



TACTICS ARTIFICIAL BAITs
WITH SHAUN HARRISON

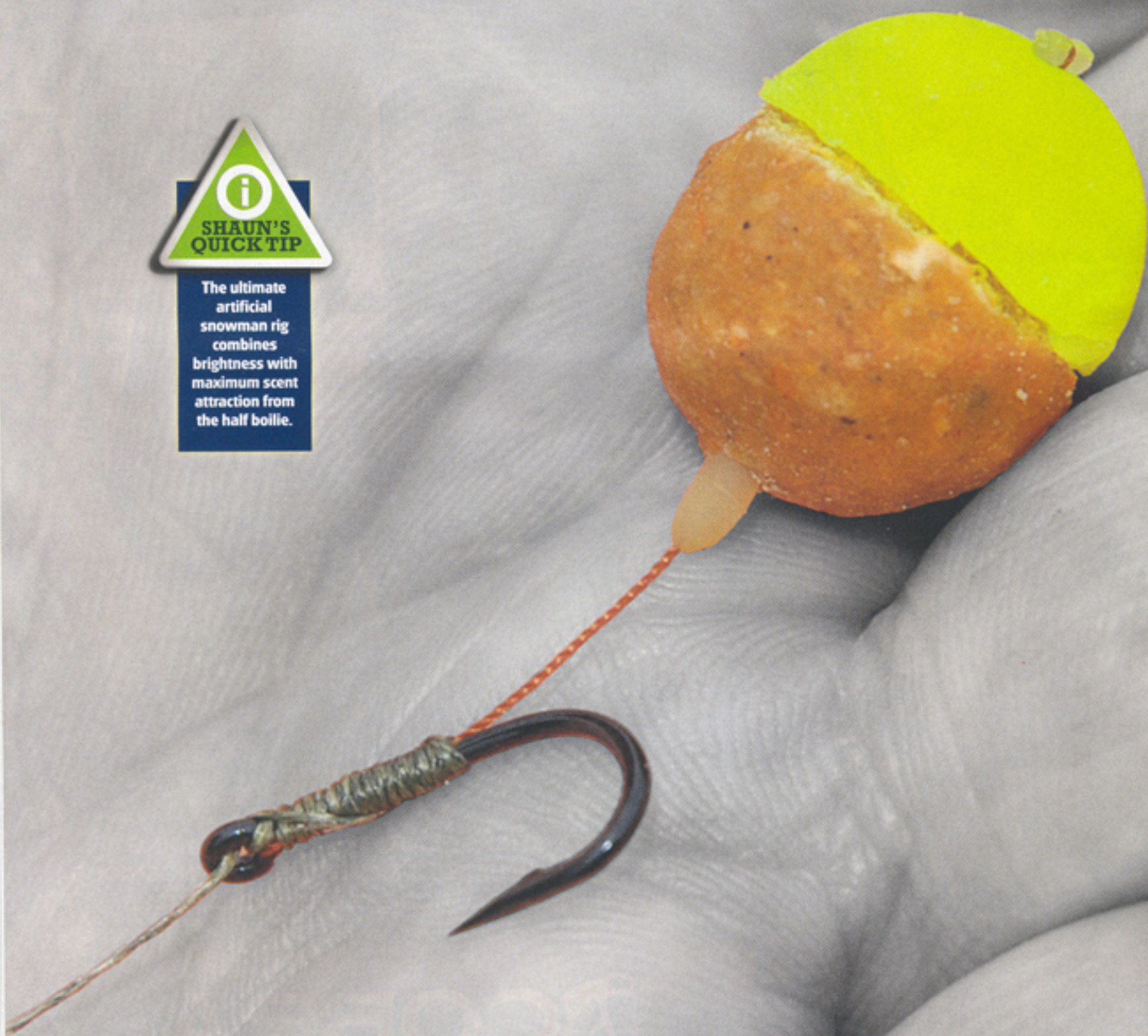
DEADLY D

Shaun Harrison has his own take on artificial baits and



**SHAUN'S
QUICK TIP**

The ultimate
artificial
snowman rig
combines
brightness with
maximum scent
attraction from
the half boilie.



EXCEPTION

their presentation. What price a home-made fake boilie?

I have never hidden the fact that I use imitation hookbaits an awful lot in my fishing. Now this seems to surprise a lot of people and understandably so – after all, why would someone who runs a bait company want to use artificial baits on their rigs?

The answer is that they work, and work incredibly well, and have properties which can be difficult to achieve with food ingredients.

The main attraction to me is that they don't get waterlogged, and the colour remains the same regardless

of how long the rig is in the water.

Of all of the artificial baits on the market today I guess the most commonly used are the many different sweetcorn imitations.

The first ones on the market were from Partridge of Redditch and Enterprise Tackle. Anglers seemed very wary of them to start with, but now it seems almost every other company has its own version, such is the popularity and confidence carpers have in them these days.


But it isn't the sweetcorn imitations I am writing about today. It is my all-time favourite, the artificial boilie, along with a few other items which pass as such – I have found quite a few little gems over the years.

The first ones I saw were from Enterprise Tackle. I started to use these in conjunction with my standard boilies as a snowman type set-up. This, in the early days, gave me more confidence, having a proper bait emitting extra attraction from underneath the 'sight bob' rather than relying on just the visual aspect of the artificial.

I caught fish from Day 1 on these bright baits, and from some pretty difficult waters too, in the warm summer months right through to the depths of winter. It got to the stage where it was rare for me to cast out without an imitation bait somewhere in the set-up.

I found the imitation boilies made from plastic/rubber-type materials would take on a flavour really well. Originally I would pierce the bait right through with a baiting needle three or four times to allow the flavour to really get inside the bait, but subsequent experiments showed that the material would appear to soak some flavour in anyway, with no need for the piercing.


I will say, though, that I no longer



An ultra-bright artificial boilie keeps its colour and buoyancy.



I caught fish from Day 1 on these bright baits



Typical snowman presentation with a real and fake boilie combo.



bother to flavour my artificial baits, relying instead on a conventional bait fished either on the hair, as a stringer or in a PVA bag scenario. My catches have not deteriorated at all by using them straight out of the pack although, to be fair, I do generally fish over a bed of bait and I'm a great believer in offering totally different hookbaits to the ones being fed.

To my mind, the only drawback to the normal plastic baits was the buoyancy aspect. There were times when I wanted to be able to offer my snowman baits popped up off the bottom. This wasn't possible without using a much larger artificial on top.

That got me thinking about other things I could use, and my naturally inquisitive mind and a thirst for moving things a stage further led to me scouring many different places, from hobby shops to toy shops, looking for things which might just pass as a boilie. Interestingly, the most successful items I found ended up coming

from fishing tackle shops, but not from the carp/specialist angling side of things.

The first thing I tried was some small 'Blobs' marketed by Korum. These are tiny round floats with a hole through the middle and a rubber centre. Again I caught instantly on these, using them as a sight bob on top of a conventional boilie. Both the blaze and the fire orange versions produced carp for me, and this led me on to sourcing some small painted polystyrene balls, sold in the sea angling market for making flounder-type rigs. These were available in larger sizes than the Blobs, and I could fish them popped up with a boilie underneath because the

polystyrene is much more buoyant than the plastic used in imitation baits. It also allowed me to use my favoured heavy-wired hooks.

Typical of me, once I had something in my head I continued to try and source alternative products. The angling world was by then gaining confidence in artificial baits, and after a couple of years of hardly ever encountering anyone using them I found I was now seeing them used regularly. What had felt like a massive edge to me for quite some time

The only drawback to normal plastic baits was buoyancy

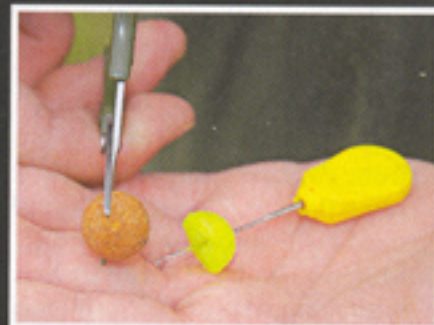


A plump, high-backed common that fell to the twin charms of a real/artificial boilie combination.

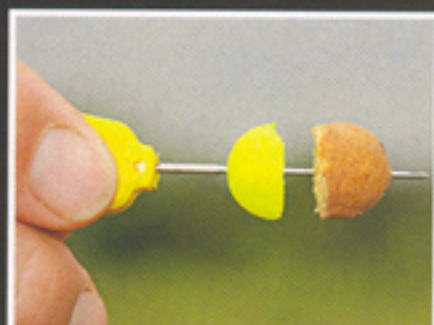
INSTRUCTION

HOW TO MAKE SHAUN'S HALF-AND-HALF BAIT

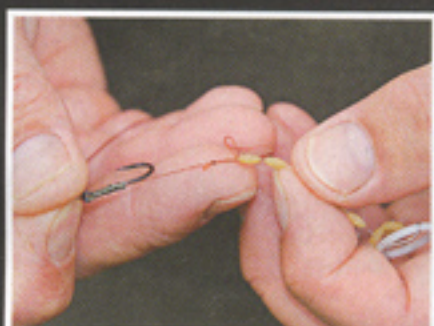
1 Cut an artificial pop-up in half. Thread it round end first on to a baiting needle. Next, cut a real boilie of the same size in half as well.



2 Thread the halved real boilie on to the needle so the flat faces of the two bait components are face to face, like this.



3 Attach a rubber float stop to the hair on your hook – these stops come threaded on fine wire to make the job less fiddly.



4 With the float stop safely on the hair, use the baiting needle to thread the two half boilies on to the hair, 'back to back'.



5 A boilie stop holds the bait in place and the float stop keeps the two halves firmly together. Result? Double attraction!



WHAT HAD FELT LIKE A MASSIVE EDGE WAS NOW DRIFTING AWAY



TACTICS ARTIFICIAL BAITS

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was now starting to drift away.

I have never been one to follow the crowd – I get a much greater kick out of doing things my way.

My next discovery came from the game angling shops in the fly-tying departments. I couldn't believe it when I stumbled across some small rubber dumbbells from Veniard. They were sold for tying Boobies but looked just like mini-replicas of the Enterprise Imitation baits. My very first cast with a 6mm dumbbell produced me a February 30lb-plus mirror. It was taken on just one of these, soaked in what became Quest Baits' Fruity Trifle Boilie Dip!

There are loads of alternative artificials you can use, and now they come in a vast array of colours too, from discreetly drab right through to screaming float colours. I use all of these.

I guess my favourite way these days of presenting artificial baits is my half-and-half rig, and I have

yet to visit a water where this does not work. I still feel far happier with real bait on as well as artificials, but I began to have nagging doubts that the standard snowman presentations were perhaps a little too obvious for the carp – this seemed to be the main way I saw artificials used.

My way around this was to cut one of the imitation baits in half, cut a boilie in half and fish these together on the hair so it looked from the side like a two-tone bait. From above, where the fish would view it from, it simply looked like a single bait, but with scent and stimulation emitting from the half boilie beneath. I stop the two halves separating by sliding a float stop on the hair as per the photograph on page 15.

This works so well that it has become my almost standard way of fishing imitation boilies, and I have the added satisfaction of knowing that I am still attracting



SHAUN'S QUICK TIP

Not all artificial baits have to be bright. These washed-out brown fake boilies are good for leaving out for several days.



Fishing a bright bait over a carpet of normal, drab boilies can be deadly.

fish with the flavour systems and stimulants used in my proper baits.

I could go on and on about different set-ups, but have focused on my favourite. Believe me, altering the material of the artificial used, and thus the buoyancy of the hookbait, makes a lot more difference than you may think. That little extra (or indeed less) buoyancy, as in the case of the half-and-half rig, can make so much difference.

So keep ringing the changes. Your fishing will benefit. **CARP**



These painted polystyrene balls are vividly bright and very buoyant.



This heavily scaled mirror fell to a bag and fake boilie presentation.