

Getting taken hook, line, sinker...and earring



LOON TUNES
and
OUTDOOR NOTES
by Len Landry

The transformation was complete.

Reed sat back forlornly on the rear seat of the 14-foot aluminum boat. He slouched forward a bit and sighed, as the smooth Mercury motor hummed ever so softly, creating a quiet bubbling on the calm surface of Stony Lake.

For a few minutes, Reed was silent.

He stared ahead, sadly. I didn't say a thing because there was simply nothing to say.

Finally, Reed sighed again, and quietly muttered a few choice phrases.

"I've never seen anything... ever... like that... Nothin' like that has ever happened... not to me... not to anybody, I bet..." Reed said with an air of resignation.

"Nope," I answered. "It wasn't bottom. I'm sure it wasn't bottom!"

It pulled and pulled... and pulled again! You saw it, right, Len?"

"Yep," I nodded in agreement.

"Man, the pull was enormous!" Reed continued, still somewhat in a daze. "That must have been a huge fish!"

"Hmmm..."

The transformation was complete, indeed.

"That's never, ever happened before," repeated Reed, now barely whispering, still shaking his head. His eyes appeared strangely sunken, like two bright little coals embedded in a reddened, sunburned face, a lean face framed with long, blonde, wavy locks, almost shoulder length, and in the left ear, that earring that had borne the brunt of so many of our bad jokes.

Yeah, sure... you devoted readers (all three of you) remember Reed Burton, right? He's the fun-loving, trouble-shooting, modern day Daniel Boone who adopted that new look, that shocking earring, about a year ago.

Well, he had been his usual, bubbly-as-an-Aerobar self about 14 hours earlier when, at the unholy

hour of 3 a.m., John Minns and I had met him outside his Mississauga apartment building...

"Yer lookin' cute as ever, Reed," I had said, tongue-in-cheek, referring irreverently to the little jewellery adorning the left ear.

"Style, man, style..." Reed had answered without missing a beat. "Even my wife and little guy like it now."

"Sure. Okay," I said, "but if you're drivin', I'm sittin' in the back seat."

Yeah, yeah, I know that I'd sworn never to fish with Reed again as long as he wore that earring, but... well, let's just say he's on probation...

The three of us had arrived at Stony Lake at the crack of dawn; we packed up the boat, and headed toward a rapid water inflow at Burleigh Falls.

Reed tied on a huge bucktail spinnerbait.

It was obvious he wasn't after walleye or perch.

The transformation had begun.

"Big lure... big fish," John said quietly, with a shrug from his middle seat in the somewhat cramped craft.

Reed cast the gigantic contraption towards the edge of the fast-water flow, just where the rapids met the deep, calm edge of a shoreline pool. The lure had barely entered the water when Mr. Muskie came a' callin'... and, after a few long minutes, Reed had landed his first, bonafide, keeper-size lunge. John skillfully handled the fish, removed the hooks and placed the muskie gently back into the water.

"My first regulation-size muskie, caught in season... and safely released!" Reed said proudly. Yes, and with that magical twinkle in his eye, the transformation was well under way.

Muskie madness, we call it.

The rest of the day was quietly devoted to walleye, and to John's plans for his gourmet shore lunch.

As John prepared our repast, Reed and I opted to take one more troll in pursuit of Mr. Muskie... Mr. and Mrs. Big Muskie... and that's when... it happened.

We were trolling big, dancing plugs over a promising weed bed about 10 feet down. The bright sunlight created a glistening water surface... tall cabbage weed passed hypnotically... serenely... under

our craft... when suddenly... Reed had a big strike.

Wham! Muskie don't hit like normal, regular fish...

Wham! Wham! Reed quickly shoved the Merc motor into neutral.

Wham! "It's running, Len! Need more drag! Oh no... No! No!"

The force of the strike ripped the reel off its mounting. (It had probably been loosened by that first muskie). The unbelievably unyielding line pulled the reel to the first rod guide... the line finally snapped... and the reel went sailing in a fine arc into the crystalline water... all in the flash of a couple of seconds.

Reed was left holding a barren, broken pole... no reel, no lure, no line... 200 bucks down the drain faster than you can flush a toilet... and no, I've never seen that hap-

pen before... and no, it wasn't bottom: I was trolling a lure just as deeply as Reed and I hadn't had a touch. Besides, 'bottom' doesn't 'run' with your plug... not like that, anyway.

Nope, that was a fish... a big Kawartha muskie.

And, you know, I felt sorry for Reed as he sat there, eyes burning, vowing revenge... pledging to return to get the beast...

The transformation was complete.

He didn't know it, but all the signs were there.

He had developed Muskie Madness... bad case, too.

I've had it for over 10 years.

Oh, he'll be all right on most days... at home, at work... you'd hardly notice... a few crazy stories, maybe... a strange twinkle in the eye...

But get Reed back on the water again...

Noonan sparks homers

A win for TEams II, III and IV started off last Monday night's action for the Georgetown Baseball Association Squirt League.

Team V vs II

Jason Hayes and Matthew Jones each handled a good fly ball catch for Team V. Other great catching was by Jason Campbell on first, and an excellent throw by Justin Hunt was a game highlight.

Batting for Team II, Kris Noonan slammed two homers and Jason Higgins one. Team-mates Mike Madill, Paul Dimarco and Matthew Hotham each hit a triple and Erin Snook a double.

Team III vs VII

Ryan Gledhill hit a double for Team VII. Mike Krause gloved a great fly ball catch at first base and Marjorie Murphy made an outstanding stop on second of a hard hit ball.

Team III's homers were by Ben Swanson, Nathan Martin and Chad Gemmill. Triples were batted by Johnathan Howell and Jeff Curran and doubles by Jason Estevan and Scott Ellis. Glen Wood added two RBIs. On the infield, fly ball catches were handled well by Ben Swanson, Scott Ellis, Johnathan Howell and Brad Belford. Jeff Melnan made two fine fielding plays.

Team VI vs IV

On the Armories diamond for Team VI, Andrew Nelissen batted

a homerun with Angela Jackman and Travis Dares each hitting doubles. Travis Dares and Adam Stoyles each added two RBIs for the team. Kevin Becker made a good throw to Andrew Nelissen on first for an out. And Erin Hay made some good catches on second.

For Team IV, Dylan Lee hit a homerun and a triple, with Brian Studdard (two RBIs) hitting a homer also. Doubles were batted by Brian Normore (two RBIs), Eddie Alcorn (three RBIs) and Richard Desjardins (three RBIs). Extra RBIs were by Tasha Bradford (2) and Jamie Larocque. Brent McClung gloved three fly ball catches with Tasha Bradford and Brian Normore each catching one. Brent McClung showed an outstanding play at first base.

Wednesday night Teams VI vs V and IV vs III were rained out but on the Armories diamond Team II gained their second win of the week by defeating Team I.

Batting for Team I, Shawn Weatherall and Jesse Viens each hit a triple and Sean Currie two singles. Matthew Walker made an outstanding solid play on first base.

For Team II, Andre Garneau batted a double and Erin Snook a triple. On the field, Matthew Hotham and Erin Snook made some good catches for the win.

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