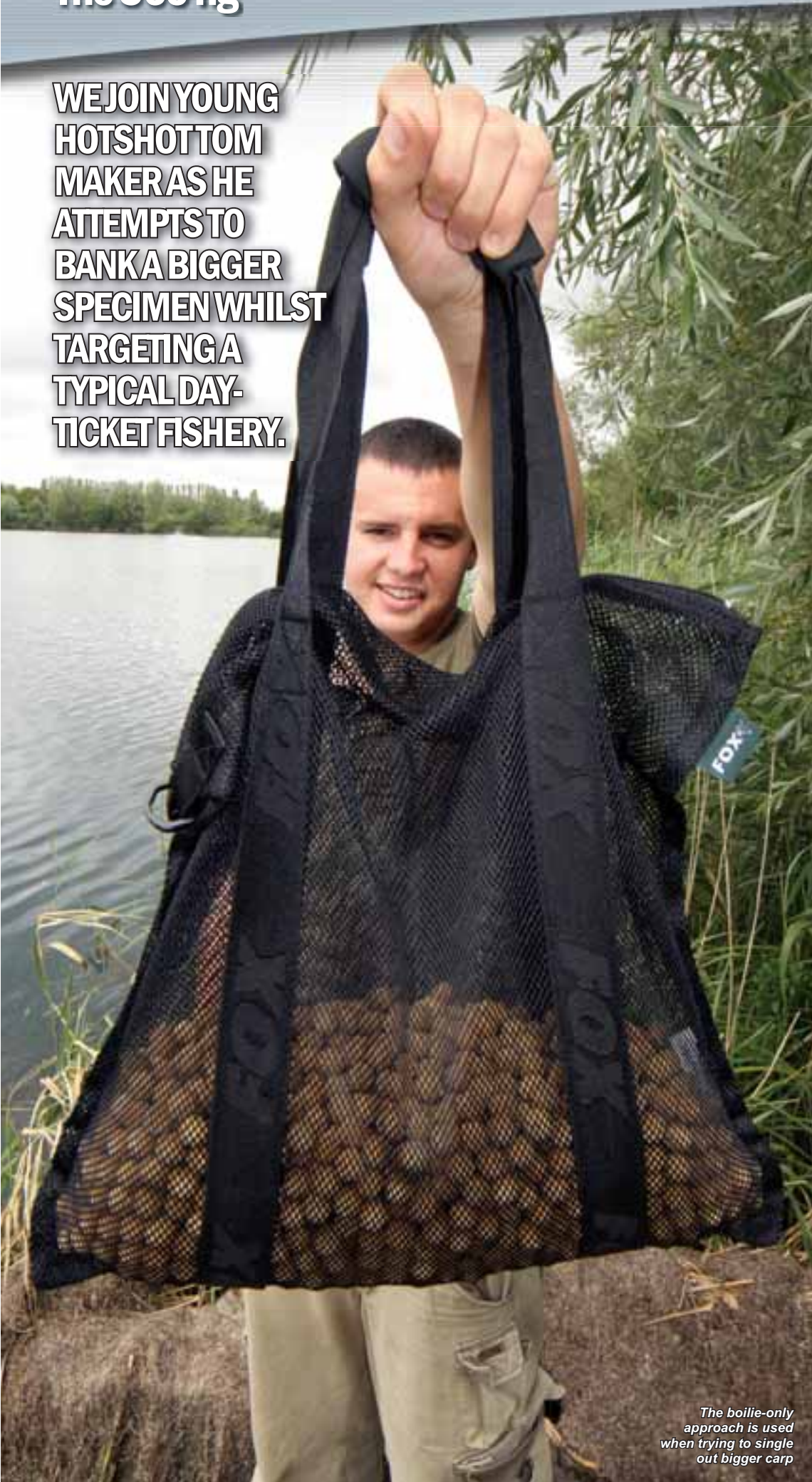


The 360 rig

WE JOIN YOUNG HOTSHOT TOM MAKER AS HE ATTEMPTS TO BANK A BIGGER SPECIMEN WHILST TARGETING A TYPICAL DAY-TICKET FISHERY.



The boilie-only approach is used when trying to single out bigger carp

HOW TO TIE TO



1 Use a pair of Fox XS Braid Blades to cut an 8in. length of Rigidity



6 Carefully thread a Ring Stop on to the hook



11 Push the hookbait all the way on until the Swivel is positioned inside the bait



13 Quickly flatten the melting Floss with the side of the lighter to secure the hookbait

CATCH

I must admit it is quite daunting being told to go onto a lake and catch one of bigger fish. Oxlease Lake on the famous Linear Fisheries complex is a typical day-ticket fishery. It's under constant angling pressure, stocked with carp of all sizes ranging from singles to high thirties, and is exposed to a vast array of tactics and baits on a daily basis.

I don't really class myself a big

TOM'S 360 RIG



2 Tie a size 10 Ring Swivel to one end of the Rigidity using a two-turn half blood knot



3 At the other end tie a figure-of-eight loop knot



4 You now have the main boom section, which needs pulling tight to straighten it



5 Thread a size 6 LSC hook through the small eye of the ring swivel



7 Slide the Ring Stop into the position on the shank then thread on a Micro Hook Ring Swivel



8 Thread a second Ring Stop on to the hook and position it on the bend



9 Cut a 6in length of Fox Bait Floss and thread through the eye of the Micro Hook Ring Swivel so you have 3in either side



10 Thread a 15mm pop-up on to both lengths of Bait Floss

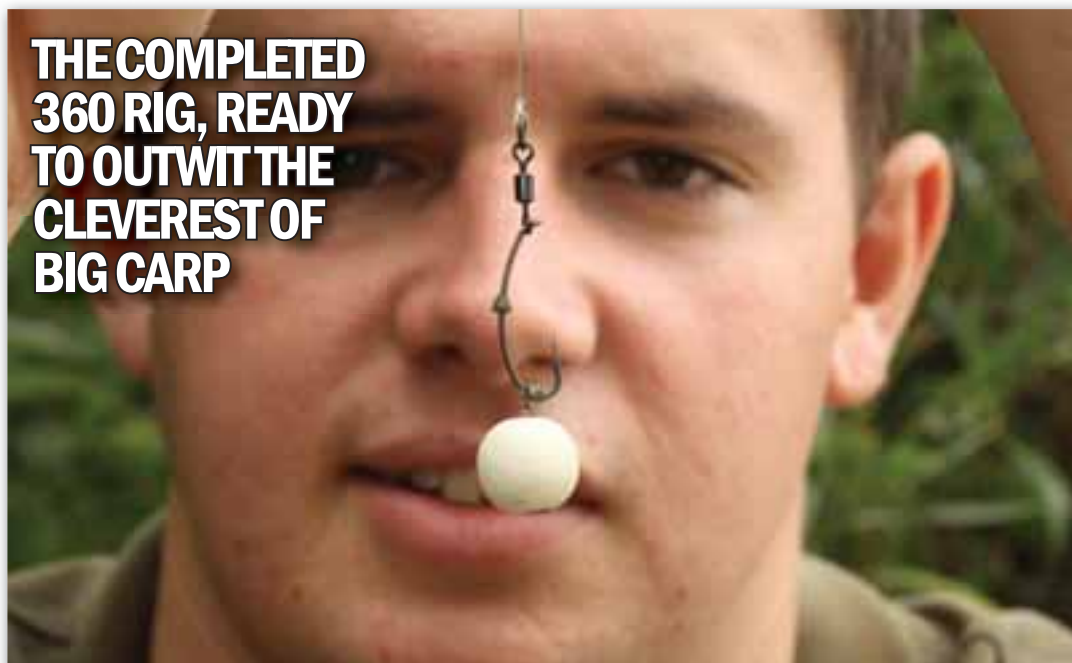


12 Cut the Bait Floss tags about 1cm long then carefully melt them with a lighter



14 To avoid the chance of the hook getting caught in the mesh of your landing net, simply place a small section of silicone tube over the eye

THE COMPLETED 360 RIG, READY TO OUTWIT THE CLEVEREST OF BIG CARP



CATCH BIGGER CARP

fish angler, although over the years I have been very fortunate to have banked plenty of whoppers. I'm an out-and-out runs angler; I like catching carp of all sizes and tend to gear my approach around catching as many carp as possible. A result of this approach is the bigger fish do tend to put in an appearance – it's a simple law of averages! This approach is based around spodding on a little-and-often basis and fishing a solid PVA

bag over the top. My spod mix includes a host of small ingredients such as pellets, particles, chopped boilies and groundbait, and my PVA bags will be filled with small pellets. I tend to go for a 10mm pop-up hookbait.

FEWER BUT BIGGER

This tactic will catch me lots and lots of carp but the ratio of big fish to small ones isn't very good. If you are the type of angler that prefers

to get fewer bites but catch bigger fish then this approach isn't generally the one for you. There will be times when I do want to try and stack the odds of tempting a bigger fish (28lb-plus) in my favour. This may be because I have had a hard week at work and feeling a little low on energy levels, or because I am targeting a specific big fish in a lake. On these occasions I like to change my approach and adopt a much more

direct strategy, based around the use of boilies.

I would definitely go for the boilie-only approach for targeting the bigger fish in a day-ticket lake. This involves feeding the swim only with boilies of a minimum 15mm in size. Mainline Cell has been my first choice for a number of years as it just keeps on producing big carp. I use a throwing stick to get the baits out into the lake as I like to have a nice spread of freebies

when fishing this approach. This method encourages big, old carp to move between mouthfuls and therefore makes them more prone to getting nailed on one of my rigs.

I often start a session by putting out at least 2kg of freebies. I know am in a lucky position of getting my boilies for free, and not everyone can afford to use such a quantity of boilies, but believe me investing in quality bait will catch you many more carp than having the latest bait boat or £600 bivvy! With 2kg of freebies in the swim I cast my rigs amongst them and then keep topping up with a few freebies every couple of hours. If I have a couple of bites it won't be uncommon for me to use around 5kg of boilies in a 24-hour session, but if I bag a thirty then it is well worth the effort!

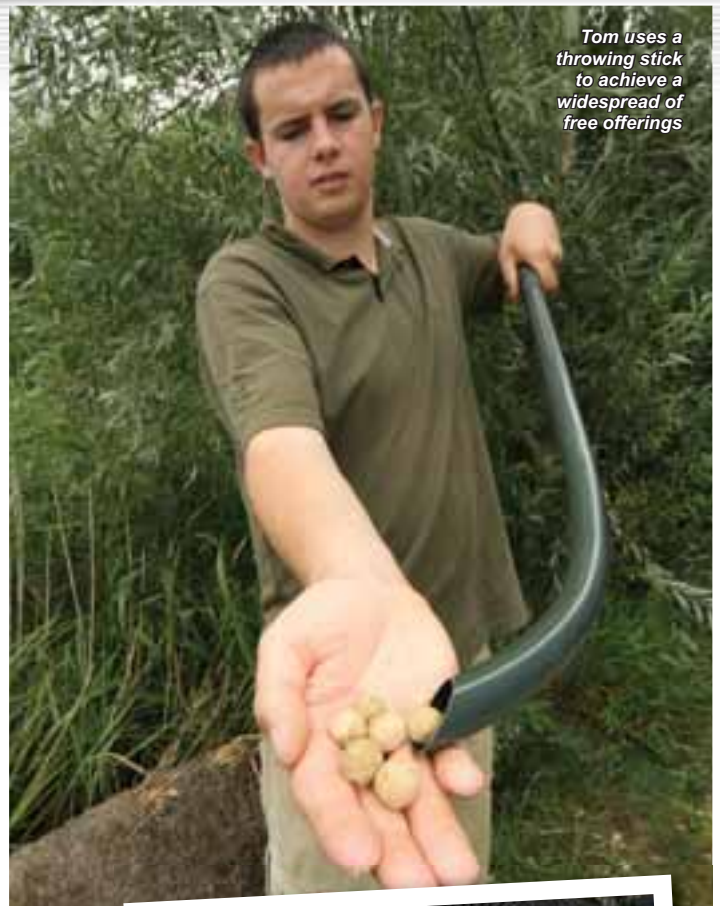
BIG FISH RIG

When targeting bigger fish I really do have lots of confidence in the 360 rig. I know certain factions of the carp world are against this rig as they believe it causes mouth damage, but I feel that a lot of these opinions are based on hearsay and not experience. All I can do is judge the rig on my own experience and I have never seen

it cause any mouth damage to carp. The hookholds are always very good and secure and I have never seen or experienced this double hooking people go on about. The rig is a brilliant rig when targeting big, wise old carp as its flexibility and movement just seem to fool them when more simple rigs such as the KD or a blowback are ejected with ease. I like to use 25lb Rigidity for the hooklink, which is incredibly stiff and adds to the anti-eject properties. I use a size 10 Ring Swivel and a size 6 Arma Point LSC hook. On the shank of the hook I use a tiny Micro Hook Ring Swivel, to which my hookbait is attached. This tiny swivel adds flexibility and movement to my hookbait and again makes the rig that much harder for a big carp to eject.

HOOKBAIT

When feeding the Cell I like to fish with a Milky Toffee pop-up over the top. This combination has caught me a crazy number of big carp over the years and will do the same for you! I'm not sure what it is about the colour white but it just seems to be very appealing to big carp; it has caught me and my friends a silly number of big carp. I tend to use a 15mm pop-up on the 360 rig



Tom uses a throwing stick to achieve a widespread of free offerings



Right: A white pop-up over the top is a proven big carp catcher
Below: A cracking 30¼lb Oxlease mirror caught for the cameras!



as I have found that it sits perfectly on the lakebed. Once a big carp sucks in the hookbait it will very rarely eject it without getting nailed!

PROOF OF THE PUDDING

Well, I fished on Oxlease during a mega-busy weekend in August and put my big fish tactics into practice. During my first 24 hours I used a good 5kg of 15mm Cell and fished 360 rigs baited with Milky Toffee pop-ups over the top, and I managed to nick a stunning mirror of 30¼lb for the cameras! My mate Ben, who was fishing next door, also managed to bank a thirty on the same tactics! I was nervous trying to prove a tactic during a feature shoot, but I'm glad I gave it a go because I now have another lovely thirty in my album!

Give the 360 rig and boilie-only approach a go – it will definitely help you single out the bigger carp.