

This one's for both of you

A good “fishing partner” is hard to find. Probably, only a fisherman will understand that statement. It takes a certain chemistry to be able sit in a boat all day long together and know that you don't always have to carry on a conversation. Typically when two people are together they are expected to talk to each other. Some would say that it is rude if you don't converse. Not so with fishermen.

In my life I have been blessed and have had a lot of great friends to fish with. But to attain the status of “fishing partner” takes fishing to a whole different level. A few years ago I lost a “fishing partner”. I actually quit fishing for a few years because I thought it would never be as much fun without him. He was actually my best friend not just my “fishing partner”. His name was Dave.

We did everything together. Grouse hunting, golfing, fishing, you name it and we did it together. About the only thing we didn't do together was hunt deer. Dave had hunted with his family all of his life. Long before we even met. I had hunted with my dad and brother all of my life.

One of the saddest days of my life was a Monday night after opening weekend of deer season. Dave's wife Mary called our house and told me Dave had been killed in a hunting accident. I felt like a piece of me had died at the same time. A very important piece.

We've all had our share of sorrow in life and I don't claim to be an expert on grief. After all, my only claim to fame is being the “foremost authority on my own opinion”. In my opinion, replacing a “fishing partner” is one of the hardest things to do in life.

I simply did not want to fish any more. No interest at all. It wasn't a conscious decision where I told myself I wasn't going to do it anymore. I just didn't have anyone to do it with.

For the next few years all I did was play golf. I played in leagues, I played on weekends, I played in tournaments. Golf was my life. Sure I did other things but most of my spare time was centered around golf.

My friend Scott, whom I played wheelchair basketball with, was an avid fisherman. Basketball however is a winter sport and I didn't really see him too often in the summer. He wasn't a golfer.

One day we ran into each other in the summer and he said he was going fishing. I told him that I hadn't been fishing in years and I kind of missed it. He asked me if I wanted to come along. “Why not” I said, I wasn't going golfing that day anyway. Thus began a new relationship. I had found a new “fishing partner”.

Scott and I fish a lot together and as “fishing partners” go he is at the top of the list. We can go out and fish all day long. Sometimes we catch a lot of fish, other times not so many. It doesn't matter. We like to fish the same way, we discuss fishing strategy the whole time we are out there, and we both will fish until the end of the day.

There's nothing worse than being out on the water in a boat with someone that doesn't want to be there. That boat can get pretty small at that time. In order to become true “fishing partners” it is imperative that both of you have the same goals in mind and enjoy fishing at the same level. Absolutely a must, in my opinion.

Thanks to Scott I am once again a fisherman. Thanks to Dave, I understand what it means to have a “fishing partner”. This one's for both of you.