

# ***VERSATILITY IS STILL THE KEY TO SUCCESS***



Many will tell you and others will argue that being versatile is the main key to being successful in competitive fishing. Warren Barnes a professional angler who hails from Fish Creek a small community in northwest Georgia strongly believes in that fact. Warren has spent most of his life fishing many different water systems around the south but one thing he has noticed about many anglers is that they will tend to fish they're strengths and be one track minded when it comes to competing only to go home empty handed and wondering what went wrong. Warren believes that being a well-rounded angler and keeping an open positive mind and understanding the habits of big bass will create more success. Here is how he does it. Warren spent most of his life fishing a wide variety of lakes around his area such as Lake Guntersville, Lake Weiss, Neely Henry, Lake Allatoona, and Lake West Point. Over time realized that he had to approach every one of these lakes differently. Which led him to believe that if he were more versatile finding fish would be easier and he could learn more patterns thus giving him an advantage over his competition.

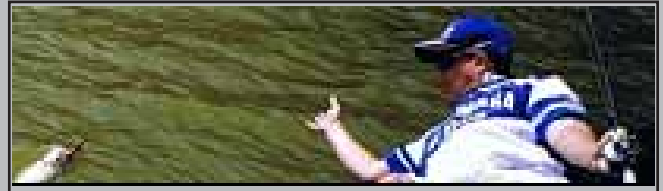
Breaking this down is not complicated and Warren has a guideline that he has learned to follow for every lake and every situation. Warren will break it down for you. First of all be well prepared for whatever situation you might be faced with. In other words a good mechanic does not become a good mechanic without all the right tools to handle whatever job might come his way. A good angler needs all the right tackle for whatever challenges he is faced with for instance having the proper jig to fish in muddy shallow water in the summertime and the proper jig to fish clear water in the winter time and knowing how and when to use them is key.



Warren adds that some baits have a time of the year when they are at they're prime and that knowing when the prime times are is a must for instance I have one certain bait that catches big fish for me in the month of November when the water temp gets around the 58 to 54 degree mark and it only works during that period and that period only but every year its like clockwork when that magic temperature comes I pull this bait out and tie it on and it works. Warren also believes that knowing the fish that your after is a must. I have

learned the key differences between the three. Knowing they're tendencies and how sensitive bass movement is to the slightest condition changes is one thing that always helps me stay on fish. I remember a couple of years ago I was practicing for a large tournament in February and had found a pattern that was producing some large fish and low and behold on the day of the tournament something changed. During practice when I find a pattern I always analyze what the fish were doing at the particular time then if any changes should occur I would try to figure out where those fish would go and or what they would do. Well getting myself in the habit of doing this has paid off because I eventually found the fish again and by the end of the tournament I finished in first place and had a limit both days. This was one situation where versatility was the key to success. So many times I here and see anglers who say that bigger is better when it comes to the lures they use. I am a firm believer that all baits no matter how big or small will catch big fish. So many times I have seen anglers pull up to an area and throw big baits for a while only to pull up the trolling motor and run to the next hole. Then I come behind them with small bait and catch the fish they were not enticing. during practice, whenever I stop on an area I always start with something small first and then go to using the big stuff. I have done this so many times in the past and it has produced some monster limits. Some people will misconstrue the fact that in winter you have to use small baits in clear water and that is totally false one of my most favorite techniques to use in the winter when the water temp drops into the upper 40s is a big Texas rigged lizard with a tungsten weight and glass bead this technique really works on those very cold and nasty days. I have used this on my home lakes in the past during the winter and have been the only one to weigh in a limit many times. The way that I rig it is based on how deep the fish are. I will generally use 14lbs fluorocarbon on a seven-foot medium heavy rod with a fast tip. The key is to pull

the lizard up next to a stump or rock and set there and shake the rod tip with about 5 to 7 tight twitches then stop for about 5 to 7 seconds then shake it again repeating this until you get a bite and if not move to the next stump or rock. I call this heavy duty finesse fishing. This has a tendency to be boring but it can be very exciting when used at the right time.



Warren also adds that you should not be just versatile with what lure you fish but also be versatile with what structure you fish. Don't just be a bank angler, learn to find fish in open water more times than not you will find concentrations of fish that no one else is pressuring. I can recall one instance when I was fishing Lake Allatoona in December and the water temp was 48 degrees and after being out there for about an hour I saw tons of boats doing the same old cold weather shuffle on the bluffs. I figured I would go and search in open water and find the fish before casting. After looking at three areas I found some fish on my Humminbird 997 si holding close to the bottom on an open water ridge in about 30 to 44 feet of water. After getting them pinpointed missing four and making some adjustments I finally got some Luv from some Allatoona spots. I fished two places like this the rest of the day and caught some fat fish. After being out there all day long I never saw the first boat fishing open water. Needless to say I was astonished. Being versatile is not a guarantee that you will win every tournament you enter but it will help you to stay in the hunt more often. So get out there and use everything that is offered to you I think you will be surprised at how being versatile will help your success.