A Winner And His Ways

By Stan Fagerstrom

Part 1

It was a walleye fishing tournament David Hedden really wanted to win.

So what’s so unusual about that? Doesn’t everybody who enters a tournament want to walk away a winner? I suppose you could say that but it’s easy for me understand why David especially wanted to win the one I’m talking about.

David, you see, was one of the contestants in the annual walleye team tournament held at Moses Lake, Washington in mid-June. But David Hedden’s partner in the event wasn’t just some friend from down the street in Pasco where David lives.

David’s partner for the annual walleye catching contest was going to be his dad. Fishing together isn’t at all unusual for David and his father, it’s something they’ve been doing for years. But the walleye contest at Moses Lake is the one time each year that they participate as a team in a competitive fishing event.

The two had done well in this contest in the past. They had racked up one third place finish over the eight years they had competed. As you’ve probably already read or heard, David and his dad did win that latest contest. It didn’t come easy.

David Hedden and his dad Don, display some of the awards they walked away with after winning this year's annual Moses Lake Walleye Tournament.
“The final day,” David says, “we only had five small fish by 11 a.m. and we were struggling. Then my dad put on a Mack’s Lure Smile Blade in a chartreuse mirror finish. Ten minutes later---BAM! Dad nailed one that went 9.18-pounds. That fish turned out to be the big fish of the tournament. It sealed the win for us.”

In winning, the Hedden father and son team wound up weighing a walleye total of 36.1-pounds. The second place team had 32.3-pounds.

Don Hedden displays the big walleye that enabled him and his son to win the Moses Lake contest. Don got this dandy fish after he started using a Mack's Lure Smile Blade in a chartreuse mirror finish ahead of his bait.

“The fishing in this contest wasn’t easy by any means,” David says. “There is a huge difference between just catching fish and catching good fish. Overall it was a good weekend that paid off. It means a lot to me to win this one with my dad. It’s the one tournament we fish together every year.”

Perhaps you, like me, find it easy to understand why David felt as he says he did about that Moses Lake win. At least you will if you’ve been blessed to have spent time in the boat with a man you love, the one you call “Dad.” I’ve had a chance to visit with David since he and his father won that Moses Lake contest. Getting to listen to what David had to say about his father left me holding a whole net full of memories of my own.

It just so happens that my own dad once helped me win a bass fishing contest. The details of my own experience in that event left me with memories far more precious than a live well full of 10-pounders.

But his winning that Moses Lake fishing event isn’t the only reason I’m writing about David Hedden. David, you see, is a full time fishing guide. If you’re a Pacific Northwest resident, or even if you live in some far off section of the country and you’re just visiting the tall timber country and want to fish while you’re there, David is a guy you need to know.

Full time fishing guides aren’t always easy to find. And as I’ve said in my columns here many times before, retaining the services of a guide with David’s experience and expertise, especially in the field of walleye fishing, will save you both time and money. It will also give you one heck of a lot better chance of putting walleyes in your boat.
David isn’t just a likeable guy who claims to know where those elusive walleyes hang out—he’s gone out and proved it. I say that because if you check the records of the Columbia River Walleye Circuit you’ll find David earned that organization’s “Angler of the Year” award for 2012.

Check with him and you’ll find he specializes in fishing mid-sections of the Columbia and Snake Rivers in and around the Tri-Cities of the Evergreen State. While he specializes in walleyes, David also guides for salmon, steelhead, sockeye and sturgeon.

Where he’s located in Pasco enables David to target each of the different species that run up the Columbia. That’s one of the primary reasons I say a visitor is so wise to get lined out with a guide with David’s experience. He just doesn’t know what species use the big river he also knows when each one is most likely to be there.

If, as I’ve recommended, you have occasion to utilize David Hedden’s guide service, by all means make your reservations well in advance. Give him a call a month ahead of time if you can. You’ll be wise to get advance answers to any pre-trip questions you need answered at that time.

This can be done through David’s website at [www.heddensportfishing.com](http://www.heddensportfishing.com) or on Facebook at Hedden’s Northwest Sportfishing.

Remember that Mack’s Lure Smile Blade I mentioned that David’s father used ahead of his bait to take that contest-winning walleye out of Moses Lake? If you don’t you should. Why? Because those record setting blades play a major role in David’s own fish catching techniques.

You don’t have to sell walleye fishing experts like David and Don Hedden just how effective Mack's Lure Smile Blades can be in your search for walleyes.

Keep your eye out for next column. I’ll be sharing more of David’s thinking in this regard. My next column will start right here August 1.
David Hedden is a full time guide on the lakes and rivers of the Pacific Northwest. He specializes in walleye fishing on the Columbia. Here he displays one of the whoppers he's taken from the big River. This one weighed 17-pounds.

-To Be Continued-