

**TOMMY BIFFLE ONCE** hated dragging little plastics with a Carolina rig, preferring to force feed jigs and plastics to bass hiding around shallow cover.

"It was just boring," the Bassmaster Elite Series pro said.

But sometimes bass move into deeper water, orienting on points and ledges along main lake or secondary creek channels, and Biffle's shallow-water bite dies.

So he asked sponsor Gene Larew to build a lure that would fit his power fishing style even in deeper water. The result was the 8-inch Biffle-O Lizard, which perfectly matched his big-bait mentality.

That lure transformed his view of the Carolina rig and opened a new chapter in his tournament fishing.

"Now I've got this big lizard that I think I'm going to catch a big fish with, and Carolina rigging interests me a little more," Biffle said. "It's a great way to catch big fish."

But it's not just the size of the Biffle-O Lizard that appeals to this four-time Bassmaster champion.

"It's got really good swimming legs, and the tail is designed to swim around with the slightest movement," he said. "You can't hold it in the water and keep that tail still."

The constant movement of these appendages provides a very natural look to the bait, enhancing its ability to provoke strikes.

If the bait simply sank to bottom to be dragged along behind the weight as many other plastics do, however, it would still fall short of Biffle's expectations. That's why perhaps his favorite part of the bait is the hollow body.

"I want the lizard to float above the bottom, so I put a piece of foam noodle in it and make it float high," Biffle said. "It'll float a 5/0 hook and 20-pound fluorocarbon [leader]."

A floating lure provides major benefits, especially when fishing grassy areas.

"Because it's floating all the time, it never gets hung up," he said. "So you can fish it in grass really well."

Scent is another element Biffle likes to incorporate, and the foam that floats the lure serves as the perfect vehicle to parcel out smells that can help bass zero in on the lure.

"I often soak the foam in garlic scent," he said. "The scent is released slowly from the foam; it helps fish find it and it makes them more likely to hold the bait."

## On points and ledges

It's a fishing truism that 90 percent of the fish can be found in 10 percent of



Biffle-O Lizard

the water. Biffle said that's why he Carolina rigs only on those features most likely to hold bass.

Take points for instance: Dozens of points may look the same at a casual glance, but Biffle said certain nuances winnow down the options.

"Usually the long, skinny points are the better ones," he explained. "You also don't want to throw a Carolina rig on the ones with a lot of chunk rock, so I look for those

that have a gradual slope."

He said graphing these points helps pinpoint exactly where fish are hanging out, and then it's just a matter of positioning the boat and dragging his Biffle-O Lizard through the bass.

"If you don't have a good graph, throwing up shallow and working it down the point will work," he explained.

When fishing ledges, Biffle said long, straight stretches are least likely to produce.

"I look for bends, intersections where another creek meets the river channel, and old roadbeds," he added. "Bends are natural gathering points for them, and intersections give them another way to get to the bends."

The proper tactic here is to throw onto the top of the ledge and drag the lizard over the lip.

"I just let it fall straight down," Biffle said. "If it's a shallow ledge, I'll let it fall to the bottom. If there's a big depth change, you might not have to let it fall all the way to the bottom."

"The fish are going to hit it as it falls, so you have to pay attention to where the bait stops falling."

To maximize the rig's effectiveness, Biffle allows water clarity to dictate the length of his leaders.

"In dirtier water, I want the lizard down closer to the weight because the weight is what tricks them," he explained. "With a shorter leader, when fish come to look at that weight dragging across the bottom they can still see the lizard."

Clear water mandates the opposite approach, with longer leaders to separate the lure from the weight.

However, Biffle rarely uses a leader longer than 18 inches.

"If you go too long [with the leader], it makes it harder to cast the rig," he said. "Plus, I just don't think it has to be that long."



Biffle combines Carolina rigging with power fishing using the Gene Larew Biffle-O Lizard.

Photos by Seigo Saito and Holly Julien