



Through the years it's been my regular experience that when you book people over the phone or via the internet, you don't know what to expect. Through these types of communication you can try to get a handle on the client but many times even this is only a guess. However, the one thing you can't predict until you actually see the client is their weight. Being a larger than average person myself, I have nothing against big people, but it is nice to know these things ahead of time in order to be prepared. A boat only has so much room and it does have a weight capacity. I have taken many large people fishing over the years and we've had great days on the water. On the other hand, some people just have no ambition and expect the guide to work miracles. I guess I am trying to politely say that some people are just plain lazy!

Years back I had a guy and his son booked for two days of musky fishing. At the time, I was running a 16 foot fiberglass boat with a 50 HP motor. The boat worked fine for me in every situation until these two guys pulled up in the morning. They got out of a pick-up truck and my first reaction was instant panic. They were both well over six-feet tall and they easily weighed over 350 pounds apiece. The coast guard sticker on the boat said the maximum capacity on the boat was 650 pounds. So how do you put 700 pounds of fishermen and a 230 pound guide into a 650 pound capacity boat?

If we would have been fishing on the Menominee River where we didn't even have to put the boat on plane and I could idle from spot to spot, it would have been easy to deal with. The problem was that they wanted to go musky fishing on a good sized flowage. Having a successful day on the water meant that we would have to fish the entire flowage and make several runs from one end to the other.

I had met the guys at a boat landing and I had the boat in the water before they arrived. Since there was no dock, I had beached the boat. Besides the weight of the fishermen themselves, they had their tackle and, of course, a big cooler loaded with who knows what. By the looks of these guys I knew that they were not going on the water without that cooler, although I did convince them to lighten up on the tackle.

Getting their stuff in the boat was the easy part; now they actually had to climb into the boat. The first thing that the father said was, "Pull the boat up closer so I don't have to get my feet wet." I replied, "It is as close as we are going to get it." Eventually they got into the boat and the son plunked his butt on the back seat almost breaking the pedestal and gave off a big grown. The father sat on the gunnel on the passenger side, almost sitting on his rods in the process. Next, I had to try to push the boat off the shoreline and climb into the boat myself. I am a fairly strong guy and I had all I could do to push off the boat. I asked the guy to move to the back of the boat with his son and he just looked at me and said nothing. About that time I was ready to quit and say the day was over, but again, you do what you have to do.

That was the easy part, now we had to try to get on our way. It's a good thing it was on a weekday and not on a weekend. On a weekend the excess boat traffic would have made navigation all the more dangerous. After I got out of the channel I hit the throttle and, needless to say, not much happened. The boat did speed up but I knew we were not going to get the boat on plane. I told, not asked, the guy to slide over so his butt was on the front casting deck. You would have thought I had asked him to run a marathon. After a few malicious remarks, he moved a bit and it did help, but we still could not get on plane.

We eventually got to a spot that I felt might hold a musky and for these guys that was good enough. They rigged up their rods with baits that were appropriate for the time of year and water we were fishing, and started to make haphazard casts. I tried to explain that we were fishing a weedline and that we were looking for a musky to be holding either in the weeds or along the weedline. I wanted one of them to cast a bucktail over the weeds and one to cast parallel to the weedline. I might as well have been talking to the weeds, for they did not acknowledge my advice.

After fishing for a few hours they said it was time for a break. They opened up the cooler and had enough food for 10 people including piles of sandwiches, candy bars, chips and sodas. After they put a good dent in the food supply, I started up the outboard and attempted to head to the other end of the flowage. A trip that normally would have taken ten minutes took twenty minutes. The important thing was that we made it to the other end of the flowage safely.

I suggested that they change baits and they actually listened to me. The father was in the front of the boat and I explained the direction I would be moving the boat and told him that this was a very good spot. I also told the son to be alert, but I don't think that was in his disposition, since I couldn't even convince him to stand up in order to try to cast instead of parking his butt on the seat which made it difficult for him to cast. I kept my eye on the father in the front of the boat and could see a wake following his bucktail. I yelled for him to get ready and make a figure eight but he said, "I don't see nothing," as a muskie boiled and swam away. I told him that he just missed a nice fish but he again said, "I didn't see anything."

Following his missed opportunity, he started to complain about my choice of lake that we were fishing, commenting that I was ripping him off. He commented that given how much money they had spent on gas, lodging, and my guide service that they should have caught a few muskies by now. He failed to mention their grocery bill, but it must have been like a small mortgage payment! By that time I really did not care what happened but I was concerned about the next day since I had another day booked with them.