

Nick details his coiled Mugga blow-back rig.



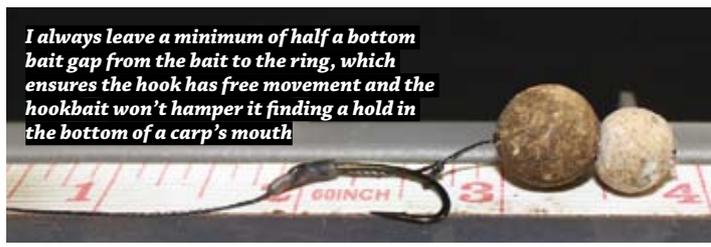
Patshall Park's Long Common – even in the rig's infancy this very riggy fish couldn't deal with it

PERFECTING A

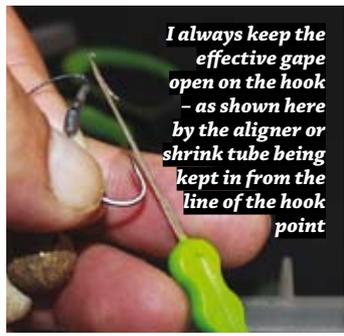
It can take years of personal findings to perfect a rig. Despite all the rigs shown in magazines or websites for you to try, I notice there's always something missing: you're own confidence and understanding! As I take you through my findings from over the years, I will try my best to rub off some of my confidence on to you. Even better, you will know why the blow-back rig stands so high on my rig list.

I first came across the blow-back rig as a picture in a magazine some years ago. With its large, long, curved hook it seemed a little barbaric at the time, as I remember. Not understanding anything about hooks back then, I made it up with a slightly less cruel looking longshank hook, combi style with a coated hooklink that was new out at the time. Using this rig for most of my carp angling, I was quite surprised by how many fish it caught me. However, with a few fish losses here and there, I knew there needed to be another step forward.

Being one who enjoys cold-water carp fishing I discovered a big detail some years later: bait weight.



I always leave a minimum of half a bottom bait gap from the bait to the ring, which ensures the hook has free movement and the hookbait won't hamper it finding a hold in the bottom of a carp's mouth



I always keep the effective gape open on the hook – as shown here by the aligner or shrink tube being kept in from the line of the hook point



As good as a rig is, it's only one part of what we need to catch consistently, like good bait (Nutrabait's Trigga here) and careful angling

This was when others seemed hell bent on going in the opposite direction, but by changing my wafting snowman to two bottom baits, I found odd winter bleeps could be turned into full blown runs, my rig happily falling to the

bottom of a carp's mouth instead of wafting around in the open space. The old thought of a carp not picking up a rig if it weighed more than a free bait is poppycock really! Watching carp dig and move stones on the lake bed put that thought

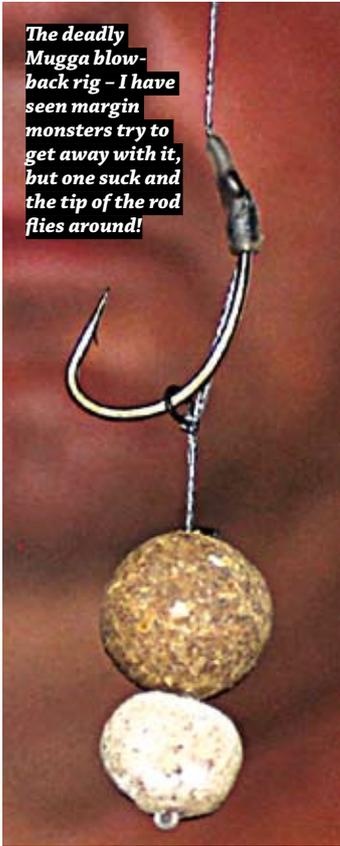
out of my mind, and kept my rig thoughts going in a positive direction! I found that as long as my bottom bait sits on the lakebed and the hook has all of its own weight to catch on any lumps inside the carp's mouth, all is good.

Moving on, I stalked a very small lake, and in the clear water I witnessed many carp unable to get my rig into their mouths. Coming from the lead side, the stiff section of the combi rig hampered the rig somewhat, but coming at the rig face on they sucked and were soon hooked. What could be going on in open water? This problem drove me mad for months.

THE COIL

The next spring came around and I soon saw a solution to my riggy problem. Just before I joined Patshall Park Church Pool, I had come up with my coil setup. It was very simple really; just a soft braided blow-back rig. How it worked was I popped up the hook end on a foam nugget, and after the lead landed in the silt, the foam dissolved and the rig sank, coiled up over the sunken lead that was hidden in the soft silt! Fishing in this way gave the hookbait the same

The deadly Mugga blow-back rig - I have seen margin monsters try to get away with it, but one suck and the tip of the rod flies around!



Tying Nick's coiled Mugga blow-back rig

- 1 The components you need
- 2 Tie an overhand loop in a length of 20lb silt Trickster
- 3 An overhand knot secures the rig ring in place ready for measuring its length: 1 1/4in. is perfect for the 12mm bottom bait and 10mm pop-up which makes up my snowman (then the ring is locked off with another simple overhand knot)
- 4 Place the rig ring just above the barb of the hook
- 5 Going towards the smooth side of the join in the eye of the hook first, whip seven times up the shank
- 6 Pass back through the eye and snug down.
- 7 Use a small Hook Aligner to neaten and secure the knot - this helps to make any kind of hook flip and turn
- 8 By not whipping too far up the shank your hookbait has plenty of room to move out of the way - this ensures a great hook hold
- 9 Tie a simple figure-of-eight knot at your required rig length
- 10 A 'mouse dropping' of Gardner putty helps the supple braid sit right

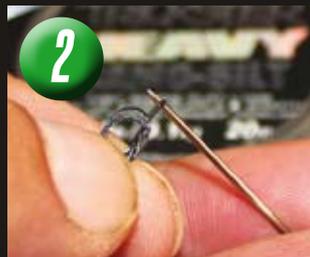
RIG

freedom a free boilie has; whichever direction the carp came from, the rig could find an easy route into its mouth.

My time on the Church was crazy and I managed 53 originals in less than five months, many coming in fast runs of bites. Big hits were practically unheard of on there, so my confidence in the setup soared! It wasn't without its problems, though. I waded through hook patterns and different lengths of shrink tubing trying to get a hold on why I pulled out of some fish. Some hook patterns gave a great number of runs, but I found that if I closed off the gape of the hook, I ended up hooking the carp in the hard bone in the front of the mouth. Have you ever heard "These hooks are crap!" when they reel in a rig after a fish loss with the hook opened out and the point bent over? Yeah, hooked in the bone... This means the rig make-up isn't quite right and the carp are getting lip hooked in the bone, which is not at all a good place for a hook hold!

THE CURVED SHANK

The more bites I had over the next few years the easier it became to



fine tune my hook choice. Being a fan of longshank hooks I found them to be a good choice for a number of years, but I still suffered the dreaded hook pull from time to time. The longshank seemed to hook a little further back, and they seemed to flip over as the shrink tubing hit the lip on the rig's exit. They gave a crazy amount of bites (in conjunction with a pop-up rig they worked even better), but losses still came once in a while. I did a whole winter on beaked point hooks, with the same braided setup with the gape left open, and didn't lose a single fish. I was absolutely caning every water I fished with this coil set up, but I had the odd telltale bleep and it was evident that I'd been done more than once!

I was getting a real picture of how my coiled blow-back was working, and how %in. of shrink tube fished compared to half an inch or more. After getting so many great hook holds on mega-sharp beaked point hooks, I started to understand the difference between the hooking and hook holds. I found the curved point hooked the flesh and under the angle of pull started to curve back, missing the bone and harder lumps in the carp's mouth. However, I couldn't ignore the fact that a straight point gave the best pricking... Then it dawned on me: maybe I would get the same effect by not having the curve at the point but in the shank. Pulling from the eye of these has the same effect as the curve point: pulling the sharp point away from the bone as the pressure is applied by the angler.

HOOK SIZE

After a little bit of fiddling with sizes I settled on a size 6 curve shanked hook, the Mugga – getting my pound of flesh and all that. From that day on I haven't looked back and I really can't remember losing a fish in open water while using them. Don't get me wrong, weed, pads and line damaged on a snag are problems we all face. Even with weeded fish, I land very near 100% as the hook holds are that good on these Mugga hooks. With its in-turned eye you can almost do away with the shrink tube and the like. However, I don't want the small rig ring to get stuck on the knot and the tubing helps to stop this from happening, which makes that part of the rig self-resetting if a bream or roach has had a play before a carp gets there.

I found hook size is very important in any given pattern, even the curve shank hook has its drawback: if used in a size smaller than 10 it almost tries to rip itself out of the carp's mouth. A standard box-shaped hook like a wide gape has problems for bottom baits in larger sizes, unless you put a decent length of tubing on to make it turn earlier. Where the curve shank fails in small sizes, wide gapes come into their own in smaller sizes where they don't have such a wide gape; i.e. they miss the bone and give a great hook hold where the curve tries to rip out! As you can see, size

and pattern go very much hand in hand with the method you're using. Put it this way: a size 6 hook is no good for floaters!

Just in case you got lost along my journey, I will take you through how it goes together:

- With the supple braid coiled up, the hookbait shoots into the carp's mouth just like free bait sitting on the lake bed.
- With the hook end slightly heavy, it wants to fall straight to the floor of the mouth.
- Leaving the gape of the hook open means it catches on any lump that it's moved across.
- Most of my hook holds are at least an inch back in the mouth on the hard pad that sits where our tongue is, but if it doesn't catch there it still has a chance as it flips and turns on its exit near the lips, as most rigs do, so having the rig set like this gives me double the



A simple three-bait anti-tangle setup – a change of one bait to a buoyant pop-up (doing away with the PVA nugget) will hold it above the lakebed ready to set a deadly trap!

chance of getting a hooked fish on every take!

- Whilst stalking this year I have witnessed carp time after time get hooked on their first suck of this rig, and they stay on until

they hit the net too!

- Despite everything I've said about this rig, however, it's only a small part of putting fish on the bank. Fish well, though, and this rig will keep its end of the deal for you!



Watching carp and how they can't deal with a rig puts your confidence sky high



How's that for stalking a pretty one?