



Return to Kentucky results in Stripers

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The swirling waters of the Ohio River just below the Smithland Dam seemed like the perfect destination to attempt to fulfill our quest to get my grandson Jack his first striper.

I had good luck at this location several years earlier and hoped we could duplicate this effort.

Those who regularly follow our escapades realize our first attempt a month earlier ended in something of a failure. While we did catch plenty of big catfish and quality white bass, Jack still returned home without catching a Kentucky striped bass. It was also my first trip for Kentucky stripers that failed to produce any of these big fish.

This time our crew included grandson and Jack's brother Nick, their father Brian, me and, of course, Jack. And, we were led by noted Kentucky fishing guide Jim Doom. Our watercraft this day was a huge Jon boat - ideal for fishing these fast-moving river waters.

Before fishing, however, came the effort to net some bait. Doom used a cast net and tried searching the still backwaters of this area. Our goal was to fill the net with threadfin shad and little Asian carp. While these efforts produced a few baitfish, it was quickly becoming obvious that netting bait was going to be difficult.

After boating about a dozen baitfish, Doom decided it was time to head out fishing. We quickly learned that our one-ounce weights were not enough to keep the bait near the bottom. The waters were simply too fast and it required a three-ounce weight to keep our baits in the deeper productive waters.

First to strike gold was Jack's father Brian. He was soon struggling to gain control of a sizeable fish. After a reasonable tussle Doom netted the first fish – a hefty six-pound pure striper. Interestingly, it also proved to be the biggest fish of the day and the only pure striper of the day.

The second catch came to Jack. He was fighting a nice three- to four-pound hybrid striper. These are a cross between a white bass and pure striped bass. Kentucky stocks these by the thousands. They typically run a bit smaller than the pure striper, but fight like a fish twice their size.

Still, Jack had boated his first striper and now was ready for more. After another round of netting bait, Doom decided to try an area near a saddle dam. This is where Jack began to teach us a bit about hooking fish. While Brian and I landed a few hybrids, Jack hooked and landed the majority of these big fish.

Oddly enough, Nick couldn't find any striped bass interested in his bait. In fact, it soon became something of a quest to get Nick a fish. Even Jack was beginning to feel a bit sorry for his brother.

Much of our five-hour trip was devoted to fishing this saddle dam. We would first go and find a few baitfish, then return and catch a few more hybrids. Still, Nick remained fishless. It almost seemed like he was jinxed when it came to hooking fish.

Finally we had just enough remaining time to net a few more baitfish and head to the main dam for a couple of drifts. This is when the tide finally changed, at least that is what we thought.

On the next to the last drift, Nick hooked a fish. In the swift water, it provided a good fight. Finally, Doom netted the fish and exclaimed it was about as big as white bass get in this river.

Still, we were not done yet. With one more drift remaining, it was time for all of us to concentrate our angling efforts. However, Jack was the only one to answer this call. He successfully landed the last fish of the day – another three-pound hybrid.

It was almost like Ol' Jack wanted to show us he still has what it takes when it comes to fishing.

Anyone interested in trying their hand at fishing these rivers, may wish to contact Jim Doom at [\(270\)703-7337](tel:(270)703-7337), or see his website at Between the Rivers Guide Service.