



FYI: ROB'S VALLEE BAG MIX

- 365 Protein Shot
- Feedstim XP
- Milkimin Pellets
- Micro Salmon Feed
- Amino Green 365 Pellets
- Cantax Red 365 Pellets
- Dried Insect Meal
- Belachan Paste Block
- Crumbed Mainline Cell, Richworth Tutti and Nash Scopex Squid

Frutti's, all in 10mm.

Another big edge that I was taking with me were the new Nash In-Line Flat Square Leads. I normally use the brilliant bag leads from Avid Carp but having seen fellow staff member Josh Hillman use the Nash leads to great effect on a different trip, I wanted to give them a go. So four-ounces of flat square lead on a short leash was the plan. I was also very fortunate to be offered a state of the art Angling Technics Microcat Bait Boat for the trip which included a graphic echo sounder along with GPS, meaning I could plot each drop with inch precision. Not only did I have ridiculous confidence in my approach, I could also cheat! (F**k you, Regan!)

MY SPOTS

Given the tell-tale signs of fish along the far bank tree-line, I had a good walk along this bank and decided what areas looked better than others. Unfortunately the overhanging trees were too dense to allow me to get a proper look into the water. Given I didn't want to create too much disturbance I decided to give the new bait boat its first voyage and proceeded to map depths and features along the length whilst I attempted to peek through the foliage. I am convinced when you watch a bait boat from great distances (the spots must have been 150yds from my swim at least) you are not as close as you think you are to your required area. So watching from close quarters enabled me to plot exact positions where I just knew the carp would frequent. Using the echo

sounder as shown by Keith Williams made a massive difference. Literally driving it very, very slowly over your spots reveals an awful lot more. Take your time! So with three very sexy spots inputted into the GPS, I was ready for action.

MY END BITS

My chosen rigs for the session were going to be extremely simple. Utilising in-line leads with a three-inch Korda N-Trap hook lengths to size eight Korda Wide Gapes. The use of two slivers of silicone to trap the Hair along the shank and on the bend, it couldn't get much simpler. I stripped a section of 3mm before the hook to give it a bit of movement too and mandatory blobs of putty were moulded along the rig to pin it all down. On a standard length Hair I mounted two 10mm baits, a Mainline Cell and a Richworth Tutti on one rod, a Mainline Cell and Nash Scopex on another. The reason for using the combination of baits was simply that they are three baits I have amazing confidence in and they are all brilliant fish-catchers on their day.

I like to have my rig central within the bag, running through the mix, as this makes sure whatever it settles on, the hook is within the mix away from any debris etc. I position the lead at the back of the bag so it lands lead down.

THE SESSION

With all my traps set dotted along the far margin, to say I was confident would be an understatement. The weather looked absolutely cock-on for a few bites. Hopefully the fish would play ball and I would get amongst them. It didn't take too long and after a few hours I received my first bite. This fish had come off my middle rod and was my banker rod, the spot looked amazing from above water and to be honest on the Echo Sounder it looked even better: a depression of six-inches deep and around a metre in diameter, obviously an area of interest. All was going to plan and a mid-thirty was offered to the camera.

However, it soon became apparent that something was askew with my rig set-up, I lost two fish in quick succession to hook pulls. It didn't take me too long to work out the mistake and I changed the lead arrangement to drop-off on the take. Four-ounces of square flat lead bouncing up and down on a three-inch rig during the fight wasn't the way to go. Thankfully, both of those fish didn't seem to be big fish but a shame nonetheless. When you hook a good one at Vallee Lakes you know about it.

As the session developed over the next couple of days I had quite a few fish, nothing huge, but all big thirties and all in prime condition. I was really enjoying the trip as I had also taken my girlfriend on her first carp fishing expedition. I had made the mistake of promising her before the trip, that big, big fish were on the menu. So the pressure was on...

I started to pick up a few fish on the

right-hand rod but again the big girls were elusive, albeit the lads opposite me were picking off some of the lakes larger residents from open water.

The trip was scheduled for four nights angling and I was now into my last 24hrs of fishing. I was happy with my middle and right-hand rods but the other had not seen a bite for nearly 72hrs. I was quite mindful of a large weedbed some 80yds to my left, a few fish had shown in the near vicinity so I decided to move it just shy of the weed.

Well, over the next few hours I couldn't believe my eyes, one after another boshing over the top of me. It was a sight to behold. Just when I couldn't bear anymore the rod ripped into life and a steady fight ensued, all the time I was playing the fish I knew it was going to be a good one (not that I was going to let on to the missus). Slow, ponderous and heavy, gradually I gained the upper hand and after a prolonged battle she rolled into the net. Yes! This is why I go to Vallee Lakes, a pristine, corking 50lber weighed and captured. After the elation and backslapping had died down, plus a few beverages, the same rod was sailed across to the weed and deposited within an inch or so of the last drop.

A short while later, another fish graced my net from the far margin area. It was a stunning common, just shy of 40lb. The light was starting to fade and the temperature was definitely starting to drop. Still the fish showed around the weedbed and I knew I had another chance before we had to leave in the morning.

I sat sipping away on the local wine and enjoying some warm food when the weed rod burst into life once again. This time the fish managed to get through the weedbed and decided it wanted to stay there! I couldn't move it at all. My heart was pounding, as I knew it was another kipper as it had almost flat rodded me at 80yds. After ten minutes of constant pressure, I decided to slacken off, pop the rod on the rest and try and call her bluff. Ten minutes later, the buzzer let out a series of bleeps, I tried again and made some ground but she ended back at stalemate. I decided to call for the bailiff to get the boat out, within minutes he arrived and was clambering into the rowing boat. The fish must have known she was going to be mine as soon as the boat launched and the oar broke the surface of the water, she was off again and out of the weed.

Once again, the battle was epic with some heart stopping moments. The lead had thankfully dropped off and I was in direct contact. With the last dapple of light and the sun setting I pulled her across the net cord. There lay yet another huge carp gulping air and looking quite proud of herself. Hoisted up she scraped just over 50lb. Photographs were completed just in time before the sun decided to disappear. Two carp over 50lb in 24 hours! A perfect end, to a perfect trip.