

# FLORIDA SPORT FISHING

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

## Sailfish Secret

TIPS FROM THE TOWER

## Barrel Swivels

TESTED TO THE BREAKING POINT

# 7

Insane Fish-Arounds

## BIGGER IS BETTER



FIRST COAST WAHOO

LEADER SELECTION

URBAN CANALS

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# Pro's Tip



If you take the time to rig your own baits, then you already know the importance of having an ice pick with a needlepoint tip.

## Ice Picks

**Simplify the Bait Rigging Process** | CAPTAIN MIKE GENOUN

► WHEN IT COMES TO RIGGING OFFSHORE BAITS so they swim and perform as if they were alive, there are some guys who are good, there are some guys who are great, and then there's RJ Boyle.

At the absolute top of the game, Boyle is an angling expert with decades of experience fishing locally and abroad alongside the best of the best. Many of you may recognize the name from his inspiring marine artwork adorning living room and office walls, tournament magazine covers and t-shirts worldwide.

Boyle also runs a charter operation out of Hillsboro Inlet aboard his easily recognizable 31-foot Ocean Master. He also owns and operates one of the finest tackle shops in all of Florida, located on Feder-

al Highway in Lighthouse Point. Seriously, this man is almost a myth.

Over the years RJ has earned the respect of skilled and novice fishermen everywhere, continually going above and beyond to assist anyone who asks for help or advice. Boyle is a humble man, but an absolute perfectionist. It's because of this attention to detail that his rigged baits outperform nearly anything on the market. Watching him custom craft daytime swordfish baits is like watching an artist paint a picture. Every precise stroke of the knife and stitch of the rigging



needle is done with purpose and finesse.

Credited with landing more swordfish over the coveted 500-pound mark than any man alive, Boyle is a visionary with a clear understanding of how the end result must appear and perform in order

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to coerce the world's greatest game fish.

When heading offshore it should come as no surprise that the more tools you have at your disposal the more success you will have. Those who truly understand the necessity of a proper presentation rely on high-quality instruments to get the job done. One of the specialized tools RJ utilizes when rigging natural baits is an ice pick.

Though it's a simple and inexpensive tool rarely seen in a weekend warrior's rigging box, Boyle demonstrated how with the use of an ice pick he's able to make clean, straight holes in the center of a baitfish's bony head where leader material will ultimately be inserted. RJ reiterated that if you misalign the hole by even a fraction the bait will swim awkwardly and may ultimately be ignored. "Really, there is no better way to drill a perfect hole," added Boyle.

I also watched with eyes wide open as RJ used an ice pick to puncture the bait's belly for precise hook insertion. After doing so, the small hole wraps tightly around the bend of the hook and helps prevent premature washout.

Not only useful for whole baits, anglers



**Anyone can drop bait to the bottom, but it's critical offerings are rigged with precision so they don't spin in the swift current common to the sword grounds.**

often count on ice picks when rigging South Florida's most popular and arguably most effective offshore trolling bait—bonito strips.

Again, the sharp tip allows for swift and effortless penetration through the fish's leathery skin without damaging surrounding flesh and making a mushy mess of things.

Tiny puncture holes in the bait are far superior to knife cuts that are anything but clean and accurate.

After watching the master at work, I'm convinced an ice pick is a simple and inexpensive tool that is absolutely essential for offshore anglers who take the time to rig their own baits. There are many other uses for ice picks, including inserting stoppers in artificial lure heads, but that's a different tip for a future issue. **ESF**

