





## Keep'em Coming – Chris Lowe

### Angler PROFILE

CHRIS LOWE  
AGE: 36  
HOME TOWN:  
WEST BROMWICH  
OCCUPATION:  
MARKET TRADER  
UK PB: 56LB



Innovator Chris Lowe shows you how to increase your catch rate on difficult day-ticket venues.

# Keep 'em Com





Arrive at first light and have a good look for signs of carp.

**B**usy day-ticket waters offer a real conundrum for the majority of carp anglers. These waters tend to hold hundreds of hungry carp, yet you always hear reports about these potentially prolific fisheries producing no bites at all over a standard weekend.

All those keen carp anglers pay their money on a Friday night, and leave for their Sunday dinners without so much as a line bite to report, so how can these high-stock commercial waters be so difficult? I don't believe they are, and have an abundance of experience on these types of waters and believe I can pass on a little wisdom to you guys, as I have enjoyed a lot of success on this type of 'difficult' venue. It's not always about getting into the 'going' swim, nor is it about a particular hookbait or rig; it's down to you, the angler, making the right decisions. Now, although there is no magic formula to getting bites, there are a few good starting points that will certainly put the odds in your favour. I'd like to run you through my usual approach on busy commercial day-ticket lakes and hopefully you will pick up a few tips to help you put more carp on the bank this weekend.

### Arrive at First Light

My first piece of advice is to arrive at your chosen lake at first light. I find it is usually the best time to locate the fish, as the carp especially are generally more active. Having arrived early I will walk around the lake and try to find as many carp as possible, either by actually seeing them or from signs of their presence, and I'm not just talking about carp loudly crashing out of the lake either. It could be anything from a slight movement of water, a few fish ghosting through the margins, or maybe a tiny patch of bubbles giving away their presence. Look hard, and make sure you're at least putting yourself in with a chance of being near the carp. Once that's done and you've picked a swim that is as close to the lake's residents as you can get, it's time to start making plans.

### Stay Quiet!

One thing I cannot stress enough is that you **MUST** stay as quiet as possible when getting set up. If you have picked the right swim and the carp are already in front of you, the last thing you want to do is scare them all off by clattering about! Quite often on waters of this type, a swim with no lines in it can hold numbers of carp. These fish are just relaxing away from angler pressure, so don't drop a bucket or a rucksack, and whatever you do don't hammer banksticks or bivvy pegs into the ground under any circumstances! In fact, leave most of your kit on the barrow. It's not dark so you don't need your bivvy and bedchair just yet! Also, if the carp start to show somewhere else you will be able to relocate with little hassle because all your heavy-duty gear is still on the barrow ready to go. All you will need to do is pack down the rods and net and move to where the fish are. I like to try to set up as far back from the water's edge as possible, again in a bid to avoid spooking the carp.

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**For the first few hours keep the bulk of your gear on the barrow. There's no need to hurry setting up is there?**

Most of the time I can push my banksticks into the ground without too much trouble, but if I can't I will just lie my rods on the ground with the baitrunner on for the first few hours – the last thing I want to do is start hammering the banksticks in because I guarantee the carp won't be hanging around to watch me do so! It's this time of the session that you can pick up a few bonus carp, so I will never get my marker rod or spod rod out at this point, even if I have never seen the water before and don't know of any spots out in front of me. Instead, I use a 'go-anywhere' PVA bag setup.

**Start With the Bag Tactics**

Because I haven't used the marker rod yet I don't know what the lakebed is like in front of me, so I will start my session off with a combination of solid and mesh PVA bags. I don't want to disturb the swim by baiting up and I am keen just to get three baited rigs in the water to give me the chance of sneaking one out early doors. The bags will ensure my rigs are still presentable even in a bit of chod. I prefer solid bags, so two rods will go out with a short braided rig of about 3-4ins, and a flat pear in-line lead of 2-2½oz. I put everything in the bag with a mix of different pellets, groundbait and some broken boilies; there's no magic formula, I just like to keep it simple. Try to make the bag as tight as possible so it sinks quicker and is more aerodynamic, meaning it will

**Very CRAFTY**

Chris has been having huge success on pressured day-ticket lakes by using really long lengths of shrink tubing on his rigs... **Very Crafty!**



**Sit well back from the water's edge and keep your eyes open for further signs of carp out in the lake.**



**At the start try lying your rods on the ground with the baitrunners on, rather than hammering banksticks in!**

cast further and with greater accuracy. I try to not make the bags too big because I'm only after one bite. On my third rod I will put a small PVA stick with a rig of about 8ins on a lead clip arrangement for shorter-range fishing.

Just recently I have been playing with a new rig that uses a long length of shrink tubing and it certainly seems to give me an edge on these really pressured lakes. By fishing with this PVA bag tactic I am angling in a way that causes minimal disturbance, but still puts me in with a great chance of catching any of the carp that are in front of me. It has quite often happened that shortly after casting out my first couple of bags I've had a take even before I've got my third bait in the water! I believe this kind of success is mainly due to the fact that I have made the effort, in the first place, of walking around the lake, finding the carp and keeping quiet. I remember one session last summer when I turned up to fish Hardwick/Smiths Lake on the Richworth Linear Complex, to find a lot of carp in one area and the anglers just packing up from the swims right in front of them. Not wanting to look a gift-horse in the mouth, I dropped in there and just got the essential things off the barrow. I cast in my first two bags, and while I was tying up another bag, the first rod was away, resulting in one of Hardwick's stunning 30lb mirrors. That one example alone just goes to show how effective the method is.

**The Right Gear For The Range You Require**

When fishing with PVA bags I feel inclined to mention that using unsuitable tackle may cause some unnecessary grief with crack-offs and inaccurate casts, which will ultimately ruin your chances of getting a good hit. The weight of the PVA bags puts a lot of strain on your gear, so a shockleader and beefy rod are essential. I like to use a Grand Max Riverge 22lb shockleader attached via a back-to-back Grinner Knot to my main line, which is 12lb Pro Clear. I like the Pro Clear because it has a thin diameter which allows it to be cast vast distances, yet it is very strong and abrasion-resistant, so can deal with weed and other snags. The rods I use are 3½lb test-curve Greys Platitudes. These are perfect for the job because they have a very fast tip recovery and can really chuck the bags a long way. The last thing I want is to see the carp showing at 120 yards,

**Chris' Difficult Day**



**Here are all the items you will need to tie up one of Chris's solid PVA bag rigs for pressured day-ticket carp.**



**Carefully shrink the tubing over a steaming kettle and create an aggressive angle to help the hook turn.**



**Chris likes to use a simple 15mm Lobworm boilie hookbait, which he holds in place with a small boilie stop.**



and for me not to be able to reach them with my 'go-anywhere' PVA bag trap.

### Decision Time

Now, I've not been on the bank long and I've already got three baits out in the lake with only three casts. I've caused very little disturbance, which means the chance of an early capture is on the cards. In my experience, I've noticed that feeding times on most lakes can continue till round about 11.00 a.m., so I will continue to fish with just the PVA bags until around that time, probably recasting every hour to an hour and half to search around the swim. I've found this tactic to be a winner pretty much everywhere I've been – even the big-fish waters.

### Now Start Plumbing

By midday, the carp are generally freaking out a little as a result of the spod and recasting bombardment from all the other

anglers, so whilst my chances of a bite are at their slimmest, I will get out the marker rod and try to find some features out in front of me. It's a safe time to do this kind of work on the majority of waters.

Now this is going to be different in every swim and on every lake, but I usually try to find a nice clean spot on which to present a bait; this might be clay, sand, gravel or silt. If it's a new water I'm on for the first time, I will try to find three spots and hopefully increase my chances of a take in this manner. There is no point putting all your rods together if you're fishing the wrong area of your swim. Another spot could potentially be ten-times better than anywhere else, so bear this in mind.

### Mark Your Line

Once you have found a few spots you're happy with, you need to get your rig into position, so don't forget to mark your line.



**On the third rod Chris chooses to fish a small PVA stick and also opts to tip his hookbait with some plastic sweetcorn.**

## Day Ticket Water 'Go-anywhere' Bag Trap



**Take a section of braid, tie a loop in one end and then attach a rig ring approximately 1ins up from the loop.**



**Slide the hook through the rig ring and attach it to the braid via a Knotless Knot - this will create a blowback rig.**



**Now you need to take a small 1ins section of shrink tube and slide it down the braid and over the hook.**



**You have now extended the shank of the hook into a shape that will make your rig much harder for a carp to eject.**



**Put the whole rig, including your lead, inside a solid PVA bag along with some broken boilies, groundbait, and pellets.**



**Seal the bag by adding some saliva to the end and twisting it shut, and your Solid Bag presentation is complete.**

# Tackle Tricks For Day Ticket Hauling



**A beefy rod is another essential item of kit when fishing with PVA bags.**



**Once you have found some good spots to fish, make sure you mark up your line.**



**A shockleader is vital when casting PVA bags at range. Chris uses fluorocarbon.**



**12lb Pro Clear is Chris' number one main line choice for day-ticket lakes.**

This means you can keep casting back to the same spot. It's no good finding a good spot and not being able to recast back on it!

### Baiting Up

Time now to do the most important thing for a weekend session, and that's bait up. I would certainly not hesitate in putting out 3-5kg of bait per rod and this would be just to start with – but I appreciate not everyone can manage this amount of bait. If I have only got two spots in front of me I will put two rods together over the heaviest amount of bait – usually 5kg or so in my case. I try to use baits that aren't expensive, so that I can top up each day with the same amount, and with an extra 1kg every time I catch a fish – be it a tench, bream, roach, or carp! We've put ourselves in with a chance of a quick bite, and now it's time to get something going with a baited area. I've found that this style of 'patch' fishing is often conducive to success on these waters.

A great example of when baiting heavily worked well for me was a few years ago when I was fishing for Benson (a 50lb+ common carp) on the Bluebell complex. I found that the more I put in, the more I caught, and also the quicker I caught. You couldn't ignore how

productive this tactic was. It took me eight weeks to catch Benson, doing eight 48-hour sessions in total. I caught 45 fish in that time, with my 45th carp being Benson at 56lb. By my third session on the lake I was going through at least 30kg of bait on every 48-hour trip. Several sessions accounted for almost double-figure captures of carp. Now maybe you're

thinking, it's okay for him, he's sponsored and gets free bait – but that's not the case. At the time I paid for every ounce of bait I used and I considered it money well spent.

### Baiting Tactics

On some waters, spodding can scare the life out of the carp, so the throwing stick method is perfect. It's very under-used and



**Throwing sticks have a huge part to play on busy day-ticket lakes.**



**Chris uses boilies, and lots of 'em!**

## Five Top Day Ticket Tips

**Be Early:** Get there when most other anglers are asleep, just before first light. This is when most carp will be giving away their presence.

**Start Quietly:** Don't go rushing in with the marker float and the spod rod. To start with, try casting single hookbaits and bags to showing carp.

**Tackle Up:** Make sure you're using the right tackle for the water you're fishing. Big waters require big pit reels and strong rods.

**Midday Work:** Do all your plumbing and spodding during the quiet midday period when bites are very rare on most waters.

**Topping Up:** Top up your spots with more bait after every fish you catch. This will definitely ensure you keep 'em coming!



Chris' number one choice for all his fishing is the SBS Lobworm boilie.



Follow Chris' advice and you, too, can bag up on busy day-ticket waters.

can produce some very big catches. When I first used this approach it was on Manor Farm Lake, again on the Richworth Linear complex (probably the most pressured carp fishing complex in the country). I was using 18mm boilies and would normally put in 3-5kg of them, and if the carp were coming thick and fast I would easily get through 10kg of boilies in 48 hours.

I know it's a lot of bait but it was not uncommon to have 8-10 fish the first night and end up with anything between 18-22 fish in a 48-hour session. Now those are sessions to remember! I know I wouldn't have had such outstanding results without that amount of bait. My preferred boilie for this kind of mass baiting is SBS Lobworm; it breaks down very quickly and really does do the business everywhere I use it.

You could use any boilie you like, and it's definitely best to stick with something you're mega confident in when taking this kind of approach.

### In Conclusion

I have only given an overview of my general approach to day-ticket fishing, but I think there have been some key points covered here. At the end of the day, it works for me and I'm sure it will be beneficial to your own carp angling if you put a few of my tips into practice.

Remember the basics; start quietly, and then when the early bites dry up, fish to keep 'em coming by mapping out your swim and then letting those crafty carp have something delicious to eat!

Good luck,  
*Chris Lowe.*

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