

THE SOUTHWESTERN SPORTSMAN



by

"Whitewater Dick" Miller

The Bass Isn't Always A Bass

THE THIRD cast was against the brush along the south shore. A good place for bass. Two burns of the reel handle and a solid strike nailed the plug and arched the rod.

I set the hooks and the bass went deep and to the left. The line sang through the water throwing a tiny sharp spray, like the periscope of a submarine.

A sharp rising pull on the rod to make him jump. I wanted to see him. He felt good and I wanted to see how good. There was a boiling swirl at the surface but no leaping fish.

Again he sounded. The line tightened almost too much. I loosened the drag and the fish made a long run toward the center of the bay.

Gradually I turned him and tried again to force him into a jump.

Another boil but no leap.

Close to the canoe now, and a short violent run to the right, toward the bow. An attempt to pass under the canoe, thwarted, and several last runs back and forth.

The landing net was in the water now, Gino ready, and we got the first identifiable glimpse of the fish. It was a carp. I led him into the net and Gino lifted him dripping into the canoe.

HE HAD put up a noble battle and I wanted to release him unhurt, if possible. His size was such that I couldn't hold him properly with my left hand while I worked on the hooks with my right.

As luck would have it the carp gave a flip at precisely the wrong moment and one hook bit into my finger; entered the bottom of my right trigger finger and came out the side, near the base of the nail.

I thought it was going to be one of those times you often read about where the point and barb of the hook must be clipped with pliers and the hook removed. But surprisingly, the hook - barb and all - backed out neatly and I was free.

With more care this time I removed the hooks from the carp's relatively small mouth. I weighed the fish (6-1/2 lbs.), released him, sucked the two holes in my finger and doctored it a bit from the medical box and cast again to the edge of the brush along the shore.

THAT CARP certainly gave me a strong fight - as carp usually do. During the battle I had had visions of an old rag-tailed bronze-green bass down there in the dark depths. I was mildly surprised when he would fight the surface and refuse to jump but it not once entered my head that the bass was not a bass at all but a great, yellow carp.

I don't know why it is but there is usually a feeling of disappointment when the wrong kind of fish turns up on the end of the line. Actually, there is no valid reason behind this feeling. When I thought I was fighting a bass, the fish FELT like a bass. It was not until I recognized the carp that I was disappointed.

Perhaps my feelings were due to the belief that a bass gives a better account of himself in the frying pan than does a carp. Or perhaps it's because the bass enjoys a higher status in the hierarchy of fishdom.

At any rate, I had a good fight, boated a big fish (my first carp on a plug) and thoroughly enjoyed it all -- all except the hook in the finger, that is, and even that experience had some value in it. It re-taught me the proper way to handle a fish with a mouthful of treble-hooks.

TROTTERS IN CARTOON

NEW YORK - (NPI) --A situation comedy series which stars the Harlem Globetrotters in cartoon form, is the newest weekly television series to be plotted for the next season. The basketball zanys will not be appearing in person but will be penned by a cartoon artist for CBS-TV.

Willie Horton Returned To Detroit Tigers

DETROIT - (NPI) - Willie Horton, slugger for the Detroit Tigers, has returned to the club, after missing four games for an unexplained reason. His walkout earlier has cost him \$1,360 or \$340 for each game.

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