

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 542](#)

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## Nabeel Issa

Former Tournament Angler and Current SEQ Fishing Identity

Nabeel Issa has lived in Brisbane for all but the first 3 months of his life, so he knows how to fish Moreton Bay and the Gold Coast extremely well. Nabeel joined the bream tournament circuit at the age of 14 and decided to take a break after 12 years and plenty of success. Right now he's enjoying fishing for multiple SEQ species and does pretty well on the long tail tuna, snapper, threadies, jew and other species that abound in SEQ.



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## Nabeel's Top SEQ Fishing Spot #1: Gold Coast Offshore

- The spring months are when Nabeel catches his best snapper (80cm plus) offshore from the Gold Coast, focussing mainly on reefs in around 30-40m of water.

- During spring the currents haven't built up to summer levels and fishing with relatively light tackle is possible, especially if the wind is from the north as it tends to push the current further out and make conditions favourable for snapper fishing.
- Early morning is best (the earlier the better), there is always a reliable low light bite around dawn. Head out through the seaway and find a reef or two in 30-40m of water that doesn't have too many other boats on it.
- The sink rate of the lure is super important, slow hang times result in more bites. Usually in this area a 3/8 to 1/2oz jig head is about right, sometimes if conditions are really good, you'll get away with 1/4oz. It's important that the lure falls on a slack line and isn't dragged behind the boat.
- Nabeel likes to cast ahead of the boat drift, let the lure sink. Sometimes he'll use a sea anchor, or if the conditions are calm, a trolling motor.
- A 5" Daiwa Bait Junkie Jerkshad in Baby Bass colour, or a 4" Bait Junkie Curly Tail is a good choice for lures.
- Reef structures off the Gold Coast are fairly flat, usually only 2-3m higher than the surrounding bottom, and usually covering quite large areas. If you find bait on a reef it will almost always hold snapper.
- It's possible to fish quite light for snapper in this area, a 3000-4000 size spinning reel loaded with 15-20lb braid and 16-20lb leader will do the job. A 7' fast action 3-6kg or 4-8 kg rod is perfect.

## **Nabeel's Top SEQ Fishing Spot #2: Gold Coast Inshore**

- The inshore areas around the seaway, broadwater and canals fish well for flathead and jewfish in spring.
- Flathead**
- For flathead any of the flats from the southern Gold Coast through Southport and up to Jumpinipin will hold quality fish in Spring. Look for places where the sandbanks are interspersed with weed patches.
  - Fishing very shallow using 3-4" paddle tailed soft plastics is such as ZMan or Bait Junkie minnows is productive for flathead. A jig head that's heavy enough that it hits the bottom and causes a commotion is all that's required.
  - Runout tides are always good for flathead, especially if you find areas where the water flows into drains or structure.

### **Jewfish**

- Jumpinpin and the Gold Coast Seaway, the two entrances to the broadwater, are the prime places to find jewfish on the Gold Coast.
- Jewfish are usually not too particular when it comes to lures, the main key is to find them on the sounder first and then get a lure in front of their faces. Nabeel relies heavily on his sidescan sonar to find them and makes passes through likely areas before casting at them.
- Spin or baitcast rods with 15-20lb braid and a 20-25lb leader is a good setup for jewfish fishing.
- 95mm Zerek Fish Traps and other soft vibes work well on jewfish because you'll be fishing in current and need a heavier lure to get down deeper.
- Setting up your drift are directly above the fish (using your electric motor) so you can vertically 'teabag' your lures works best. With the Fish Traps, Nabeel likes to slowly lift them and then let them drop. Almost always the bite will come as the lure falls on a semi-taught line – and it can be quite subtle, so be vigilant and set the hook hard. Chris Cleavers podcast episode explains this very well.

## **Nabeel's Top SEQ Fishing Spot #3: Moreton Bay Inshore**

- The Spring months see the jewfish school up in Moreton Bay in good sizes and in very large numbers. Also check out Nabeel's previous podcast interview about Moreton Bay Jewfish and his jewfish Sonar Masterclass.
- Nabeel usually doesn't start casting until he's found jewfish on his sounder, but he's recently discovered jewfish in Moreton bay in places they aren't seen on the sounder - shallow rock bars in strong current.
- Places where there is significant structure for a school of jewfish to hide under, such as wrecks, bridge pylons, wharves and so on tend to hold the schools of 100 or more metre plus jewfish.
- Soft vibes are often a good option, but soft plastic paddletails can work very well too. Nabeel's favourite is the Daiwa Bait Junkies 5" jerkshad in baby bass colour. These are simply cast out, given two hops and allowed to sink, then repeat until you're out of the zone.

- The period towards the end of the tide, just before the slack water tends to fish well. A high barometer and a southeasterly wind tends to result in better bites, whilst a northerly and a falling barometer tends to fish poorly.

## **Nabeel's Top SEQ Fishing Spot #4: Moreton Bay Offshore**

- Fishing this area necessitates crossing the South Passage bar, a notoriously shallow and treacherous barway. Only attempt this if the conditions are safe to do so, with plenty of local knowledge and preferably with someone familiar with the bar system. A high tide is obviously best for extra water depth, run in tides tend to flatten the waves a little. If in doubt, DON'T.
- Once outside it's the perfect place to cast lures into the wash of rocky islands for snapper or flick topwater lures for Spanish mackerel.
- Trolling for mackerel is worthwhile and is a good thing to do whilst watching the sounder and marking bottom for snapper fishing.
- Nabeel finds he's usually fishing in water from 10 to 60m deep, and a good selection of 5-7" soft plastic jerkshads and jigheads ranging from ¼ oz to 1 oz is a good starting point. These lures are so versatile they'll catch just about anything.
- Take some topwater stickbaits for chasing the Spanish Mackerel.

## **Nabeel's Top SEQ Fishing Spot #5: Brisbane River**

- For those on the south side of Brisbane, there is good boat launching at the Port of Brisbane and for those of the northern side the best ramp is at Pinkenbar. Head straight for the mouth, as that area fishes best in spring and is sheltered and fishable in SE winds, even up to 25 kn. Just stay the legally required 30m from the wharves.
- Wharves that have access to deep water are a great spot to start looking for threadfin, use your sidescan to work along looking for schooling fish. Jewfish tend to be more towards the mouth, while threadies can be found up to and beyond the Gateway Bridge.
- The same gear as Nabeel uses in Moreton Bay will work in the river, just add a 30cm bite leader of 40-50lb fluorocarbon to the end of your normal leader as threadfin have a raspy mouth that wears through thin leader.
- Zerek Fishtraps worked with very slow lifts and keeping the lure no more than a metre from the bottom. Threadfin take the lure on the drop and you have strike very fast to set the hook.

- Threadfin seem to school on the flat benches and stay very close to the muddy bottom and are quite obvious on the sounder.
- For jewfish it's important to keep putting in time until you find the schools. Sometimes they're under the wharves, sometimes well wide of the wharves.
- For threadfin Nabeel likes the runout tide, but for jewfish he likes the run-in tide. The smaller tides seem to cause the threadfin to school up more tightly, but not so much the jewfish.