

Tying the Nuckols' (Jig) Fly

by Dan Potts

I have tied this pattern originally as per Charlie Nuckols since the mid 1990's. I have only changed a few things from his original hair jig marketed as his "Float 'n' Fly" system. Mostly, I have modified the pattern to better "match-the-hatch". His original patterns were originally intended for catching black crappie, but he was catching so many smallmouth bass that the rig and approach revolutionized smallie fishing into the 2000's, but, has now been lost in the archives. This is one of my attempts to bring the approach back to life. I have been showing fly tiers/fishermen how to tie this extremely easy pattern at our local *Fly Tying Fly Fishing Symposium* for years now.

Materials:

Hook 1/16th to 1/8th oz. "aspirin"-shaped lead head jig (w/. or w/o. collar keeper)

Note: Commercial "aspirin" or other vertically-flattened jig heads are available, or you can make your own less expensively (see below.)

Thread any heavier fly-tying - black, brown, dark green, etc.

Tail – none

Body - none

Wings craft hair (fake fur, as per Troll Doll hair, usually available at most craft stores) – black, white, brown, red, etc.

Under-wing white or lighter-colored

Over-wing black or darker-colored

Side-wing any color to help imitate local minnows (e.g. red for redbreast shiners)

Hackle - none

Accent Krystal Flash – green, orange, etc.

Eyes "stick-on" – green, orange, etc.

Head cement

Tools:

Vice appropriate for hook

Thread Bobbin appropriate for heavier thread

Scissors

Bodkin

Assembly:

Create an "aspirin-head" from an unpainted round-headed jig by lightly pounding the head on both sides on an anvil with a smooth-faced hammer. Clamp jig hook as for any fly, however, because jigs run "hook up" you would tie this patterns upside down (light on top, dark on bottom). Pre-wrap the hook next to the head with thread and cement to prevent it from rotating later. Tie in the lighter craft hair under-wing on top(=bottom) to extend back shorter than you plan to tie the darker over-wing. Tie in the darker over-wing to extend past the under-wing. Tie in sparse side-wings of color(s) of your choice. Tie in only a few strands of Krystal Flash (less than four) on each side to give the fly a light "sheen" of a living fish. Whip finish just behind the head and cement. Carefully remove stick-on eyes with a bodkin and apply to both sides of the jig head. Carefully trim the krystal flash fibers to the length of the fly – done in less than 10 minutes, and even beginners can tie this one!

Uses: (see accompanying article)

Variations: (see photo below)



Potts' modified Nuckols jig w/. dark on top, red & white on bottom, subtle eye – great under a float.

Same as above, except tied to imitate a (Strawberry Res.) redbside shiner.

Good under a float, but also great for cast & retrieve in the shallows.

Same as above, except tied on a smaller lead head/heavier hook, and brighter eye.

Same as above, except tied on a smaller lead head & hook, especially effective when used in tandem on different leader lengths and cast towards shoreline structure.

Same as above, except tied on a commercial flat-headed jig, equally good under a float, but is more prone to snag when cast & retrieved.

Not the same, but quicker and easier to tie with only squirrel tail instead. Good for general use.

Similar to above, but intended to primarily imitate crayfish, but readily snags in intended crayfish habitat (=rocks), so best cast towards shore.