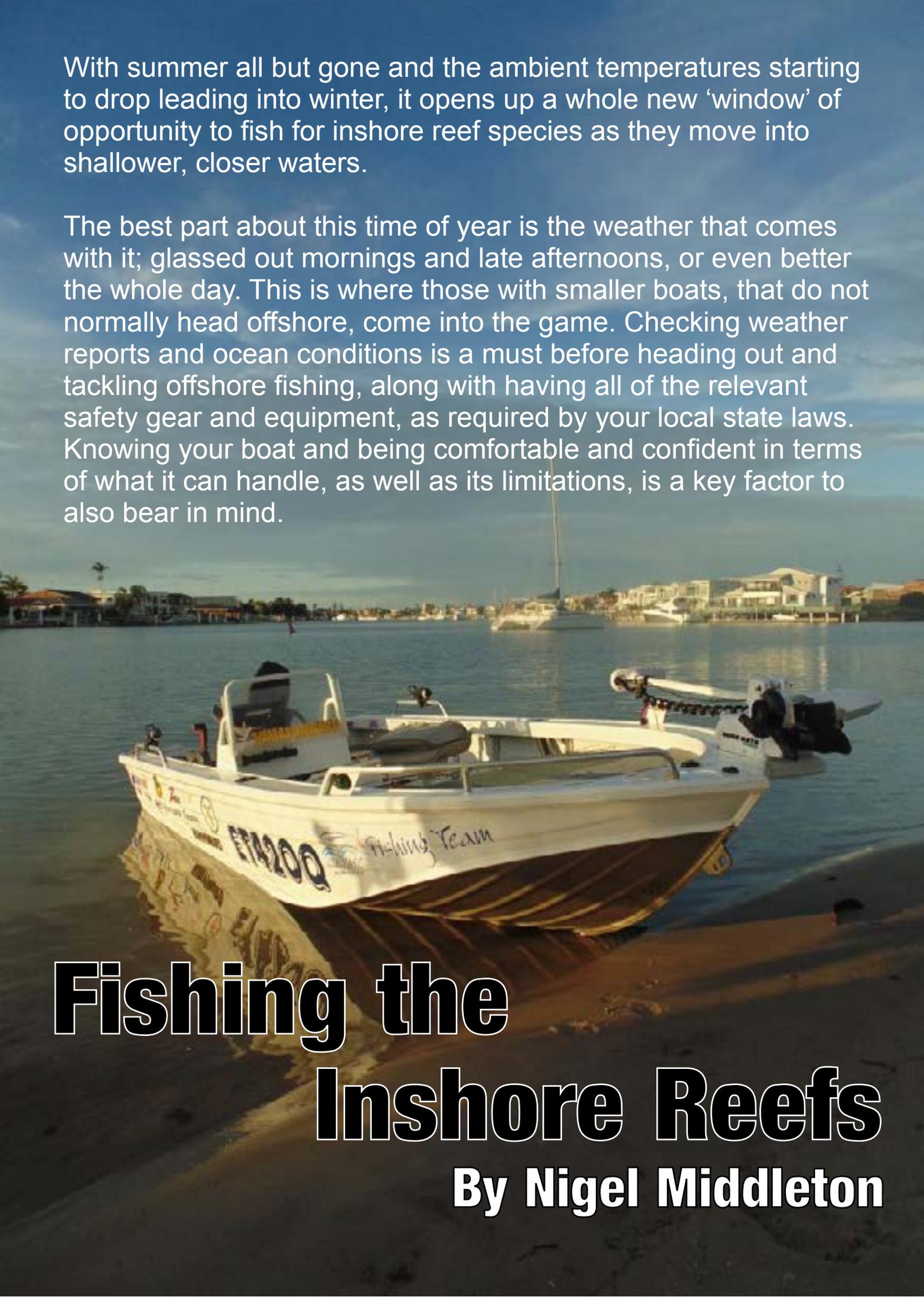
ready to come out of the nozzle and also keep the bottles off the deck of your boat. I'm renowned for leaving bottles lying around with the nozzle open and there's nothing worse than stomping on a full bottle and having it squirt out all over your carpet.



Most tackle retailers stock a good range of Pro-Cure and it is a must have in your tackle box if you are serious about bettering your catch rate whilst lure fishing. Remember to always carry a few different flavours so you can match the scent with your lure choice or target species. Next time you are at your local tackle shop be sure to grab some Pro-Cure Super Gel to give yourself that unfair advantage.

With summer all but gone and the ambient temperatures starting to drop leading into winter, it opens up a whole new 'window' of opportunity to fish for inshore reef species as they move into shallower, closer waters.

The best part about this time of year is the weather that comes with it; glassed out mornings and late afternoons, or even better the whole day. This is where those with smaller boats, that do not normally head offshore, come into the game. Checking weather reports and ocean conditions is a must before heading out and tackling offshore fishing, along with having all of the relevant safety gear and equipment, as required by your local state laws. Knowing your boat and being comfortable and confident in terms of what it can handle, as well as its limitations, is a key factor to also bear in mind.



Fishing the Inshore Reefs

By Nigel Middleton



Having all of these boxes ticked and always looking for that 'window' of opportunity, my day had arrived with a light afternoon east-southeasterly breeze and next to no swell. It was time for a solo run in the 4.2m Explorer Trophy, powered by a 40HP outboard engine, out onto the salt and briny. With one of my favourite inshore GPS marks punched into the sounder, I was well on my way to reaching that fixed fishing location.

Upon arrival I always spend a few minutes sounding around, checking for both structure on the bottom and where the bait is holding, what fish are being marked and at what depth, along with ocean drift. Having marked up some really good shows of both bait and fish, close to the bottom off the northern tip of my GPS mark, it was time to deploy the iPilot electric motor and engage the Spot Lock (Anchor) function that will hold me on my GPS mark for the duration of my fishing time. Utilising this sort of anchoring / spot lock technology these days on shallow inshore reefs far outweighs dropping down a noisy old reef pick and chain to the ocean floor, in the process scaring off what you had previously marked on your sounder.



Having marked a school of fish close to but up off the bottom, I was keen to find out exactly what they were, with a suspicion that they may be a school of pearl perch. Soft plastic selection is also another factor to consider, including the ability to be able to mimic the size of bait that your target species is feeding on. Having a varied selection on board of both 5" ZMan Scented Jerk ShadZ and GrubZ, along with different weighted jigheads, it was just a matter of finding what colour was going to be most productive.

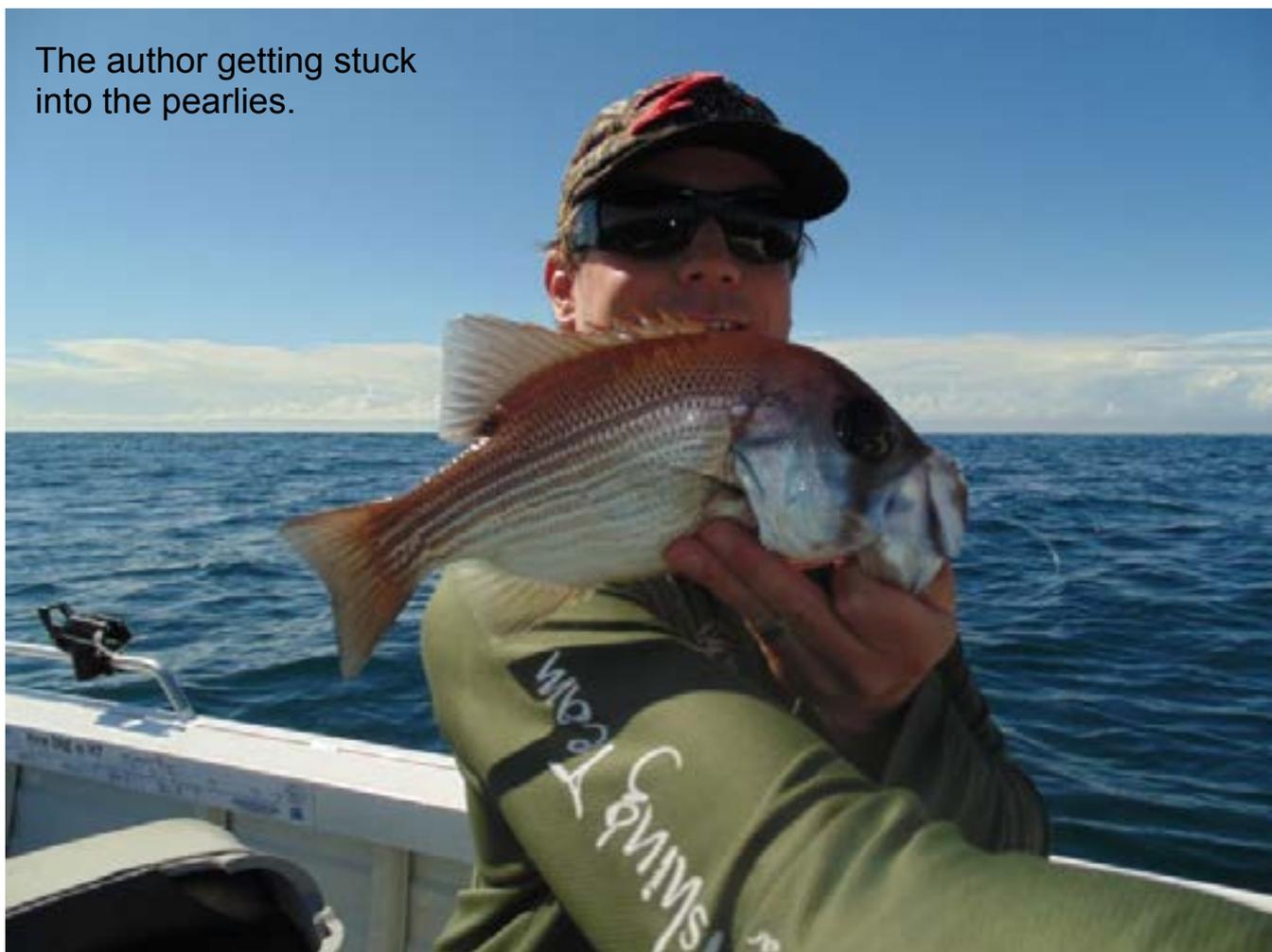
Knowing my local area quite well I was quick to tie on a 1/2oz HeadlockZ HD jighead with a #5/0 size hook. On that I selected to rig a 5" Scented Jerk ShadZ in Coconut Ice Glow. Even though these plastics come pre-scented I always like to increase the scent omissions by adding a generous smear of Bloody Tuna Pro-Cure scent, in both the underbelly of the plastic and down each flank.

As the fish were up off the bottom and holding directly under the boat, as reflected by the sounder, I chose to work the plastic vertically. This is achieved by opening the bail arm and allowing the plastic, under its own momentum, to free fall through the water column until it touches down on the bottom. Watching the plastic as it descend, it gives off its own slow spiraling action which will help to entice the bite you are chasing. This is where your jighead weight comes into play as you want the plastic to be light enough to slowly sink, mimicking a dying or wounded baitfish, but heavy enough so that the ocean current doesn't drag your plastic too far from the vertical drop position. It is worth spending the time experimenting with jighead weights until you achieve your optimum sink rate for your chosen plastic/jighead combination.



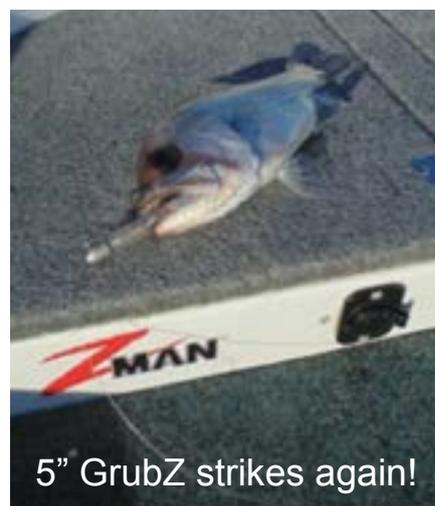
A pearl perch that couldn't resist a ZMan 5" GrubZ locked on a TT Lures HeadlockZ HD jighead.

The author getting stuck into the pearlies.



Counting the lure down is a great way of knowing what depth the lure is at when you do get a bite. On this particular afternoon the fish were in one of their aggressive bite periods, with the plastic not making the bottom before either getting hit or hooking up. If there was a bump on the way down I would click the bail arm back over and give the rod a short sharp twitch, ripping the plastic up a metre or so before dropping it down again. These two different techniques proved too tempting for this feeding school of pearl perch, landing seven fish for seven drops, before getting absolutely smoked and bitten of by a mackerel species on the eighth drop!

I continued this technique of vertical plastic fishing for a little over an hour, landing a dozen or more pearl perch between 30 and 38cm, along with a few cod species that also like to haunt the inshore reefs. I did however change to a ZMan 5" GrubZ in Violet Sparkle when the bite slowed a little as the action from the curl tail, plus the added scent of Bloody Tuna Pro-Cure, was more than enough to entice yet another bite.



5" GrubZ strikes again!

As I was on a short timeframe and the sun was now lower in the sky... and getting towards snapper o'clock, I decided to change techniques and target a snapper for a fresh feed of fish. The ocean current had picked up with the change in the tide so I selected a 3/4oz TT HeadlockZ HD jighead rigged with a 5" Scented Jerk ShadZ in Coconut Ice Glow. When adding Bloody Tuna Pro-Cure I like to always put some in the belly of the plastic, but this time I also applied more up around the head of the plastic because when snapper hit a baitfish they will crunch the head and eat it there and then, or drop it and smash it again on the drop. When you get a hit from a snapper have a good look at your jighead as you will find quite a few bite and crunch marks in the lead head during a snapper bite.

With the plastic now ready to go, a nice long cast up current is normally best as this allows the plastic to sink back towards the boat. Whilst the plastic is sinking wind the reel slowly to keep the slack out of your line until the lure touches bottom. I like to give a double hop action to the plastic and always allow the lure to touch bottom again between each double hop.



A nice snapper on the ZMan smeared with Bloody Tuna Pro-Cure.



On the first cast I got belted and quickly free-spooled the line, looking for that second bite of the snapper turning around to finish its meal off, but to no avail as the fish did not return. I put a second cast back into the same area, allowed the plastic to sink to the bottom and then continued the same double hop retrieve. A few twitches in, I had the bite I was looking for and the fish stayed connected. After a couple of short runs and the ever present, tell-tail head shakes of a snapper, I had boated a 48cm inshore snapper. Perfect eating size for the table.

Just to wrap up on the rod setup that I like to use for inshore plastics fishing, I fish a 7' one-piece graphite rod with a 4000 size reel, running 20lb braid and 20-40lb leader, depending on fish size and the bottom structure I am fishing. With the two hour or so 'window' I had to fish at an end, it was time to get back to the ramp after what had been a decent session of around 20 odd fish caught on ZMan soft plastics.

The end of a fun and productive plastics session...





Colour	4"	5"	Colour	4"	5"
Pearl	3020	3000	Houdini	3025	3005
New Penny	3021	3001	Redbone	3026	3006
Shiner	3022	3002	Gold Rush	3027	3008
Smoky Shad	3023	3003	Bad Shad	3028	3009
Electric Chicken	3024	3004			

ZMan – 4" & 5" Scented PaddlerZ

ZMan Scented PaddlerZ are a realistic baitfish profile that are available in 9 colours and 4" and 5" models to suit your favourite medium to large predatory species. They have already proven to be dynamite on flathead, snapper, mulloway, barramundi, mangrove jack and more. The segmented tail design of the PaddlerZ creates maximum action with minimal movement, making it an extremely versatile lure option – slow roll it like a swim bait, twitch it and hop it like a jerk bait, or retrieve it at speed for pelagic species, the PaddlerZ can handle whatever technique you throw at it.

It can also handle any species you throw at it with its ElaZtech, 10X Tough construction. Other benefits of ElaZtech include its super-soft and flexible realistic feel that keeps fish biting and built-in buoyancy that sees the tail standing up and moving with the water when at rest on the bottom. ZMan Scented PaddlerZ are pre-scented with Pro-Cure to attract fish and trigger strikes, making the ZMan PaddlerZ a deadly addition to your arsenal. Fish on!

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New Gear

Tackle Tactics – Kids Tournament Shirts

If you have a little fisho in the family they can now share their love of the sport, just like mum and dad, in their ZMan or TT Lures Tournament Shirt. These shirts are cool and comfortable, quick dry and they have a UPF 45 rating to help protect your little fisho, whether they're collecting bait, fighting a fish, or splashing around and building a sand castle.

ZMan and TT Lures Tournament shirts are now available in kids' sizes – 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 and XS, along with the adult range of S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL and 5XL. These shirts are ideal for those spending time outdoors and make a great gift idea for the angler, boatie or camper. Available to order from your local fishing tackle retailer, or online from

www.tackletactics.com.au.



TT Lures Tournament Shirt

Kids Size 4	4070	Small	4010
Kids Size 6	4071	Medium	4011
Kids Size 8	4072	Large	4012
Kids Size 10	4073	XL	4013
Kids Size 12	4074	XXL	4014
Kids Size 14	4075	XXXL	4015
XS	4076	5XL	4016

ZMan Tournament Shirt

Kids Size 4	4080	Small	4020
Kids Size 6	4081	Medium	4021
Kids Size 8	4082	Large	4022
Kids Size 10	4083	XL	4023
Kids Size 12	4084	XXL	4024
Kids Size 14	4085	XXXL	4025
XS	4086	5XL	4026



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