



Terminal Tackle: Overlooked, But Vital To Success

By John Bette

With most of the musky seasons closed and the sports show season upon us, this is a great time to go through our fishing gear. It's time to see what we need to replenish, replace, or maybe even upgrade.

This is also a great opportunity to go through, inspect, and evaluate your terminal tackle — mainly your leaders. Often, leaders wind up being a neglected part of our whole set-up. We tend to spend a lot of time and money focusing on rods, reels, and lures, but leave the terminal end of things out of the equation. The fact is terminal tackle should be treated as importantly as our lures. Your leader is the most crucial link between your lure and you.

Sports show season is a great time to seek out and talk to different manufacturers. Approach them and ask them questions about the components they use and why they use them. In the case of fluorocarbon leaders, not all fluorocarbon lines are created equal, and the qualities of some will vary. Some offer great tie-ability while others offer better abrasion resistance. I tend to lean toward the abrasion resistance to help prevent failure. You don't want to lose your lure



The moment of truth — a musky hits the net. Boatside battles put incredible stress on terminal tackle, making quality components and construction vitally important.

or your fish!

Talk with some of the guides at these shows, too, and ask them about their favorites. You will never have a better opportunity to get so many answers in one place as you will at a fishing show.

If you do not visit fishing shows, utilize the Internet, but proceed with caution and consider the source. If you ask enough questions, you will be able to filter whether people are praising something because they get free stuff from a buddy, or if the product in question is legitimate. I prefer to use the manufacturers' sites for information rather than a forum of fishermen ... I will stop short of saying fishermen tend to exaggerate. You can find great ideas from

the forums, but it's also a great idea to confirm that information with the manufacturers whenever possible. Most companies nowadays respond within reasonable timeframes.

I will not tell you there are leaders that will never ever fail. This just simply isn't true, and do not let anyone ever tell you that it is. However, if you take steps to ensure that you are using the best quality leaders that you can buy or build, you are going to drastically cut down the odds of having a failure.

In a day of musky fishing, you sometimes don't realize how much stress is put on your equipment — regardless if you came in contact with a fish that day or not. Just the stress of casting heavy lures, changing lures, snags, and the occasional mishap of a backlash can really take its toll over time.

When a big fish does hit and you engage it with a bone-jarring hook-set, the last thing you want to worry about is if the money you saved on your leader was really worth it. Do your homework and research wisely to put the odds in your favor. Then, you can focus more on catching your trophy fish once the season arrives!

See us at the Musky Shows



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