

## Sticking a Fork in It!

Written by Steve Chaconas

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For some it's chocolates. Others flowers. For me it's boat-ordering time. There are usually one or two new items on my Skeeters every season. Once it was the "lift assist" Minn Kota trolling motor. After a long season, my knees thank the padded front deck! The long anticipated permanent move to a 4-stroke SHO Yamaha outboard blew me away! Humminbird side imaging was really cool and the upgrade to DEKA AGM batteries keeps me on the water all day. But I passed on the trendy power anchor...the "Power Pole". Until now!

Why on earth would an anchor ever be of use to a bass fisherman? After all, they're for flats fishing, older guys and sight fishermen...not for the Potomac's muddy spring waters. But two years ago, while guiding with fellow Captain John Sisson, I finally took note. Fishing in the wind, John's group would catch a fish and then another. We would get one, stop to take it off and then begin the long trek into the wind to get back to the spot! John stayed on the fish with his Power Pole anchors.

As spring winds subsided, I lost interest in the new piece of gear and skipped it on my 2011 boat. During the 2011 FLW Potomac River Tour Open at National Harbor, it was visibly obvious every pro had not one, but two of these appendages. A few pros pointed to a major skeptic, Kellogg's pro Dave Lefebre. He was flat out resistant to the idea that he "needed" them. So, I jumped aboard the Pennsylvania pro's boat and we took off to fish. Before I could get to the topic of his dual Power Poles, I had a fish miss my lure. Down went the Power Poles and we even backed up a bit. Able to make the exact same cast that produced the strike, I caught him. Dave and I picked up 4 more on this single stop on a long grass bed. Now we were talking.

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Seeing and believing after fishing with former Power Pole skeptic Lefebre who now considers Power Poles to be a must-have valuable fishing tool. At the end of the day, we pulled into a crowded ramp with nowhere to tie up. I expected to sit and wait. Dave's Power Poles presented another idea. He nosed into a small section of the dock, dropped his Power Poles and we were a step away from the dock and a step ahead of others waiting for enough room to tie up alongside. Nice!

During the same tournament, IAMS & Pringles pro Vic Vatalaro fished a stretch of grass with nearly 30 competitors. They meandered, casting and pitching for fish in dense grass. Not Vatalaro! Power Poles down, trolling motor up and electronics off, created a sanctuary! Others moving about actually "herded" bass into the "quiet" zone established by Vatalaro...no transducer "ping" or propeller noise. This strategy paid off as he weighed in the largest limit of the tournament.

Every tournament boat had two Power Poles; boats could pivot with only one. Pros revealed special fishing situations that could be created with Power Poles. When wind has chopped up the water obscuring fish on beds, pros place boats upwind from the fish to block the wind, creating a slick surface providing a very clear approach for sight fishing. For the rest of 2011, I envisioned Power Pole situations. Fishing in the wind, staying put on grass mats, scouring docks without trolling motor noise or muddy water, and attending to or instructing a client without having to worry about the boat moving or drifting into danger. Possibilities are endless as these anchors can be deployed remotely or with foot pedals on the front deck. For other features, [power-pole.com](http://power-pole.com).

One thing is definite; my 2012 Skeeter will be equipped with 2 Power Poles. I might even install myself. The brackets bolt to existing holes on my Skeeter jackplate. Pumps mount to the shelf that used to be for the 2-stroke oil tank. Hoses self-clamp and wiring is remote. Just drill 4 small holes insert grommets then hoses, fill reservoir, attach power to battery and that's it! I can't wait

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to lower my Power Poles and start fishing!

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## **Potomac River Bassing in February**

Finally cold weather we've been waiting for! When water drops to 40, fish seek warmer water at specific depths. They gang up and are easier to catch...if you fish slowly!

For this, use ½ ounce Silver Buddy blade lures burped off the bottom along steep drops! Use a medium heavy rod with a softer tip or a medium action rod with a bit stiffer action, like the Quantum KVD spinnerbait rod. With less stretch, 12-14 pound test Gamma fluorocarbon line provides better hooksets.

Also, Punisher hair jigs with Punisher chunks and rattles are effective. They soak up garlic flavor Jack's Juice attractant. This bait works when sitting and shaking!

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Other choices are Mann's Stingray grub, 3-inch avocado rigged on a ¼ ounce ball head jig. This is a light line presentation, 6-pound test Gamma copolymer line. Cast green-pumpkin Mizmo tubes with insert heads. Allow it to sit and glide. Watch line and set the hook while reeling and pulling.

If the water is clear and warmer...50 or above, crankbaits like Lucky Craft's Bevy Shad in chartreuse and red patterns and Lucky Craft Pointer 78 suspending jerkbaits will work fished very slowly on 10-pound test line. Here, a very soft cranking rod is important, as the bites are soft. It's also important to have sharp hooks. I replace mine with Mustad Ultra Point short shank triple grip trebles.

Wear a PFD, dress in layers with base like Redington Rex Technical Tees, and cut glare to prevent sunlight headaches this time of the year with Maui Jim gray lens polarized sunglasses. Happy Valentine's Day.

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