

The Serious Tackle Box

With Chris Gonzales

Double Trouble Dolphin Rig

*Experienced Fishing Advice To
Make Fishing Great Again*



When was the last time you saw a *Coryphaena Hippurus*? Well, for sure it wasn't on one of the Discovery Channel's dinosaur-related programs. While the name may sound like it's a prehistoric ancestor of the hippopotamus,

it's really our beautiful, flashy, bullet-fast dolphin. They are also known as dorado, dolphinfish, and mahi-mahi - I'll stick with dolphin.

Our Texas Record dolphin is an impressive 65.6 pounds, and while the Double Trouble Dolphin Rig primarily targets schoolie dolphins and those up to 20 pounds or so, I wouldn't hesitate to tempt a 65.7-pounder with it. One thing is for sure, regardless of the size, when matched to the proper tackle, dolphin fishing is exciting. With your rod bowed, reel screaming and a jumper in the distance, your adrenaline supply will definitely be taxed.

The heart of the Double Trouble Dolphin Rig is the Snapper Slapper Jr.'s of 1/2oz. each. Larger sizes such as 1 oz. could be used - not only are they heavier, but 1oz and up sizes come with a stinger hook; they also do not come with the twin curly tails. The stinger hooks can increase the hookup rate, but the chance of having two thrashing dolphins coming aboard and extra hooks flailing about creates a safety concern. An egg weight can be added to your main line ahead of this rig if needed to increase castability when using the Jr.'s.

When built as in the illustration with the short leg reversed, it will positively help keep the jigs apart on the retrieve. To get the three strands of mono into the sleeve, a size bigger than those at the jig heads will have to be used. The bulbing of the mono ends is carefully done by melting the very end of the mono strands. Do this with the ends a couple of inches outside of the single barrel sleeve. Cool them and pull them into the end of the sleeve before crimping. Leave both ends of the sleeve "belled" as shown, this lets the "bulbed" mono set in them plus it gives a curved end for the leg to exit. The color combinations I like to use are pink/chartreuse and chartreuse with matching curly tails. Extra steps I take are to hand sharpen and offset the hook 12-15 degrees. These two simple steps will definitely increase your

hookups. When built as shown, tie the mainline to the 80# size 6 Spro Power Swivel. Snapper Slapper Jr.'s are what I prefer because of their look, vibration, and swimming motion that their unique head shape and curly tails produce. Any one's jigs in the sizes mentioned will work, but not as efficiently as those Jr.'s.

To fish this rig, a high-speed reel such as an Avet LX and its 6.0:1 retrieve ratio will be a factor in your favor for getting hooked up. Dolphins of any size, for the most part, like a lot of retrieve speed; many times the chase after a speeding lure generates a strike. The Avet LX also has great castability and an ultra-smooth drag - more factors in your favor.

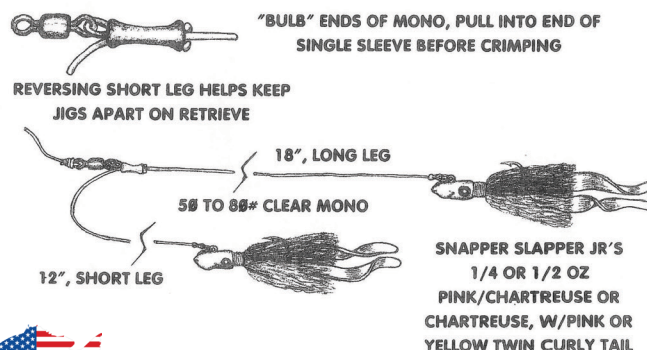
This reel, filled with Braid Backing and Mono Topshot, mounted on a 7' rod such as Plasma 11 15-40# line is a hard combination to beat. For added fishing comfort, I put a Cush It cap on it - your hip will like it, too.

A couple of things to do when fishing this rig that cuts down on tangles: the first is to slow the rig down just before it hits the water by thumbing the spool.

This will straighten your rig out and away from you and short-circuit a tangled mess when it hits the water. The second is to use a fast, steady retrieve speed. A jigging motion on the retrieve many times will cause the rig to tangle. Using these two steps will give you more productive fishing time - dolphins seldom eat tangles; they're not "natural".

Several things to keep in mind. Dolphin can be just about anywhere offshore

Double Trouble Dolphin Rig





and they love any floating structure (this includes your boat); weed lines and weed patches. A weed patch is in effect a "floating reef due to its

multi-species tenants. Dolphin, among others, like to eat many of those "tenants". If you don't see any dolphins in the water, chum a bit. Several small handfuls of quarter-sized chunks may pull them into view. If several, or one, swim by before you're ready to cast this rig in their direction, throw a few pieces of chum to stop and hold them within casting range. I like to call it "stop chumming" - it works on other near-surface cruisers such as Ling, too.

One last safety concern: "feel the weight" of the fish before you set the hook. At the strike, keep winding with the rod tip pointed at the mono's entry into the water; wind until the line comes tight, then load the rod. At that point, your dolphin or dolphins should be solidly hooked. This is important since most strikes will come very near the surface. A premature attempted hookset at a shallow depth can shoot the jigs from the water and back at you and your fellow fishermen - not a good thing, feel the weight!

It's hard to do a piece on dolphins without mentioning photos. Take your photos quickly, when you can almost hear their color before they fade like a beautiful sunset, only dolphins do it much quicker. Don't miss your

dolphin's brilliance and beauty-capture it in a great photo that you will admire forever.

Since this is "sight fishing", a good pair of polarized sunglasses (I prefer those with side shields) and a cap with a dark underbill are two must-have items. If you can't see 'em, you may not cast at 'em! Even a Double Trouble Dolphin Rig needs to be seen to be appreciated by Mr. C. Hippurus.

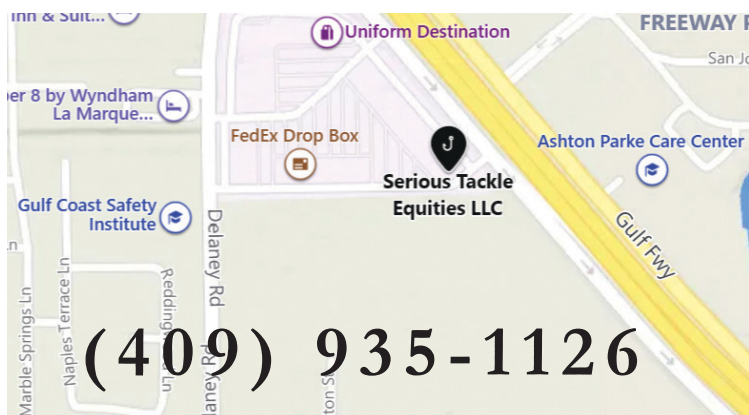
If you have any questions, stop by Serious Tackle or email me at

chris@serioustackle.com

Chris Gonzales
Owner - Serious Tackle



14065 Delany Rd.
LaMarque, Texas 77568
(In the Gulfway Plaza)



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