

The Serious Tackle Box

Experienced Fishing Advice To
Make Fishing Great Again

With Chris Gonzales

The Serious Tackle OG Cobia Float Rig

Cobia - the stealth bomber of our Gulf Coast waters. You don't see them, then they are there, and just as quickly, they might disappear. It's a scene that many of us have experienced far too many times. While cobia are many times seen at the near-surface, it's actually the mid-depths and the bottom where most of their feeding is done, therefore, it's probably still in the immediate area.

How about a different approach to controlled-depth fishing? For the almost unbelievable price of less than five dollars, you can duplicate what is the heart of this rigging technique. That's the float, washer and the bead; refer to the illustration for their positioning- you probably already have the rest of the pieces to complete the rig. The float obviously has to be large enough to support what's hanging beneath it. The stopknot is of cotton string, an 8-turn uni-knot tied around your main line; it's tight on the main line but still able to be moved as needed to vary the depth being fished below the float. The plastic bead and stainless flat washer are sized as the smallest that won't let the knot go through the bead or let the bead go through the washer, and the washer is big enough so that it won't bury up in the top of the float at the strike. If you were fishing your bait at say, thirty feet to the rig's swivel and the stopknot would somehow jam into the top of the float at the strike, you would have a problem. When you retrieve your line and the float comes to the rod tip, your cobia would still be around thirty feet away - not a desirable situation.

When properly assembled, the stopknot will easily pass through the rod guides and the float will rest on either the egg weight or the swivel; at that point, either flip the complete rig out away from the boat. The line will run through the float until the stopknot hits and stops at the bead and washer. At that point, your bait will be at the depth you selected with your stopknot positioning.

The baits shown are on 4 to 6' mono or fluorocarbon leaders that are tied to a Spro Size 6, 80# Power Swivel (these guys are small for their rated strength, black and stealthy). I recommend camo painting your egg weights;

Rust-O-Leum 7727 Royal Blue works for me - this virtually eliminates strikes in that area. If not camo painted these sinkers should, at a minimum, be old and dull. New, shiny egg weights are almost guaranteed to generate kingfish and wahoo strikes and the resulting cutoff.

"Crab eater" is another name cobia go by and a live crab in the near-surface area is a vulnerable target to a sometimes-bottom feeder such as a cobia, that's why they work so well. The live crab shown has its claws removed; this makes it easier for a predator to attack without hesitation. It also cuts down on the chance of you getting pinched when baiting up. Removing the outer swimmer, as is also



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Tie Stop Knot, 8 turn Uni-knot, around main line. Position it to set depth of bait.

Stop Knot Detail w/stainless washer and plastic bead atop float.

Main Line



Egg weight if needed to position stop knot against top of float.

Live crab with pinchers and outer swimmer removed.

Live Pinfish with dorsal and lower half of tail clipped.



4 to 6 ft. mono or fluorocarbon leader.



“ghosted” in the illustration, gives some motion to the crab but not as much as it would if you left both or the outer swimmer intact. Carefully punch the holes in the bottom and top of the crab shell for the hook to pass through with an icepick; if you use the hook you’re to fish with to make the holes, the hook most likely will be dulled. While the illustration doesn’t show it, clipping the crab shell endpoint if it appears to be obstructing the hook gap is a good idea. This “point clipping” is more critical when using circle hooks than it is with “j” hooks, but something to pay attention to when using either style.

The “irresistible to cobia” live pinfish illustrated has a couple of things done to it that increase the vibrations/distress signals it sends out without an excess of bait movement. The clipped dorsal fin and lower tail fin accomplish this, making the pinfish an easier-to-locate and catch meal. The cutting of the lower section of the tailfin also causes your pinfish to swim at a downward angle, making it more likely to stay at the depth you’ve selected.

Use circle hooks as illustrated and you will most likely be hooked up as your line comes tight after the strike. Daiichi “Bleeding Bait” Circle Chunk Light, D84Z in 7/0 size works for me.

Another advantage of this cobia float rigging is that, from a properly

positioned and anchored boat, you can “drift fish” across a rock or wreck or past a rig at a predetermined depth, its motivation provided by the wind/current. The drift speed can be somewhat controlled by your rate of line deployment while the distance you cover is only limited by your reel’s line capacity for the most part. Also, at a distance, circle hooks are worth their weight in gold for their hookup ability.

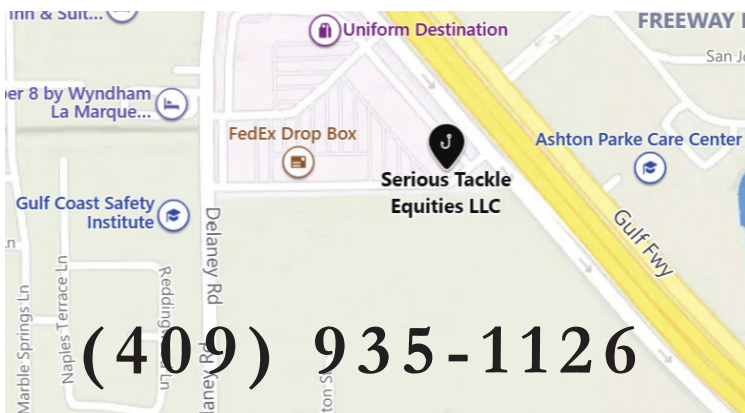
Cobia are obviously attracted to live bait; the livelier and more frantic, the greater your chance of a hookup. That, plus the simplicity and low added cost of this type of rigging makes The Cobia Float Rig an even better choice. Don’t let your next Gulf stealth bomber swim by without getting its opinion.

If you have any questions, stop by Serious Tackle or email me at chris@serioustackle.com

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