

# Salmon-Trout-Walleye Trolling Topic

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Slider or Should I Say: “Stacker” Methods

Stackers as we call them sometimes, were technically what we “used to” call adding a second rod to a downrigger set up by way of a dual pinch pad release or a secondary inline release set above the bottom release mechanism. So, one had a lure run off a release at the bottom and near the ball and one above it, utilizing one downrigger with two rods. This was very common in the late 70’s and 80’s but two of the major disadvantages were: the second rod tied up an extra rod holder unnecessarily and every time you had a strike or wanted to change one lure, both rods had to come in and then be reset.

**Merriam-Webster** verb definition of a “stacker” is: to arrange in a stack, to arrange for secretly cheating and to arrange or fix as to make a particular result likely. So, after reading that definition, I agree that stacking can refer to “any” method of adding additional lines to one rod to help “make a particular result likely”.

At some point in time, anglers, who can be quite crafty and genius like, figured out one could add that second offering by attaching a piece of monofilament with a snap on one end and a snap swivel on the other. Attached to one end would be a lure, which was typically a spoon but not always and the other end would be attached to the single main line using a snap. The fishing rod would be attached to a release located on or just above the downrigger weight. No second rod was needed, and this set up was easy to retrieve and set.

So, like myself and many anglers, we do refer to adding sliders in one style or another as “stacking” even though, I have been corrected on this before. So, let’s move on to some methods.

There are (4) basic methods for adding stacked lines and they are noted below. I have also identified the delivery method, basic concept, some tips, and flaws.

## **#1 Free Slides:**

The set up: 7-10 ft. piece of 20# or lighter fluorocarbon leader material with a #3 Duolock snap or Dreamweaver Tournament #2 snap swivel and a #2 Dreamweaver Tournament snap swivel on the other end.

**Delivery:** Once the bottom lure or lure affixed to the main line is set and sent down to the desired depth, the slider is snapped onto the line and tossed into the water while making sure the spoon and hooks are not fouled. The slider will work its way downward until it finds the bow in the line or gets stopped by a current. That depth is unknown although some fish finders have the ability to show this location.

**Flaws:** Once that slider gets bit, the angler must grab the rod and release it from the main release and reel frantically until the snap, which is affixed to the main line, connects with the head of the lure on the main line. Pending just how far apart they are and how long the main lure is set behind the release, will dictate how frantically and how long one must reel. Often, and during this time period, there is no positive connection made with the fish until it reaches the bottom lure. Much can go wrong during this process and many fish are lost.

**Advantage:** It's easy and catches "bonus" or shy or fish wandering out of traditional kill zones. With this method, the bites are often exciting but there are a lot of missed opportunities with this method.

## **#2 Semi Free Slides:**

The set up: 7-10 ft. piece of 20# or lighter fluorocarbon leader material with a #3 Duolock snap or Dreamweaver Tournament #2 snap swivel and a #2 Dreamweaver Tournament snap swivel on the other end.

**Delivery:** Once the bottom lure or lure affixed to the main line is set, send it down 8-15 feet pending the depth of the target zone. Then, the slider is snapped onto the line and tossed into the water making sure the spoon and hooks are not fouled. Lower the weight to the target depth. That slider typically stays in that same area and is held into place by friction and current. However, sometimes, the slider will "hover" before descending. When that occurs, keep dropping the weight but overdrive it by about 10 feet. Then stop it and bring it back up 10 feet to the original target depth. This little trick usually solves that issue.

So, we basically have another lure fishing around 10 to 15 feet above the main offering which gives us more knowledge of where those bites may be occurring.

**Flaws:** Once that slider gets bit, the angler still must grab the rod and release it from the main release and reel frantically until the snap, which is affixed to the main line, connects with the head of the lure on the main line. However, the amount of reeling is far less, unless the bottom offering is far behind the release. During this shorter time period, there is no positive connection made until it reaches the bottom lure. Much can go wrong during this process and some fish are lost.

**Advantage:** Its easy and catches "bonus" or shy or fish near the kill zone and allows us to fish more lures in the targeted zone with one being stealthier and fishing higher than the one behind the weight. If a fish is spooked or does not like the lure behind the weight, the

free slide fishing nearer to the weight can be looked at easily and quickly by that same fish. These bites are still just as exciting with less reeling.

### **#3 Fixed or Pinned: Also known as The Best Chance Too method**

The set up: 7-10 ft. piece of 20# or lighter fluorocarbon leader material with a #3 Duolock snap or Dreamweaver Tournament #2 snap swivel, Offshore (OR16 or OR30 Heavy tension) release and a #2 Dreamweaver Tournament snap swivel on the end. The line is run through the offshore release before tying the line to the snap or snap swivel.

**Delivery:** Once the bottom lure or lure affixed to the main line is set, send it down 8-15 feet pending the depth of the target zone. Then, the slider is snapped onto the line, the Offshore pinch pad release is pinched onto the line (affixing it) and the lure is tossed into the water making sure the spoon and hooks are not fouled. Lower the weight to the target depth. That slider will stay exactly where it was installed, and we know exactly where those bites are occurring.

**Tip:** paint the OR release black with quality paint or nail polish for a stealthy appearance. (The OR releases are red and orange).

**Alternative:** use a #16 rubber band in lieu of the OR release. After clipping on the snap to the main line, simply run the band through the snap/snap swivel and tie a half hitch onto the main line to keep it affixed.

**Flaws:** Once that slider gets bit, sometimes the angler must grab the rod and release it from the main release and reel until you have good contact with the fish. If the fish is not on the slider, the angler eventually must coordinate with his team mate to remove the rubber band/OR and slider while maintaining control of the fish connected to the bottom bait. Generally, the teammate can break it quickly and remove the slider entirely or break the band and allow the slider to slide to the fish. The same method would apply to the OR release if the fish is not on the slider.

**Tip:** Sometimes the slider can become twisted around the main line with the fish, while fighting the fish on the bottom bait. A quick and easy method to fix this is to grab the slider line near the spoon end and pull it slowly. Typically, it will cause the twisted line to unwind and then allow the OR release to be un-pinched or removed quickly.

### **#4 Semi Fixed or Pinned Using the Dreamweaver Action Stacker:**

The set up: 7-10 ft. piece of 20# or lighter fluorocarbon leader material with a Dreamweaver Action Stacker (rubber coated snap) and a #2 Dreamweaver Tournament snap swivel on the other end. The Action Stacker rubber coated snap has a slit pre-cut into the rubber in which the main line is inserted into. By inserting the line into the rubber slit, the slider will not free slide.

**Delivery:** Once the bottom lure or lure affixed to the main line is set, send it down 8-15 feet pending the depth of the target zone. Then, Action Stacker is snapped and affixed onto the line, then the lure is tossed into the water. Always make sure the spoon and hooks are not fouled when they hit the water. Lower the weight to the target depth. That slider will stay exactly where it was installed. So, we know exactly where those bites are occurring.

**Flaws:** Once that slider gets bit, sometimes the angler must grab the rod and release it from the main release and reel until you have good contact with the fish. If the fish is not on the slider, the angler eventually must coordinate his team mate removing the stacker while maintaining control of the fish connected to the bottom bait. Generally, the teammate can remove the slider entirely or sometimes the angler fighting the fish can continue to reel when the rubber coated slider is to the tip of his rod. Reeling through the DW Action Stacker can be a benefit, especially if the teammate cannot remove the stacker in time.

One retrieval tip I feel is very important to know: When tripping your rigger to reel in, always take it a little slower when retrieving stacked spoons. If you “speed reel” the two spoons in, you may end up with what I call a Bob Marley, or commonly known as: dreadlocks!

I have had many productive fish catching days using stackers. Some days, many of our downrigger bites occur on these. So not having a stacker program can hurt you, especially when the fish are really on a spoon bite or you are targeting steelhead and brown trout. Stackers also allows you to fish extra lures and target two different species of fish on one rod.

One common example: Our offshore program usually targets kings and steelhead. When primarily fishing spoons, we can fish larger spoons in king catching colors on our main lines while running smaller orange or pink back spoons higher on our “stackers” for steelhead.

These stacker methods can be used on any species typically caught while trolling on the Great Lakes, but they are most effective when pursuing salmon and trout species. If you have not tried one of these “stack” methods, give them a shot when fishing a spoon program.

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