



# Carlyle Now Prime for Big Catfish

by Lee Keck

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When it comes to his angling abilities 19-year-old Jack Ruffini of Highland knows how to catch big fish. He proved this fact again recently when he made short work of catching a nice stringer of quality catfish from Carlyle Lake, including one that weighed nearly ten pounds.

This year, catfishing at Carlyle Lake has been turning on. Many veteran catfish anglers say the shad (the main baitfish for Carlyle's cats) have been slow to grow to an appropriate size. This has caused the really big bite to occur.

However, this year more than ever, the plentiful catfish in this lake have grown to a bragging size. Though fishing up until now has produced bigger catfish than most years, the numbers of fish being caught has also increased.

That, apparently, -----has now become the case for Jack. He was among the first to benefit from this quickly developing situation.

The water was quite rough when Jack and I headed out to our fishing hole. A north wind had whipped up the lake's surface into an angry, white-capped waterway. While it took us quite awhile to gingerly boat northward from the Dam West ramp to our fishing location about a mile away, the bouncing trip was worth the effort.

Jack was first to strike paydirt. His first fish came within minutes of dropping our anchors. Using a popular dip bait and plastic worm-like lure he soon landed a nice three pounder.

His second fish came minutes later. It, too, was a nice, plump three pounder. It was already beginning to seem like Jack had zeroed in on these fish.

Though we were both concerned about the rough waters, our location near a northern shoreline placed us in much calmer waters.

Then, Jack made a comment that put us both to rest. He said it appeared like the wind had changed directions and slowed some. He was right as the lake now appeared much calmer.

Still, Jack's fishing lesson was far from over. He soon landed fish numbers three, four and five. Each of these fish also weighed in at better at better than two pounds.

Then came a brief lull in the action. It seemed like every fish in the lake had disappeared. We both wondered if this meant our fishing day had already come to an end.

Finally Jack detected a sixth bite. He set the hook and was soon playing a hefty five pounder.

“This is the biggest catfish of my life,” said the young angler. “I’ve caught numerous nice-sized catfish in my life and some that we’re close to this one, but this is the biggest.”

As Jack admired the nice catfish his other rod tip began bouncing. He soon forgot about the five-pound catfish and devoted his complete attention to the other fishing rod.

Soon he was playing a really big catfish. It refused to come in as easily as the previous catches. It was quite obvious that this catfish was much larger than the others.

In fact, this fish seemed a great deal larger than the five-pound previous catch. Once it was netted and in the boat, we could see why it was tougher to land. It was actually a great deal larger. This fish would definitely tip the scales at nearly ten pounds.

It seemed like Jack had again caught the biggest catfish of his young life – twice in the same day. And to make things even better, he had plenty of life ahead of him and even bigger fish yet to come.

The bite then came to an end and we enjoyed a much more peaceful boat ride back to the boat ramp. It did appear that the lake’s surface was much calmer than a few hours earlier.

Even better. It appeared that the good catfishing had finally returned to this lake. This is something that is a regular summer activity for anglers at this lake.

And, you can be assured that Jack will be back to catch his share of these fish. In fact, there are probably even bigger catfish waiting for Jack’s offerings.