

# Using the Garmin LiveScope – From the Horse’s Mouth – “Josh Jones”

By Bernard Williams

I got a chance to speak with Oklahoma Guide and Professional Crappie Fisherman, Josh Jones of Sapulpa Oklahoma a few days ago. For you crappie guys that don’t know him, this guy

has started a cult of Garmin Livescope users. Josh has a huge following in the social media world. He is a Garmin Pro Staffer that helped Garmin perfect the Livescope design.

## **Equipment & Setup**

According to Josh, he’s been using Panoptix for over three years. He started with the original Panoptix and made recommendations for the new Livescope. So now you have a little background about my subject.

I asked Josh about his rod setup, “I use a Todd Huckabee Phantom 13 Rod combined with an inexpensive baitcasting reel as my primary rod and reel setup”, according to Josh, “The Phantom is a 13’ heavy action 2-piece rod with a fixed reel seat. I started with a 10-6 and graduated up as newer models came out. I don’t need a net to lift those giant crappie in the boat. My reel is a Bass Pro Crappie Maxx Baitcast Reel. I spool it with 20# Braid Line. I use ¼ oz. egg sinker pegged directly to the line that I can adjust up or down whether I’m fishing a minnow or jig.”

“If I’m fishing minnows, I use a 2/0 Aberdeen Gold Hook; if I’m fishing a jig, I mainly use 1/32 to 1/64 oz hair jig,” says Jones, “My favorite color jig is white or light gray. I hook my minnow through the bottom and top lip. If I’m fishing a brush pile, I’ll adjust the sinker down within several inches of the jig or hook. I have greater control of bait going down in the brush pile.”

I fished against Josh on Arkabutla Lake during the Magnolia Crappie Club’s Fall

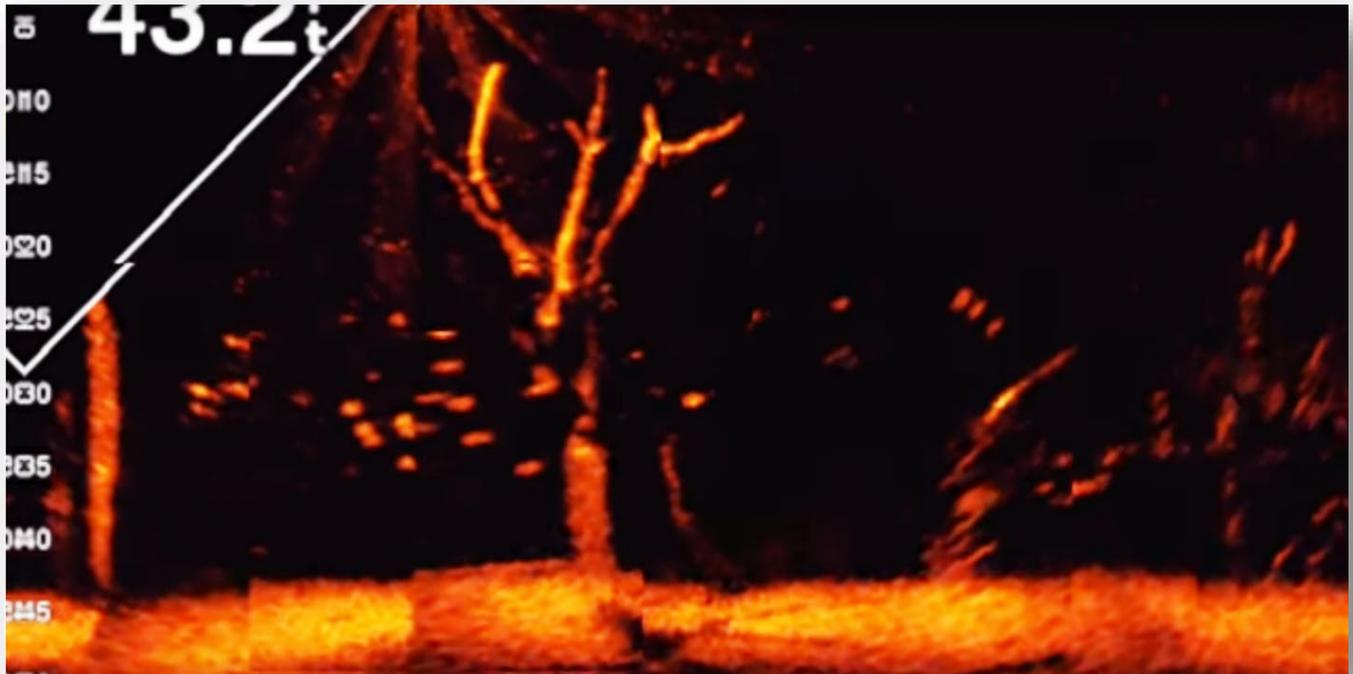
Tournament. My first question was, how long did you practice, and what were your

thoughts once on the lake? “I arrived at the lake around 5 pm. Brad Chappell and I fished for about an hour; we caught some huge fish. We could have weighed over 17 pounds for our largest 7 fish. My research of the lake told me that I needed to find deep water close to the edges. Arkabutla has very



*Professional Guide & Angler Josh Jones*

little structure, so we had to fish open water areas. The fish we found were in water depths from 10 feet to 18 feet. The fish were very spooky; we had to ease up to them using the trolling motor sparely.”



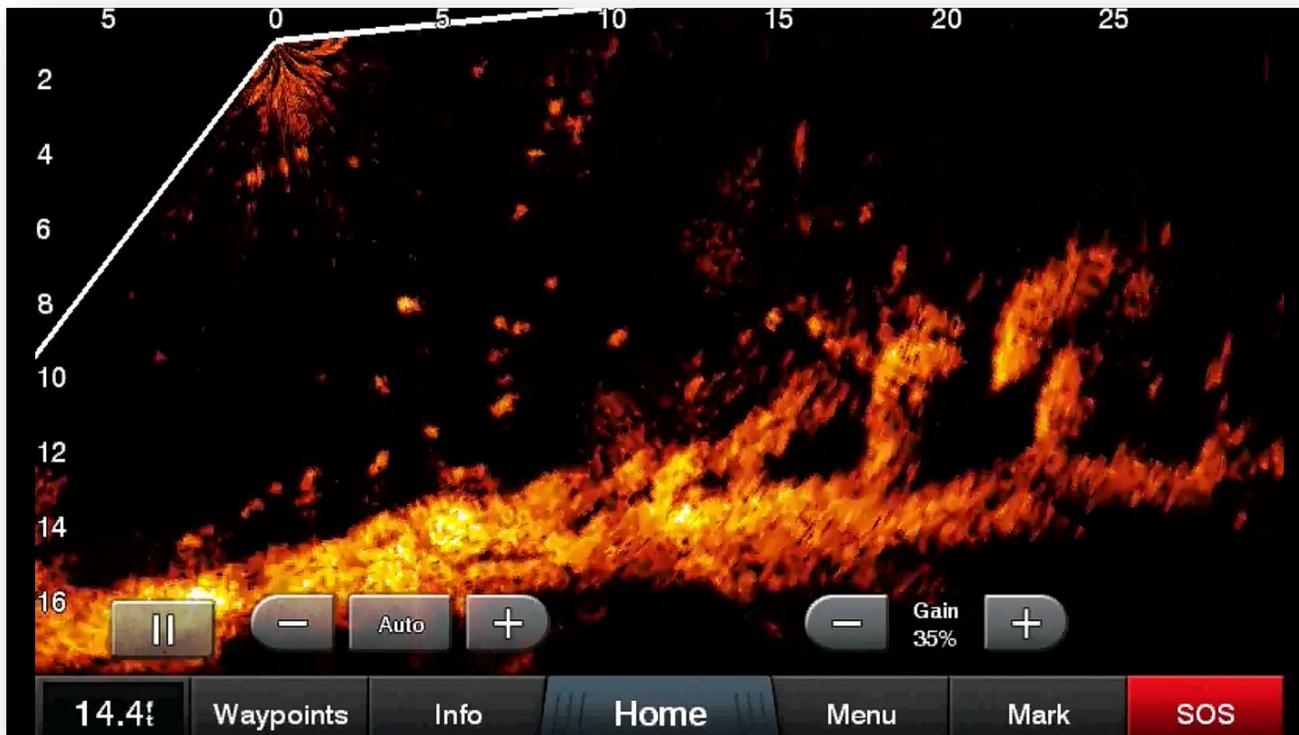
“I use Garmin GPSMAP 1220 Chartplotters exclusively; I have 3 Garmin Units with the GT52HW and LVS12 LiveScope Transducer and the Navionics Plus Lake Map Chip. I use the ClearVu and SideVu scanning sonars to find fish locations. Once I find an area with significant fish, I rely on the LiveScope from then on to catch fish.” According to Josh, “Arkabutla and Grenada are the best crappie lakes in the country for trophy fish. We have a few lakes in Oklahoma that are comparable in fish size but not in quantity.”

### ***LiveScope Tips and Tricks***

“The LiveScope has changed the face of crappie fishing; you can now target the bigger fish in the lake. What we got to do as crappie fishermen is to catch the fish, take a photo, release the fish as quick as possible, and have a replica made for a mount. Replicas last a lot longer than the actual fish. Catch and Release are what we’ve got to do as a conservationist. Otherwise, we’re not going to have any big fish.” Says Jones, “I love eating crappie, I’ll keep 11” to 12” crappie to filet.”

I asked Josh how long it took to learn and perfect LiveScope fishing? “It took about two years fishing approximately 200 days per year. I was never satisfied; I would learn something new on every lake I fished. The big fish lakes in MS taught me a few things. It’s always a learning process. The biggest challenge is learning how to chase fish. It takes quite a bit of practice to chase them down and catch them. Crappie doesn’t always bite after chasing them. I like to get within 30’ and get off the trolling motor and coast up to the fish. The trolling-motor will spook the fish in shallow water. ”

“With the LiveScope, I can put my bait within inches of the fish directly in their eyesight. Sometimes I



have to bump them to wake them up. When I see that fish turn up at a 45-degree angle, it’s time to hold on. When the fish are aggressively biting, it’s not unusual to see them come from 10’ to 20’ and bite your bait.” Josh says, “Fishermen that are new to LiveScope want to set the distance too far. For best results, don’t set your distance much farther than 35’ unless you’re chasing a fish. Another tip is to adjust your gain constantly, the gain changes depending on bottom hardness. You can move from a hard to soft bottom very quickly, gain adjustments clears up the screen enough to distinguish different species of fish. Bringing in the distance helps determine the size of the fish. Always use the LiveScope Grid. The Grid helps determine fish size at a glance.”

“Single-pole LiveScope fishing can be fun and work at the same time. Nothing excites me more than feeling that THUMP. I’ve woken up during the night setting the hook on a fish. By now, my wife is used to it. Single-pole tournament fishing is exhausting; I’m drained after eight solid hours of concentrating and holding that pole all day. The reward is worth it, taking that gigantic sack to the scales is exhilarating. I get a thrill like no other when I see them scales pass the 15, 16, or 17-pound mark.” Says Josh, “I’m not out there tournament fishing to show off my skills. I’m there to have fun doing what I love most competing. That’s why I drive 8 to 10 hours or more, one-way to compete against other fishermen.”

## **Conclusion**

My last question for Josh was, what advice can you give the everyday person wanting to master the one-pole LiveScope fishing. “Clean your transducer, aquatic fouling accumulates quickly and can



*GPSMAP 1222 ChartPlotter – Recommended*

have to use it to master it.”

I’ve said it several times, LiveScope for crappie fishing is here to stay. Like it or not, just like CHIRP, Side-Imaging, Down Imaging, and 360 Imaging, they’re the new tools, and the Young-Guns are mastering them every day. I’m going to acquire all the LiveScope knowledge I can every chance I get.

**Bernard**

reduce the performance. Use a mild detergent and a soft cloth, then wipe it dry. Be patient, practice, stay focused, and be willing to forget some of your old habits. Let the fish tell you what they want, don’t try and force-feed them. Learn to follow the fish, this takes a lot of practice, but once you’ve mastered the technique, you’re going to an awesome LiveScoper. Always remember, the LiveScope is only a tool, just like the rod, reel, boat, line, and hook, you