

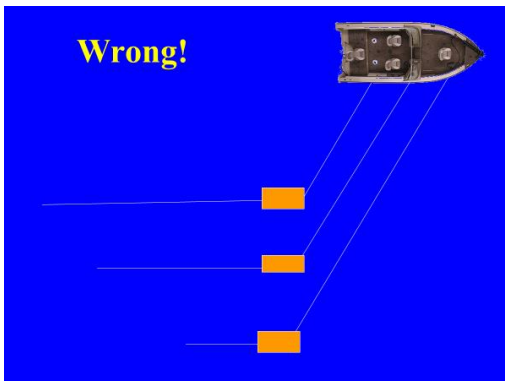
## Trolling setup-which lures go where

by Lance Valentine

Trolling setup is a topic that gets heavily discussed every spring as anglers prepare to head out for some open water trolling. The most asked question we get is “do you run your shallowest or deepest lures on the outside of your spread?” The answer is quite detailed and has a few variables. Let’s discuss how and why to set the proper trolling spread.

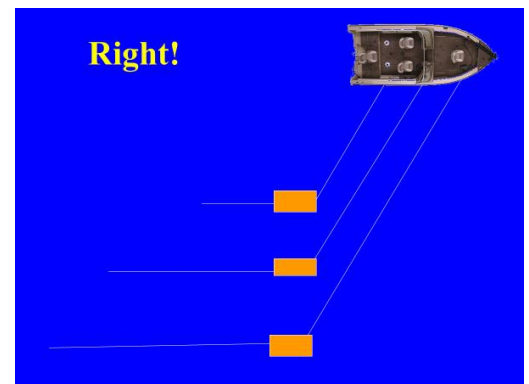
First, we need to determine if we are trolling with lures that “float” at rest and dive when trolled (unweighted crankbaits) or are we using some sort of weight (inline, tadpole, snap weight) or diving device (tadpole, dipsey, jet etc.) since the setup for each will be different. In this article, we will cover setting a spread using crankbaits with NO weight added, the most common way to run them. Before we can talk about setting a spread, we need to establish a few “rules” that crankbait trolling is effected by

- 1) Crankbaits achieve their depth by “pulling” line under the surface
- 2) All things being equal, the more line you let out the deeper a crankbait will dive. Each bait has a “max” depth it can reach and at some point the lure will actually dive shallower with more line let out
- 3) Line has a VERY significant amount of drag in the water
- 4) MOST of the line you let out is actually on the SURFACE! The crankbait only pulls a small percentage of the line down below the water.



So, with those rules in mind, let’s discuss setting a spread of crankbaits. Most anglers start by putting the shallowest bait on the outside of the spread (see pic) for several reasons. One, is the perception that fish are “spooked” to the side of the boat (another topic for later discussion) and two, that if you catch a fish on the shallow line, you can simply pull it over the deeper lines and not get tangled. But this is actually backwards thinking! Remember, most of the line you are letting out to achieve deeper depths on the middle and inside board is actually FLOATING on the surface, which will make it easy for the lure and fish on the outside board to catch the line and cause a tangle, and most often a lost fish!

Knowing that most of the line we let out is on the surface should make it easier to understand that running the LONGEST lead on the outside is much more efficient and results in significantly less tangles. I do this every day with inexperienced anglers, running 3 or 4 Off-Shore inline planer boards per side and have very few tangles without ever having to reel in or move one of the other boards. The longer lead simply comes over the top of the shorter leads and makes it easy to get the fish in without tangles. With this setup it is also very easy to get the outside lure reset back to the outside without a tangle or having to move the remaining boards. Simply let the lure back out straight behind the boat, snap on your Off-Shore Inline planer board, free spool the board straight behind the boat to the amount of line you want to run the board to the side (I run 100’ to outside, 75’ to middle and 50’ to inside) then engage the reel and let the board carry the lure back to its original position.



Remember, this setup is for floating crankbaits with NO weight attached to the line. Hope this helps you catch more fish, have less tangles and have more fun while trolling this season! In future articles I will cover the best way to set spreads with weighted lines, divers and some advanced techniques for being a more efficient open water troller!

For more information on trolling and everything walleye, visit [www.teachinfishin.com](http://www.teachinfishin.com)