

My ten best Ned Rig "lessons learned" on Lake Keowee.

Charles Townson, April 2019

I began fishing the Ned Rig two years ago and initially had little success with it and was not convinced of its effectiveness. However, as I worked more and more with the bait it was obvious that it is an excellent lure for Lake Keowee and can be used for most, if not all, months of the year. I fished it extensively in 2018 and it has been the "go-to" bait for me in the spring of 2019. My biggest bass in both years has come on the Ned Rig, so it does NOT just catch small fish. It catches a lot of fish and it catches quality fish. Here are the things that I have learned that might be of help to fellow KA members:

1. Equipment setup is VERY important. The Ned Rig is best fished on a medium-light spinning rod with a fast action tip. A rod that is 6-7' in length is a good choice. Invest in a high-quality rod in this weight and action and you might be amazed at how many bites you have been missing on equipment that is too heavy! A good quality spinning reel should be paired with the rod. Set your drag properly as this is a light setup.
2. The reel should be spooled with a high-quality braid line in the 10-20 pound range. I have been using the new Seaguar Smackdown braid recently in 15 and 20 lb. test and highly recommend it. A flourocarbon leader of either 8 or 10 lb. test line should be used with the braid. I use a leader that is about 12-18" long and that allows me to feel what the lure is doing at all times.
3. While the Ned Rig jig head comes in various weights, the 1/10 oz. seems to be a great all-around choice for Keowee. It can be fished in depths from shallow water out to 20 feet without much problem. The Ned Rig can also catch fish deep (40+ feet), but I will leave that conversation to another day.
4. The bait can be fished in a variety of ways and catch fish. Some people drag it on the bottom, others lift the bait and let it fall, others move it more quickly. I think it is important to let the bait descend naturally to the bottom on the initial fall and would estimate 80% of my bites come that way. After letting the bait fall, I work it slowly back to the boat hopping it off the bottom or swimming it just off the bottom. If you are not getting bites, try slowing down and make sure the bait is making contact with the

bottom. The number one mistake I see people make with the Ned Rig is fishing it too quickly. If you are not getting bites, slow down. If you still don't get bites, slow down more!! Yes, you will lose some Ned Rigs - that goes with the territory.

5. Setting the hook is different with the Ned Rig. When I feel weight or a definite bite, I simply raise my rod tip and reel into the fish. Most of the time that drives the Ned Rig hook into the fish's upper mouth, which is the ideal hook set for the Ned Rig. If you jerk the bait when you feel a bite, that often results in a lost fish. After setting the hook, just keep tension on the line and let your drag do the work if you have a big fish on.

6. Color doesn't matter much. I have used virtually every color of TRD that Z-Man offers. My favorites are Green Goby, Yoga Pants, and Craw. However, I have used colors such as Mud Minnow, The Deal, etc. and have not really seen much difference in the number of bites. I think the presentation of the bait is much more important than the color.

7. Keep the bait straight. Keep the TRD hanging on the jig head straight. I find myself constantly adjusting the bait to make sure it is straight on the hook. A good way to check this is to reel the bait in quickly and watch it. If it runs straight, with no wobble, it is good. If it is wobbling around and crooked, it needs to be reset on the hook. By the way, I have caught a number of fish that run after the bait while reeling it in. If you see a bass chasing the TRD while you are reeling it in, just stop reeling and drop your rod tip - many times that will result in a fish!

8. Fish the bait in the wind. The Ned Rig is a great bait on windy points and shorelines in the spring. Yes, it is more difficult to feel and detect bites, but the outcome can be fantastic. Position your boat so you can cast down wind. This allows the bait to get to the bottom easier. Raise your rod tip and check the bait to see if there is weight on the initial fall. Keep the bait on or near the bottom and raise the rod tip slightly to hop the bait as you work it back in.

9. If your trolling motor has spot-lock, use it. As soon as you hook a fish, hit spot lock so you can stay on that position. If there was one spotted bass up on a windy point, there might be a dozen more in that same area you can catch. Throw right back to the same area a few times before moving on.

10. If you catch a fish or two on a point or windy bank, turn around and fish that same area again (and possibly again and again and again). I have fished a single point or stretch of bank for hours at a time, making pass after pass after pass as long as I am catching one or two fish each pass.

Well, those are my top 10 "lessons learned" on the Keowee Ned Rig bite. I hope at least one of these will be of help to you!

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