

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 551](#)



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Joseph Urquhart

Tournament Bass Fisher And Lure Maker

Joey has lived in the NSW town of Casino for his whole life and grew up fishing the Richmond River for bass. An accomplished tournament angler for 14 years, his award-winning, hand-crafted timber lure business “Jollip Lures” has an enviable reputation for producing some of the best Australian made timber bass lures on the market.



Joey’s Tips for Richmond River Bass On Lures

- The Richmond River is a massive system with the main channel alone offering 300km of bass fishing water....not to mention the tributaries! There are usually bass to be caught all the way through this system, but the key to big catches is to find the section of river where fish are aggregated – which varies based on conditions.
- At the time of writing, the rising water levels and unusual rainfall in the preceding months makes the reaches around the town of Casino a great place to start.
- It’s important to understand that bass respond to river conditions. Whilst they might normally gather in the estuaries for spawning in winter and early spring, substantial unseasonal flooding at other times of year can trigger a spawning migration, as happened in February/March 2022.
- Under normal circumstances the banks of the Richmond River have tons of canegrass, shrubs and grasses with the odd snag. The floods in February flushed

much of this cover away and the banks are largely devoid of bass-holding structure, with just the odd snag here and there.... Which is where the fish are. Finding “old wood” that has been in the river for years is the best strategy as these contain algal growth, insects, shrimp and other bass food.

- Any time is a good time for bass fishing. However, surface fishing tends to be best during the dawn and dusk low light periods when the bass come out into more open water, but the 8-9am period is a good bit window too. Joey finds it's possible to fish all day with topwater lures if you get your lures tight under a shady spot.
- Overcast days and rainy weather fish well on the surface all day long. Otherwise, look for shade that's permanent, rather than dappled light from a large gum tree.
- Looking for back eddies, upwelling and current breaks is the key to fishing the freshwater reaches of the Richmond River.
- When fishing the tidal areas the water flow can obviously move in either direction, so it's important to adjust where you're fishing accordingly. The first hour or two of either the run-in tide or the run-out tide fishes especially well. Fish the back end behind the snags, regardless of which direction the water is flowing. Single tree root balls are great, but everyone fishes them.
- Remember that just because there may have been an angler fish a snag before you doesn't mean you should move on..... there's often still fish to be caught.
- Making short, accurate casts from a kayak is a great way to target bass. Shorter casts mean you'll have less line out and less chance of a fish getting you into structure.

Joey's Richmond River Bass Tackle

- Joey fishes almost exclusively with baitcast gear, only switching to spin very rarely when he's fishing the estuarine reaches and the conditions call for casting very small, light plastics in windy conditions.
- The biggest mistake is to fish too light. A 6-12 or 8-14lb rod is perfect for river bass, Joey likes a 6'10" to 7' rod for boat fishing but finds a 6'2" to 6'6" rod is a better length from the kayak. For crankbaits and spinnerbaits he likes a softer, slower taper rod, but for throwing fizzers he uses a more powerful rod with a fairly soft tip. He couples these rods with baitcast reels and 15-20lb mono leaders.

Joey's Richmond River Bass Lures

- Most people like winged surface walker style lures for bass fishing, but Joey prefers a fizzer. There are a few of these around, but he obviously prefers his own lure, the Jollip Silly Fizzer 60. These lures are designed to sit on their side at rest so that the full colour pattern and the oversize eye are visible to the fish. This is the first lure that gets tied on very early in the morning and gets cast into every back eddy (one or two casts per eddy and then move on). Give the lure three sharp jabs of the rod tip that in total only move the lure 6" or so, then pause. The pause is most important as most hits happen when the lure is stationary or just starts to move again. If a hit doesn't hookup, let the lure site for a while, then jab it again.... Sometimes bass move well out from the snags following this lure.
- A crankbait that is in the 45-60mm size range that gets down deep quite fast is perfect later in the day when the surface bite is a little tougher. The Hideup 150 is a great Japanese lure that is perfect for this job, but Joey's Lawson Lures Little River King or the Jollip Ripper 60M are great for crankbaiting bass too. A slow roll is usually all that's needed in terms of retrieve, although Joey might twitch the lure if he feels he's lost contact, just to check it's still working.
- Spinnerbaits are deadly on Richmond River bass and the Bassman range in 3/8 or 1/2 oz weights are perfect. Joey likes white spinnerbaits and prefers silver blades for clear water or gold blades for dirtier water. He's not too fussed about the style of blade (Colorado/willow). Let the spinnerbait sink all the way to bottom and then slow roll it back in. If there is structure mid-retrieve then pause and free spool the lure back down to depth. These lures work especially well in the tidal sections of the river.