

Chad Hoover



HOME: Norfolk, Virginia

FAVORITE FISH: Largemouth Bass

FAVORITE KAYAK: Wilderness Systems Ride 135 and Tarpon 160i

How many rod holders do you use and where do you place them?

I use six: one forward-mounted, two flush-mounts behind the seat and three vertical on the front of my crate. I mount the flush-mounts myself, facing them almost straight back so the rods do not tangle in overhanging trees. This also helps keep them out of the arc of your back cast and lessens the likelihood of entanglement when fly casting.

Do you use a fish finder?

Absolutely. I use the Garmin 300C in conjunction with buoys to mark structure so that I don't have to have the fish finder on all the time. Fish finders continuously "radiate"; the fish and bass can detect it even at the lowest setting.

Do you use GPS?

I use two handheld GPS units—the Garmin 460C and 76CSX—along with mapping software, aerial photography, and topography to develop fishing strategies, and also as the basis for pre-trip planning and post-trip assessment.

What do you store in your rear tank well?

I use a crate system made by 3rd Grip called the Crate Mate Jr. I like this system because it comes with vertical rod holders that have a tool and lure holder built in. The pockets are great for additional soft plastic lures, leader material, small tackle boxes, or any other accessory you may want to organize.

Do you store gear in any of the hatches?

I carry an extra paddle, a first aid kit, batteries, a dry bag with extra clothing and raingear, and my depth finder battery box.

What do you use for a seat?

The Wilderness Systems stock seat.

What kind of anchor do you use?

I use a Bruce or folding anchor for deep water or fast current, a stake out pole or a drag anchor for shallow water, and a lip gripper to clip onto structure like sticks and branches. The stake out poles that I use are the Original StakeOut Pole by CaptDick Enterprises and a golf club with the head cut off. I use several types of drag anchors: a folding anchor secured to the closed position; a window weight; or a water bottle filled with cement with the rope cemented into it. With the lip gripper, I use a lanyard to attach it to my anchor trolley.

Do you use a trolley system for your anchor?

I use an anchor trolley in all fishing situations. I use one continuous loop running fore and aft, with a stainless steel ring in the middle. I use very nice pulleys to make the system operate smoothly.

Any other comments about your outfitting?

- I recommend using a flat black paint designed for plastic to paint your kayak's console. This reduces the glare and makes your depth finder and GPS easier to read, and significantly improves your visual acuity while shallow-water sight-casting.
- I run the bow bungee through a small Nerf ball to make it easier to shove my paddle under for quick stowage.
- I carry a small bowline for wade fishing. I use this with a drag anchor to keep the kayak out behind me when the current or wind would normally force it out in front.

>> Chad grew up hunting and fishing in rural Louisiana and Georgia and is now an active-duty naval officer stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. He developed a passion for saltwater flats kayak fishing while assigned to a search and rescue unit in Corpus Christi, Texas. Chad is an accomplished tournament angler and conducts seminars and clinics throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast. He is a member of the Wilderness Systems Kayak Fishing Team and author of the new book *Kayak Fishing for Bass*, from The Heliconia Press.