

THE LOOP

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Certified Casting Instructors
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CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR WORKSHOP AND TESTING PROTOCOL ADOPTED

*Report by Chuck Easterling
Chair of the CI Test Committee*

At the FFF Conclave in Loveland, Colorado in August 2009, at their annual meeting, the Casting Board of Governors adopted a Certified Instructor Workshop and Testing Protocol.

This Protocol took approximately two years to develop and was presented to the Board by the CI Test Committee to give guidance to examiners who administer the CI test and insure consistency in the presentation of the CI test workshop and the administration of the CI written and performance test.

The CI test is the most frequently given test of the CICP. It also has the largest number of examiners administering the test and required workshop. This combination can - and perhaps has in the past - lead to some inconsistencies with the certification process.

As the CICP grows with an ever-increasing demand for testing and an increasing pool of examiners, especially internationally, it was the opinion of the CI Test Committee that consistency in the certification process was of the utmost (critical) importance.

The Protocol, for the most part, may be viewed by some as simply formalizing what may have been common practice among many examiners. However, experience teaches that over time and distance, certain terms and practices can evolve to the point where significant differences often arise. Hopefully, the adoption of the protocol will help insure increased consistency in the important process of testing and certifying candidates on a worldwide basis.

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The protocol as adopted by the Casting Board of Directors may be found at www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=5089.

Perhaps at this point it is appropriate to mention that the protocol is not intended to be an in-depth, step-by-step guide on how to administer the performance test or evaluate a candidate's performance of the tasks on the performance test.

Consistency in evaluating a candidate's performance is of the utmost (critical) importance and the CI Test Committee is in the process of developing expectations or standards for the performance test. The development of expectations or standards will, hopefully, aid in insuring consistency among examiners in evaluating a candidate's performance.

On the other hand, the function of the protocol is to provide an overall guide as to *how to administer the workshop and the CI tests*.

As an example, the Protocol addresses such questions as:

- what topics must be covered in the pre-test workshop;
- who may conduct the pre-test workshop;
- what is a passing score on the performance exam;
- are any tasks on the performance test considered a *mandatory pass* in order to successfully pass the performance test;
- what role may an emeritus CBOG take in CI testing?

It is highly recommended that CI examiners and CI workshop presenters become familiar with and review the Protocol before presenting the required workshop or administering the written or performance test.

The Protocol will officially go into effect on Jan. 1, 2010.

The CI Test/Workshop Committee members are:

Chuck Easterling (Chair), Dan McCrimmon, Sheila Hassan, Dusty Sprague, Gordie Hill, Guy Manning, John Breslin and Denise Maxwell

Where to find a copy and download it??

CI Testing Protocol

www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=5089

Two other documents were completed as well by the committee.

They are:

Recommendations, Hints & Suggestions www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=5025

Teaching Skills Workshop Outline www.fedflyfishers.org/Default.aspx?tabid=5097

ADAPTIVE FLY CASTING INSTRUCTION - TECHNIQUES FOR PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

*A Practical Approach to Common
Ailments That Limit Fly Casting*

FIRST IN A SERIES

By Dr. Gary Eaton, MCI

Steve came to me in the middle of trout season dismayed because his carpal tunnel syndrome prevented him from enjoying his favorite sport, fly angling. His doctors and therapists successfully returned him to work in the winter but fly fishing aggravated his hand numbness in less than an hour.

When he stopped the rod on a long cast it felt like an electrical shock shot into his palm and fingers. His hand got tired easily resulting in excruciating pain up his forearm and beyond his elbow if he continued very long. His heirloom rod felt heavy and clumsy and he often looked to see if he had hold of the fly line, distracting his attention from the water. Being unable to work for a few weeks led him to gain weight so his clothes fit a bit tighter than usual.

I observed as he cast his re-built bamboo rod with a delicate three-point grip imparting a long, flowing stroke. The rod seemed to benefit from incorporating a haul on each cast due to the inherent flexibility. Longer casts met with more tentative stops on the forward cast and a slight twist, anticipating discomfort. After a half dozen casts, Steve held the rod in his line hand and rapidly shook his limp rod hand up and down as if to awaken it.

He looked at me asking, "Can you help me?"

I silently asked myself, "What do I do *now*?"

DISCLAIMER – *Casting instructors should not treat any health condition nor give any medical advice. Problems present at rest or worsened by casting that do not respond to adaptations suggested should be referred for medical clearance before continuing any casting program. These articles intend to provide neither medical advice nor treatment.*

A FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT – AS DEDICATED CASTING INSTRUCTORS SERVING OUR STUDENTS, WE TRY TO CHANGE PAINFUL MOVEMENTS DISCOVERING ALTERNATIVE PAINLESS MOVEMENTS TO DELIVER A FLY. FEWER OR SHORTER MOVEMENTS, LESS FORCE, SLOWER SPEED; ALL **MIGHT** REDUCE POTENTIAL FOR INJURY.

A PRIMARY RULE IS, "*If it hurts, stop doing it that way!*"

Concept of peak demand related to total force - Force equals mass times acceleration ($F = m \times a$) and efforts to reduce the mass moved, distance moved, peak speed, and rate of acceleration should reduce total force applied. The grip force needed to control the rod at initiation of movement and at STOP is much higher than required during early-to-middle acceleration of a simple, straight-line cast. Adaptations allowing reduction in peak force and duration of grip force should provide benefit.

Recommendations made in this article reflect concepts of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation applied to movements of straight-line fly casting with a single-handed rod. Consider these simple adaptations and their intended results.

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HAND PROBLEMS (PART ONE)

***CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME* = MEDIAN NERVE COMPRESSION**

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME USUALLY BEGINS AS NUMBNESS LONG BEFORE WEAKNESS IN MORE THAN 80% OF CASES AFFECTING THUMB, INDEX, MIDDLE, AND HALF OF RING FINGER.

One or both hands may be involved at different intensity of symptoms. Mild cases are defined as those not involving strength when measured by electrical testing of the nerves.

Symptoms include hands that “fall asleep” or need to be shaken after discomfort awakens the sufferer. Dropping things without warning, and intermittent “clumsy” hands may be especially alarming.

Frequency of complaints often increases with weight gain, cold exposure, vibration, prolonged high grip force, repetitive motion, wrist position that includes significant flexion or extension, etc.

As hand weakness endures, adjacent areas of wrist, elbow and arm may exhibit other uncomfortable symptoms while recruited muscles increase active, compensating force. Discomfort can extend above the elbow and is usually relieved by rest. Often, these secondary pains first motivate the sufferer to seek help.

Adaptations to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome should reduce load, enhance tactile stimulus, mitigate pressure in mid-palm at the wrist, and avoid prolonged grip force.

The following ideas can be instituted and evaluated after optimal medical treatment is complete.

These suggestions are intended for professional FFF certified casting instructors to implement with their students.

Serious instructors look to alter equipment, movements, and other variables to reduce force intensity, duration, or motion.

LARGER HANDLE CIRCUMFERENCE –

For adult hand sizes, increasing handle circumference by 50%, or more, decreases required force to grip. Larger hands often benefit from larger circumference increases.

Comparison of fly rods in my collection suggests that modern fly rods have decreased the average diameter of factory cork handles by over one-quarter of an inch since the 1940's. I find no indication of any rationale for this except aesthetics decisions by manufacturers.

Applying tennis racket handle products, Wilson™ Cushion Pro over-wrapped with Unique brand Tourna-Grip™, increases circumference while preserving the non-slip feel of cork.

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LIGHTER ROD -

Shorter rods represent lower swing weight but benefits decrease rapidly as length is decreased below eight-feet for adults using typical line weights. Fiberglass, Boron, bamboo, and “filled-core” tubular rods like Hexagraph™ rods, represent significantly increased weight for any given length versus modern graphite designs. Lower rod mass limits the required forces at the stop and at initiation of movement by decreasing the momentum or inertia to be overcome by the casting arm.

FASTER OR STIFFER ROD ACTION –

(Extremely) slow action rods require much longer duration of per-cast grip force and longer rod arc or casting stroke to accomplish the same cast compared to (fast) rods with less flex. Translating this to higher total grip force applied, the demand increases dramatically as casting/fishing prolongs. My experience with students also suggests that a medium-fast action rod provides easier line pick-up off the water, decreased stroke length and duration, less variability of tip control and an overall easier time casting. Proper application of a very smoothly accelerated stroke with delayed rotation, along a precise straight-line path, reduces effort and improves casting efficiency that renders ultra flexible rods less beneficial. Loop control becomes a side benefit that remained elusive with very slow rod actions. The improved capacity to cast in any wind enhances confidence of the student. Reduced casting arc empowers a good stop by decreasing the overall momentum the student must overcome.

SOFTER HANDLE SURFACE -

Cushioned handle surface allows the grip to “sink-in” slightly. The dry feel of cork offers a fairly non-slip texture. This benefit remains even with use of firm foam overwrap like Wilson™ Cushion Pro covered by Unique brand Tourna-Grip™. This combination adds about one-quarter inch to the diameter of the cork in addition to legitimate cushioning.

AVOID “V” GRIP & “THREE POINT” GRIP –

“V” grip places the rod butt directly into the vulnerable median nerve at the wrist and should be avoided without adequate cushioning protection.

“Three Point” grip decreases the index finger from contact on the handle. This reduction in contact area results in significant weakening of the grip by over 20%. Compensatory demands on remaining contact fingers lead to earlier fatigue symptoms.

Recommend a thumb-on-top grip, also called the “key” grip.

USE TEXTURED FLY LINE –

Lines such as Scientific Anglers™ Sharkskin and other highly textured lines enhance the sensitivity to affected hands compared to smooth line surfaces.

Benefits should include fewer dropped lines while hauling or performing other line hand manipulations.

Gary Eaton will be providing our readers with a series of articles. As we age, parts of our bodies rebel and give us problems..... we aren't 30 anymore (at least I'm not!) Many thanks for this series.

My Favorite Spey Teaching Tool

by Rick Williams

Kirk,

I've been reading with some interest the recent postings in the two-hand study group on losing spey rods, and whether (and how) to use your own equipment while teaching. I thought I'd share my recent experiences, which have led me to my new favorite two-hand teaching tool — a 4' long, 1" diameter smooth wooden mop handle (minus the mop)!

I've been doing a lot of two-hand teaching over the last month and have progressed from taking my own rod along for the lesson, to using the student's rod, to my mop handle. I can do about 80% of the teaching I want to do with the silly mop handle. I have to occasionally borrow the student's rod to demonstrate D loop formation, inclined versus flat anchors, or trajectory issues, or other finer points.

First, like Ron discussed, I don't like to borrow the student's rod to demonstrate. Even though I don't think the students generally mind, it seems awkward. This led me to taking my own rod along for several lessons. That made it easy to demonstrate, but keeping my own rod safe and out of the student's way while casting (particularly once we start into the double spey or snap casts!) became something of a dodgeball game. Then I found myself wading over to the shore and placing the rod safely in some bushes, where it would be safe, but easy to forget and leave for someone else's benefit.

Deciding that would be a loss that increasingly forgetful me was likely to incur, I then decided not to bring a rod at all for a couple of lessons. However, I found myself having to frequently (too frequently) borrow the student's rod to teach or demonstrate something. Time was wasted switching the rod back and forth and changing positions, etc. During all of that I realized that I frequently needed the rod to show the student hand, body, and rod positions, rather than because I needed to make a cast. So when I got back home, I went through all the odds-and-ends in my garage looking for something in the 4-6' length that was about the diameter of a spey rod that I could use as a demonstration tool for teaching positioning, lift moves, sweep moves, circling up to the key position, and so on.

Well, you guessed it. The mop handle was the best candidate and I've now been using it with great success for several weeks of teaching. It is extremely easy to demonstrate all the moves in any of the spey casts with my stick!

For example, students quickly see the way the rod and hands work in the shotgun lift at the start of the switch cast and how they transition into the sweep, then rise to the key position before the forward cast. Finally, I get to use the handle as a wading staff or can simply lean on it, when I'm not using it to demonstrate.

Find something similar and try it, if you haven't already. You'll be surprised at what a great teaching tool a 4' long stick turns out to be,

Regards,
Rick

* Kirk Eberhard hosts the e-mail THCI Study Group

Special Recognition Award

*Presented to Al Crise
from the Casting Board of Governors
August 2009*



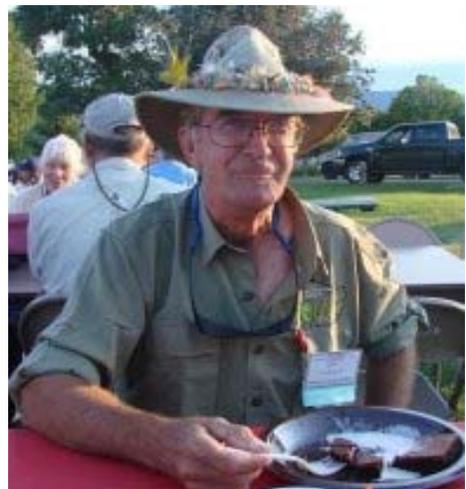
Photo by Josset Gauley

This year the Casting Board of Governors voted to present a Special Recognition Award to one of our members.

Many of you may know Al Crise from his e-mail CI Study Group or from his involvement in the Youth Conclave at the annual FFF Conclave.

Either way, Al's enthusiasm and support of our Casting Program is 100%.

This is the first award of this type to be presented by the Board and I can't think of a more deserving recipient.



”SNAP-SLIP-Spey” – May the mass be with you!

By Juergen Friesenhahn

Since spring 2009, switchrods have been my greatest addiction. They are ideal tools for fishing my local rivers, and these ‘1&1/2-handers’ suit my fishing style (nymph/streamer fishing) perfectly.

I have been practicing this fishing style using the singlehanded rod for decades, and with the new hybrids, this is great fun and easy to handle, with lots of advantages! 20 meters of distance **and controlled fishing** with hardly any backspace. Gradually, my overhead casting has dropped to practically nil. My main weapon is a #5-110-4 with matching shooting head/polyleaders, an elegant floret par excellence. Fishing my local rivers exclusively in *speystyle* and *wet-fly-swing* is pure joy!

However, I was often confronted with one specific, adverse player in my heavenly spey-galaxy: If, for whatever reason, the line mass (the belly/head) beyond the rod tip is *gone*, the *spey jedi* - *lightsword* lacks energy. Nothing there to load the rod against!

In the real world, I am often stuck in fishing spots where you can’t move up/downstream and you have to cover the whole water from one spot, especially the downstream stretch. I think you know the spots I’m talking about from your own experience!?

Fishing these spots with a singlehander is quite easy: strip the streamer actively to your feet, cast the line out again with overhead or rollcast moves.

However when fishing with switchrod/doublehanders and a shooting head, you normally stop fishing at the *sweetspot position* of the head with optimal overhang, which is around 18 meters downstream (3.3m rod, 10m head and overhang, 3m polyleader, 2m tippet) from your position, then going into a single/snap/dump/poke or whatever WITH the line mass outside of the rod tip.

If you strip any further, you have to cast out the main mass again in order to speycast properly. I solved the problem this summer by simply overhead casting with my switchrod to cast out the head again, then changing into spey, which is indeed possible. But this ain’t cool! Overhead casting with a speyrod!

Obi Wan wouldn’t have done it that way and, by the way, Darth Mass would have exclaimed a metallic laugh – overhead casting, give me a break!

I would like to introduce you to my technique to defeat the enemy Darth Mass in Obi Wan style! I’ll try to describe a move to cast out the nearly totally stripped in mass/head with a switchrod/doublehander elegantly, harmonically and effectively without any unnecessary movement or overhead casting. After casting out this line mass again, the *lightsword* is re-energized and you’re ready for action. So the actual part/move I’m describing is the part BEFORE the normal speycast with sustained anchor/circleup/keyposition/fire.

Enough Star Wars analogies. Let’s cast!

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For the purpose of easy and comprehensible description I use the move in the following situation:

- River left
- Upstream wind
- Caster is right - handed

Before I describe the move, I recommend you have a clarifying look at these demo videos on Youtube:

Casting the Snap-Slip-Spey (in SloMo)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dw5uf37q_vo

Fishing the Snap-Slip-Spey (Normal Speed)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uh5Cg1BgjMI>

The demonstrator **SNAPS** with nearly zero line upstream, **SLIPS** the whole shooting head in front of him in a clean half circle (which has other positive side effects!) to the exact and perfect sweet spot position without any slack line, and is then ready to go in a conventional sustained anchor circleup/keyposition/fire.

How can this be accomplished?

The secret lies in the preparation phase for the **Snap-Slip**. This is done by controlling **TWO line segments** as marks, while stripping in the line.

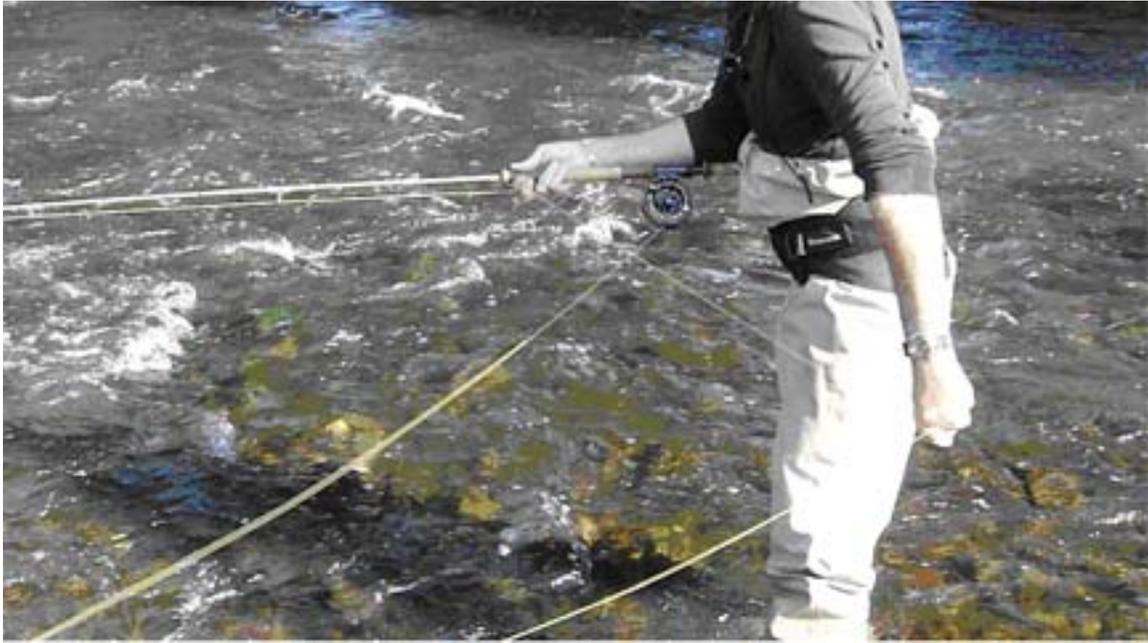
Here is the sequence:

MARK 1: While stripping in and reaching the sweetspot position, mark this running line segment between the pinky/index finger of your left hand and hold the mark firmly:



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Stripping further in:



Stripping:



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MARK 2: Then, reaching the end of the SH (ca 2m SH + Polyleader is outside the rod tip), trap this line segment between your pointer and the right middle finger as usual.

Note: the main mass of the head now hangs between right middle finger and left pinky

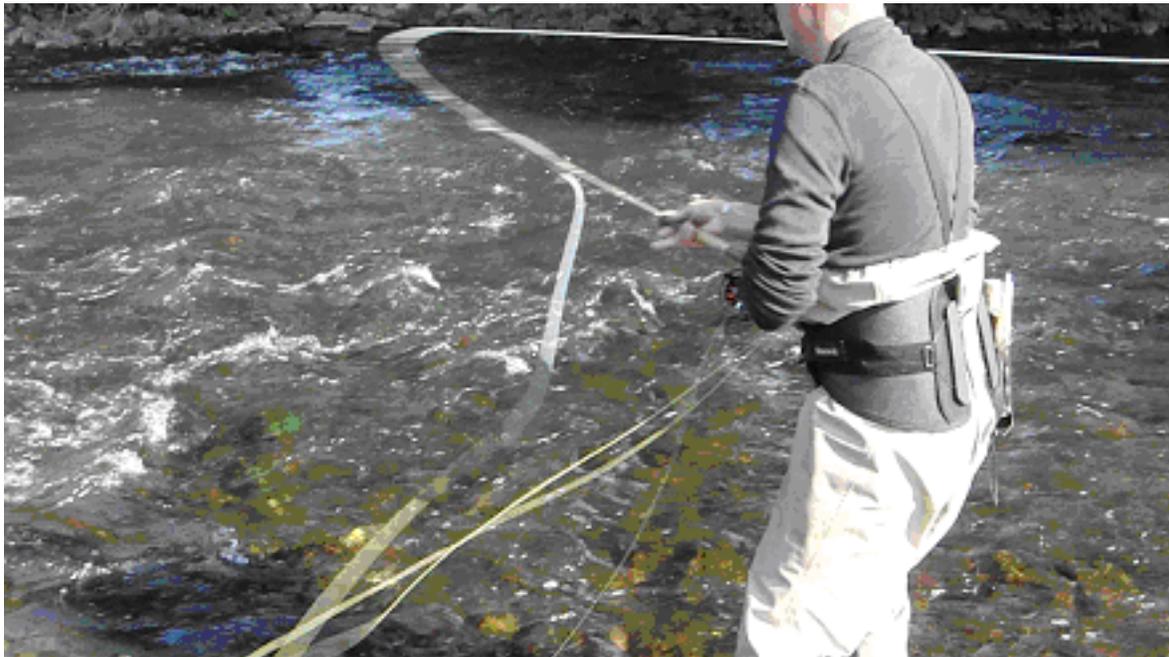


SNAP-PHASE: Now snap upstream with the aim to intentionally lay the polyleader/tippet clearly on the target line beneath your upstream shoulder (180 degrees reversed, fly lands closest to the bank). It is a kind of classic overpowered Snap-T, that lets the leader/fly tuck to your right onto the target line.



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Then let the upper hold go AFTER snapping the line upstream. The snap requires this upper finger grip of the right hand to load the rod.



SLIP-PHASE: SLIP a clean half circle in front of you. Lay the exact path you'd like to go a split second later in the sweep phase. Slip until you feel or see the line tighten on your left pinky, going for a conventional waterborne anchor cast, with a perfect overhang position.

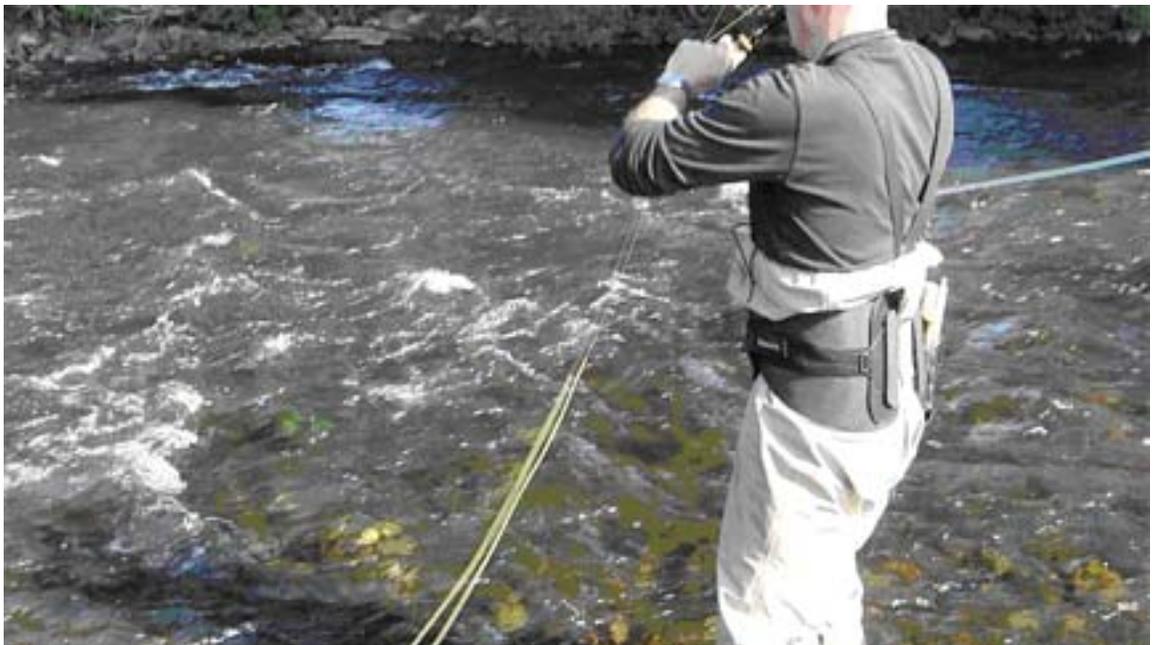


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Conventional loading phase of the rod, line is still fixed between index and pinky finger:



Circleup, nearly key position. The polyleader is partially ripped out, but the leader stays - hopefully, if the acceleration was correct - in the water, and doesn't have to be turned in any way, because it is already positioned. It will be drawn directly and accurately out of the water by the D-Loop in the correct target direction, laid before.



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Fire. Releasing the line of this cast does look a bit posh with the braced pinky ;-D



Let's go a bit deeper into the thoughts behind the moves:

The Mark-Phase:

I mark the sweetspot-line segment, because in a downstream slip movement without any mark and only controlled by the upper right hand as usual, it is **almost** impossible to hit the perfect spot. Fact!

If you watch the video "Fishing the Snap-Slip-Spey (Normal Speed)" closely, you can watch this *line hooking* with my left hand in real time, performed at 0:11 and 0:43. Fluently practiced, it is so quick, nobody will recognize it! Your trick!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uh5Cg1BgjMI>

Palm up, pick this line segment and strip/fish further in.

You can strip in nearly as far as you want: with a switchrod 2m SH plus Polyleader/Tippet OUTSIDE the rod tip is enough to lay out the whole line again.

I orientate myself in fishing the fly, not how much line I stripped in.

So strip the fly to approximately the proportion described above.

If you see the sweetspot: fix with left hand and fish.

If you see the polyleader... fix with right hand and SNAP.

The Snap-Phase:

In fact, this movement evolved out of a Snap-T, but with the line momentum directed beneath my upstream shoulder to position the leader/tippet/fly directly on the targetline.

As you can imagine, there is normally no substantial mass to snap!

Nothing happens if you snap this setup in the usual fashion, because the bulk of the mass is on your side of the rod tip, hanging between your right middle finger and your left pinky.

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This snap is a classic overpowered curve (in the horizontal plane) directed towards the near bank. The leader/tippet does not straighten upstream!

Flip leader/tippet/fly towards the targetline and use this impulse/watergrip as an anchor to slip the main line mass against.

The Slip-Phase:

Against this upstream impulse and the developing grip of the tippet/leader, I **slip out the whole shooting head** (8+m slipped, added to the 2m snapped) before me **in a clean half circle**.

Why?

I found that when you drop the line, for example for a double spey/circle cast, this line is normally laid out in a more or less straight path on the water, except for the line portion near the rod tip. Because the line is hanging on the dangle, you can realize only a kind of 'J' shape, not really a clean half circle.

If you then go for the sweep you **rip the straight line/J-line** layout with a circular incline-motion, **causing significant horizontal rip, meaning a percentage of the spray is caused by this horizontal component**.

If you lay the line circular for the anchor instead and rip it EXACTLY (if at all possible in running water ;-D) in the reverse circular motion, **you have less horizontal spray, because a great percentage of the rip is done vertically**.

However this moderate rip is only to be seen as a side effect.

If you lay the line in exactly this half circle path on the water and you rip it out of the water a split second later, there is way enough stick to load the rod and the movement is far more harmonic, rounded out, as you can see in the video.

This layout also prevents any Bloody-L tendencies, because the path of the laid out and that of the ripped out line are nearly identical!

So I slip the line downstream in a highly controlled half circle, until I feel a pull on the pinky. This, too, you can see clearly in my video documentation and take it as a second point of orientation.

Now you have slipped out the whole line mass in front of you, neatly arranged:

- line lies beautifully in a half circle-path, which you follow for the sustained anchor - sweep
- leader/Tippet/Fly lies opposite the target on the target line.
- and you look so cool with your arms crossed, ready to go!
- that's it.

After this, the cast is totally conventional with the benefit of the previous steps

- water anchor with a bit less spray (white flea)
- sweep in an incline motion
- circle up (Redirection)
- key position
- fire
- ...out she goes.

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Bottom line:

The Snap-Slip-Move is a way to regain the stripped in line mass out of the rod tip *Yedistyle*. Therefore it is a universal module, that can be set before any sustained anchor cast.

As a student of speycast and as a preparation for my aspired THCI in the year 2009, I realized that speycasts normally rely on the mass/line outside the rod tip to load the rod. They dump/poke/flip/cast this mass. However I did not find a solution to *spey-operate* with nearly no mass outside the rod tip.

My simple source of inspiration was the fishing situation.

Why stop fishing so far downstream from my position, when I am stuck in a spot with no possibility to move up/downstream and chasing fish near downstream on my bank?

So after doing this move, the first fish I caught instantly was a big perch.

No steel, no trout, no salmon - a nice, shiny and fairly large perch on a streamer!!!

BTW: Living in Dortmund/Germany, the main species I fish for are trout, barbel (I call them 'steelhead of the poor'), chub and, of course, perch.

I tested this move with 3 different switchrods from #4, 10'6" to #6, 11' and tested it with 2 double-handed rods from #8, 12'9" to #9/10, 14'3" and heads inbetween 9m and 12,5m and polyleaders/tippetts, ranging from 3m to 5 m. No problem!

In the videos you can see me cast within a range of around 25m with a #6 switchrod and a SH of 10m + 5m Polyleaders/Tippet. If you have to manage more running line (more than one coil), you'll have to mark the sweet spot segment between other fingers.

The area I did the shooting at is a bit too restricted, but I needed

- river left with substantial current
- a bridge to film from
- sunlight/weather
- a friend to do it, preferrably a fisherman, who 'knows' what to film
- enough time

Please excuse that my English is sometimes "bumpy" ...

This move is absolutely great for fishing flipped streamers on a switchrod in the range of 20-25 meters.

I hope these explanations clarify my thoughts behind this move. I will also provide more video work, if time and weather allow, because I do have a few more Snap-Slip-Moves for other current/wind situations in stock. Stay tuned at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/JuergenFriesenhahn>

Last but not least, I want to thank Simon Gawesworth, Way Yin, Kirk Eberhard and his Spey Study Group for encouraging me to publish this.

Juergen Friesenhahn - FFF MCI, 2009

Teaching on the Water

by Pete Greenan, MCI

My fly-fishing schools stress fly fishing, not just fly casting. Although I start students on grass fields covering the basics, they eventually want to get out on the water. I would like to detail how I go about teaching casting while fishing. I believe this method can work for all sorts of on-water programs; i.e. from a skiff, drift boat or float tube.

We begin before we go out by going over rod rigging, leader choices and a general overview of what the student should expect. Then I instruct them on good safety techniques, how to store and protect their equipment and how to manage line. When I feel they have grasped those concepts, we go to a location where wind and water movement are minimal. This eliminates the stress of having to learn under adverse conditions.

In my case, I stop the boat and check that the student is comfortable. Now it is time for review. I ask them to make some short casts to acclimate themselves to their surroundings and the movement of the boat. I go over the basics one more time. Throughout all these exercises I take time to demonstrate the casts, and explain why it is done that way. I often use the three teaching maxims; visual, kinesthetic and key phrases. At each juncture, I allow time for self-discovery, only discussing their casts when they are done.

At this point I concentrate on two major factors needed to catch fish; accuracy and distance.

We work on accuracy first. I choose targets in or on the water within their normal range asking them to move from one to the other with a minimum of false casts. On each cast, I adjust their stroke and speed until they show proficiency. Here again I encourage them to remember the basics; i.e. the straight line path of the rod tip, matching rod bend with rod arc, etc. I also encourage them to use all the casts in their arsenal; switch casts, roll casts and others. Now is the time for a short break to discuss what they are doing, relax a little and refresh. I might go over the knots we are using, why we chose the leader construction or why I picked a particular fly. All this should take about two hours.

Now, I'll move them close to obstructions to hone their skill. Shorelines or bushes are great for accuracy practice, because they know immediately when they miss. Weedless flies help here. Here also is the time to work on different planes of the casts. When casting to a narrow opening, I teach an upright plane and when casting under the bushes, a more horizontal plane. The exercise also helps them cast a tight loop.

Distance is the easiest for me to teach on the water. I look for three targets in a row as if they were target rings in a five-weight contest, with the closest being the student's average cast, and the farthest about sixty feet. I'll often demonstrate how to extend line by increasing the stroke length. Beginning at the first target, I'll ask them to reach out for the second. Using the phrase "reach out" generally helps them increase the bend in the rod. I'll also demonstrate and explain again how rod arc changes with rod bend.

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At this point we are entering advanced casting techniques. These include line speed and the double or single haul. Demonstrating how to use the haul to pick line off the water, increase speed and shoot line to the last target is my next step. Once I see acknowledgement, I have the student make the cast. When I feel they are comfortable with the distance it is time to put it all together. But first, we take a lunch break. You have to feed the horses too. All this has eaten up about four hours.

To test their new skill level, I pole the skiff along a shoreline moving in and out while they cast. This makes them use all the arrows in the quiver. Even a little success here is important. The student can see the results of their hard work immediately. While poling I analyze their casts, complimenting them on the best and offering advice on the not-so-good. Here is where I work on reading the water. In my case it covers things like where fish would be holding, how to see fish in the water or how to read signs of feeding fish. This is a good time to explain how the fundamentals work, too. You can help them understand the pluses and minuses of each cast relative to the essentials. You can see how this might be applicable to a drift boat or float tube, or even wading a stream.

The last thing I do when giving on-water instruction is let the student catch a fish or two. I think everyone understands how important that is. So, I take them to a spot where I am confident they can hook up. When they do, I talk them through fighting the fish, proper handling and a good release. I encourage them to look around, be observant and I point out the wonders of the environment we are in. I talk a little about courtesy, why we fly-fish and how they can further enjoy fly-fishing.

I believe my students are looking for this process. They want to catch fish with a fly, but are not enthusiastic unless they are on the water. Most are result-orientated and so am I. The more enjoyable the learning experience is, the more apt I am to develop good clients and strong supporters of FFF.

Fish Hard,
Pete Greenan- MCI
Sarasota, Fl.

CONCLAVE 2010

West Yellowstone, Montana

August 24-28, 2010

Certification-Events in Hungary and Sweden 2009

By Lars Chr. Bentsen

Hungary - August 2009

August 17th and 18th Philip Maher, an MCI from Ireland and I were asked to travel to Hungary where The Association of Hungarian Flyfishers and Paul Arden, MCI from UK/Hungary/NZ, had organized a certification event with seven local candidates.

The event was held in very sunny and hot conditions – typical Central European summer, close to a little restaurant where we were allowed to hold the workshops, written tests and have lunch.



Candidate József Banati during his test. From the left, the president of The Association of Hungarian Flyfishers, József, Philip Maher and Lars Chr. Bentsen. Note the sunscreens, sunglasses and the blazing sun. Photo by Zsigmond Kovacs.

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After the initial workshop with presentation of the certification-programme, FFF in general, personal introductions from Philip Maher and myself, and written tests, we began the performance tests.



Philip Maher and Lars Chr. Bentsen discussing the results of the written test with candidate Erno Paskay.
Photo by Zsigmond Kovacs.

Despite some problems with English, it became apparent that the candidates were extremely well prepared. Apart from being experienced and good casters, the candidates were very well prepared and well versed in the terminology used by most FFF instructors. Their instruction abilities were solid and well founded – as was their fault correction. We feel it's important to acknowledge the work done by Paul Arden in preparing the candidates.

We both want to express our thanks to The Association of Hungarian Flyfishers for a fantastic event, well organized and all the good food.

A special thanks goes to Adam Denes for a lot of practical work in the event, a fantastic goulash on the last evening, and for his work with translations of key FFF documents. Adam's translations obviously contributed greatly towards preparing the candidates. Adam also acted as translator for all candidates who needed it.

All seven candidates passed their FFF CI exam. Big congratulations to Zsigmond Kovacs, Adam Denes, Erno Paskay, Zoltan Farago, Balazs Harsagyi, Zsombor Púnkósti, József Banati.

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Sweden - October 2009

October 9-11. Testing in Sweden in October offers different problems than testing in Hungary in August – sub-zero temperatures in the mornings and evenings is one of them. Local MCI and THCI, Thomas Berggren, had put together this event at his own place, Little Malma Fishery. This venue was perfect with a big, newly cut lawn where Thomas and his helper, Tobbe Olsson, had laid out courses for the performance tests – two courses that were serviceable from both sides. Apart from sub-zero temperatures in the mornings and evenings on the Saturday, the weather was very nice with high sun and no wind on Saturday – cloudy and a little windier on Sunday.



On Saturday morning, the pool was frozen over and there was rime frost on the grass.
Photo by Lars Chr. Bentsen.



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Examiners were Robert Gillespie, MCI & THCI – Ireland, Stefan Siikavara, MCI – Sweden, Thomas Berggren, MCI & THCI – Sweden and Lars Chr. Bentsen, MCI – Denmark.

Out of six candidates Tony Lindberg - Sweden, Christer Appelgren – Sweden, Teemu Tolonen – Finland and Staffan Dahlbom all passed their CI-exams. One candidate had to cancel his test, and one didn't pass. Sunday a THCI-exam was turned into a workshop given by Robert Gillespie, MCI & THCI – Ireland.



Robert Gillespie (right) giving a workshop on the Two-Handed Casting Instructor Certification to Ronny Landin (left) and in yellow is Thomas Berggren, Sweden (center). Photo by Lars Chr. Bentsen.

The event was very well organized by Thomas Berggren, and despite sub-zero temperatures, cancelled flights, broken down cars and other problems, everything went extremely well!

All participated in Thomas' outdoor barbecue with boar-burgers on Saturday evening despite the cold.

From myself and the other examiners, I want to say "Thank you" to Thomas and his wife-to-be (congratulations from all of us), Cecilia and Torbjørn for a wonderful event and exquisite, homecooked food.

Thanks also to Lasse Karlsson, who showed up only to say "Hi", but lent a helping hand!

One thing that I have learned to appreciate above everything else participating in international events is the community for learning that is always created. A community that in my experience will keep growing with the continual sharing of knowledge and experiences between instructors - new as well as old ones.

I have always felt that the interest in flyfishing, flycasting and flycasting instruction creates a common ground for continual development of skills and knowledge for all involved. This has certainly been proved true in these last two events.

Judging a Guide by Its Cover

Lou Bruno

Winston, yes Winston; upon hearing the name I momentarily fabricated thoughts of nobility, refinement and yes thoughts of the English statesman that shared the name. That is where the likeness stopped.

Fly fishing and the people who fly fish can at times come across as being a bit snobbish, and elitist. You know the wine and cheese crowd. Any thoughts that Winston would fill that mold were quickly erased.

Winston represented the beer and beef jerky crowd. His waders were dirty and stained; hair needed some attention, his gear was...was...was! The fly rod wasn't a pristine tool used on the odd occasion. I could tell the fly rod had been his companion and had landed many a fish. His reel revealed the battle scars, a legacy to the time he spent fishing. The two fly boxes he carried showed areas that were soiled and worn. The fly boxes were nothing else but a container for his flies. The flies within the boxes were a tangled heap.

How could he know what was in there, how could he pick a fly out without bringing several companions with it? Somehow the fly boxes lost their entire purpose, he could have used a zip-lock bag. Have you ever seen the fishing vest that the stores would put on close out sale; you know the one that was turning yellow and dirty from hanging on a hanger for years! That was Winston's vest. Now try to imagine years of being worn and exposed to the elements then add that to the appearance.

Winston was my guide this day. I chose to meet Winston at the stream. When I walked past his truck, I glimpsed a peek in and noticed the remnants of a meal, leftovers still sitting on the front seat, with fly leader material covering it and some fishing magazines and newspapers tossed alongside.

Trying to gain a better image of my companion for the day I quickly envisioned Winston eating in a hurry, deciding that the fish were more important than his lunch, leaving it partially eaten and heading for the stream. I began to ask myself questions about Winston: how old is this guy anyway? Does he make a living doing this? Does he have a family? I may not find those answers out today, so for now Winston is my 'guide'.

"Silence is golden," please tell Winston! The guy would talk, and talk and talk. Questions, once only a thought in my mind, were randomly being answered by Winston. Could he have been reading my mind? Winston had no problem talking about his life.

A single guy, although I assure you not a confirmed bachelor, was waiting patiently for the right mate. For now Winston's love was guiding and engaging others in his passion. Looking at Winston, you would never have thought that he made his livelihood any other way. Not true. It did not take long for Winston to realize that he and the business world did not mix; you know that oil and water thing. Winston had a charismatic personality. He loved people and had a way of balancing out the conversations. As we worked toward the water, I soon

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found myself as an open book, sharing my life and experiences without reservation, not a topic spared, Winston listening attentively and keenly interested. Overcoming my first impression of Winston quite quickly, I was optimistic and anxious to find out what the rest of the day had in store for my companion and me.

Once on the stream a transformation began in Winston from the talkative, unorganized Winston to the knowledgeable, skilled and intense guide and fly fisherman. He knew the stream well, and no matter where we moved along that water the fish couldn't hide.

Did Winston really know where the fish were? For me that answer was simple, it was not luck; for Winston it was no doubt, skill. Winston was seasoned, not only in appearance, but in long hours of reading and educating himself in all aspects of guiding and the sport of fly fishing. He knew where the trout were hiding and how to tempt them out of the water. Would it be the May, Caddis or the Stone fly that would coax the elusive trout this hour?

With a hatch in progress, I was instructed to quickly tie on an Adams dry fly. Not hesitating for a moment I followed my instructor's cue and like magic I found myself hooked into a rainbow. Amazing!

So I asked myself, once again, happenstance or skill. The answer wasn't any different, not that I expected it to be, but it had to be asked anyway. After all, at the end of the day I had to assess my guide and his skills. We continued on the stream that day, Winston using the water as his personal classroom, to educate me on his love and passion. I did not want the day to end, however I knew it must.

As we walked back to our vehicles, dusk was beginning to lead way to darkness. I was exhausted by the day, the effects showing in my every step; however Winston seemed to be quickening the pace with each step.

Finally back at my vehicle, resting my body against it for support, my mind on instant replay of the events of the day; savoring the few last moments of silence when... the silence was broken by a familiar sound, it was ice being swooshed around in a cooler. Then Winston handed me a cold drink.

As I stood against my car that evening, feeling the warmth of the air on my skin and a cold drink in my hand, my thoughts went back to my initial meeting with Winston. I could only think to myself, 'you're right', "Don't Judge a Guide By It's Cover" CHEERS!

HELP!

When Liz Watson and I took over as Loop editors, one of the jobs we put on our list of things to do was put all of the back issues of the Loop up on the web site. The reasons are obvious and we hope that they have been well used by our members.

This was one small item on a list, but a HUGE job to accomplish. Remember that the Loop was in printed form at that time, so gathering up the issues was time consuming - thank goodness for e-mail and scanners.

Here is where I need help. **One of the issues has gone missing.** This is an issue that was published because - and wait for it - I have the outline for it..... but the actual issue is missing from the web site.....

So please check your archives - **both printed and computer** -to see if you have a copy of the:
Loop WINTER 2003.

If you do, please contact me at goldnwst@telus.net

Thanks - Denise

PEARLS....

From a Master Study Group

Hosted by Gordy Hill

Pearl #1 - Spey Line quiz

1. Generally speaking what types of lines are not suitable for Spey casting?
2. Generally speaking what types of lines are commonly used for Spey casting?
3. Why are those listed in (1) unsuitable and why are those listed in (2) suitable?
4. Recommend the head (front taper + main mass (belly) + back taper) length to rod length for a promising student.
5. How much floating line (multiple of rod length) can be comfortably aerialised into a 'D' loop with a long belly Spey line, single Spey cast and 45 degree angle change?
6. As (5) for a Double Spey cast with a 90 deg angle change?
7. How do the answers given in (5) and (6) vary for the following conditions:
 - a) Standing on a casting platform?
 - b) Wading ankle deep?
 - c) Wading up to waist level?
8. What can be done to increase the length of line aerialised in a 'D' loop for a Single Spey cast and what is likely to deteriorate during the casting sequence as this length is increased?
9. What determines the maximum mass of a custom fast sinking tip attached to a Spey line?
10. When Spey casting with a fast sinking tip, how can you reasonably sure that the line/fly will cast cleanly?
11. How does the leader/fly assemblage influence Spey cast and for Underhand casting?
12. Who popularised the modern Underhand cast? What are the advantages and disadvantages of Underhand casting compared to Spey casting?
13. The rear portion of the head of many WF Spey lines is comparatively heavy, why?
14. What disadvantage (from a fishing perspective) is encountered due to the heavy rear portion with certain types of line?
15. What type of line was preferred by Scotsman, Alexander Grant who often cast over 160ft without shooting any line over 100 years ago? What type of cast did he use? What type of rod and where did it get its name from? Which of the modern lines most closely compare with Grant's line?
16. What do you expect to see if uncontrolled running line is used with a shooting head and:
 - a) The running line is too light/lacks friction?
 - b) The running line is too heavy/excessive friction?
 - c) Imagine that you are wading waist deep in a fast flow. Describe how the drag effect of loose running line can be reduced whilst casting?
 - d) How can turnover be improved?
17. Howling upstream wind, standing on a long steep bank four feet above the water (the bank rises to 100 ft). Fishing with a type 3 sinking line into deep water. What cast would you suggest?
18. Wind is downstream and you are positioned back against a wall built right at the water's edge with no possibility of wading? Choose an outfit and casting method to make best use of the situation?
19. For what purposes was 'Skagit' casting styles developed? What techniques are common to all Skagit casts?

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20. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a double tapered line for Spey casting?
21. What is the primary function of the rear taper of a Spey line ?
22. Which is better, a long rear taper or a short one ?
23. Is it necessary to have a rear taper on a Spey line ?
24. Can you think of any advantage to using a shooting head rather than a full Spey line ?
25. Do you know of any group of Spey fishermen who are known for cutting off the rear taper of their Spey lines ?
26. In general, how are Spey lines rated ?

Answers to the spey line quiz.....

Spey lines

1. Generally speaking what types of lines are not suitable for Spey casting? Short belly lines without the weight to properly load the rod.

Good answer, belly length is important and absolute minimum is generally considered to be 3 x rod length. Line profile is also important eg. a level line or a WF line with a reverse tapered head (weight concentrated at the front of the line) or a regular 30 ft shooting head would not be ideal.

2. Generally speaking what types of lines are commonly used for Spey casting? Lines with enough weight to load the rod. Short belly Spey lines minimum (length 55') Mid belly (length 65') Long belly (length 75').

Most spey lines floating, intermediate, Sink Tip or Full Sinking. Skagit Ines short but have the weight.

Lines with enough weight to load a rod are necessary for all forms of casting but I know where you're coming from and sometimes a line size heavier than that indicated on a rod are better for Spey casting. Skagit lines are short but they are a means of fishing with long and heavy tips and the complete assemblage takes the system into the 'normal' range of lengths related for roll and Spey type casts. DT lines can also be used provided that the casting distance is not great (up to 75 ft?). Beyond that the superior shoot-ability of WF Spey lines is advantageous. Before the WF lines appeared (Wulff Triangle Taper was the first I think) we could cast 120 feet with a DT floater by cutting the front taper of a #11 line and attaching 20ft of #9 where the diameters matched.

3. Why are those listed in (1) unsuitable and why are those listed in (2) suitable?

1. The lines can't load the rod because the weight they afford the 'D' Loop is not enough to load the rod.

2. These lines have the gram weight, while in the "D" Loop, to load the rod.

Setting aside the rod loading issue, a good Spey or roll casting line puts a significant proportion of the line mass into the D loop, this has to gain sufficient inertia for casting and a longer front taper helps this by presenting less friction and mass as the D loop lifts from the surface. In other words the main casting mass is arranged to be concentrated in the top half of the D loop.

4. Recommend the head (front taper + main mass (belly) + back taper) length to rod length for a promising student? 65' head length /w rod of 14' or 15'.

That's what I would say!

5. How much floating line (multiple of rod length) can be comfortably aerialised into a 'D' loop with a long belly Spey line, single Spey cast and 45 degree angle change? Four to five rod lengths. You must be able to lift some times as much as 75' of line off the water. You need a long stroke to accomplish this cast.

Good answer!

6. As (5) for a Double Spey cast with a 90 deg angle change? The change in angle or type of the cast should not change the four to five rod length of line that can be cast.

It's more difficult to contain as much line in a D loop formed from a "sustained" or "picked up" anchor than it is from a dynamic or "dropped" anchor so generally speaking the maximum amount of line that can be comfortably contained in the D loop will be less than for the single Spey. I note that this was recognized in the answer to question 7!

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LINES FOR TWO HANDED CASTING

by Al Buhr

Notes on Understanding Two-Handed Fly lines:

Two-handed line choice was easy, not too long ago. The Double Taper (DT) was the retail fly line produced by manufacturers. The DT as the predominate line available, had a following; some would say, the 'proper' choice for spey casting. However, the market strength (or popularity) of the DT was a slight illusion, since it also was the line material source for the growing trend of hand-made custom lines. This scattered innovation was a quiet rebellion of the 'proper way', seeking better ways to present a fly.

By 1980, a change of ideals was in place and growing. Working independently, Göran Andersson in Northern Europe and Jim Green in America, popularized in their regions the effectiveness of the shooting head with the two-handed rod.

Göran, developed the Andresson cast, shortly after becoming known as the Underhand cast. This method utilizes many movements and ideals of old 'Spey casting' techniques (keeping in mind, the 'modern spey casting' method was becoming established). Göran's methodology encompassed the cast as a complete system; as where: leader, line, rod and the technique all harmonized for maximum efficiency with minimal disturbance. Today, this technique has branched to several forms; also referred as Scandinavian or Scandi.

Jim Green, worked at devising both rods (at Fenwick) and lines. First came a sink-tip system for winter steelhead fishing, then followed with the floating tip version. By the mid-1990 the sink-tip line system had branched and then became labeled as 'Skagit line' by Marlow Bumpus and Ed Ward.

1994 brought change to the market, as Weight Forward (WF) two-handed lines became commonly available (Cortland, Rio, Scientific Anglers, followed by Airflo). The shift away from the DT formally was set. At that time, WF lines appeared in a mid-50-foot and 70-plus-foot versions, varying some with each manufacturer. With the DT just in the near past, rod action/strength had not shifted, fostering line development to be somewhat common in head weight as per line size designation among the brands.

The Shooting head element of two-handed lines was already in place by the late 1980's with Göran Andersson teaming up with Loop Tackle. Loop established a complete line of shooting heads (ST) and matching rods of different weights and lengths.

In 2004 a two-handed fly line standard was adopted (AFFTA), which established a common manufacturing weight for each line size, in four head length groups. The AFFTA line standard strived as a simple solution to a multi-dimension fly line; accounting for the natural parameter changes as the head length shortens or lengthens. The standard scale shifts with each of the four groups, each having a set weight-point. When this standard was adopted, 60 percent of retail lines were already within tolerance, with an additional 15-percent within 15 grains (1 gram) – over or under.

For those who understand the single-hand line standard, at first glimpse, may find the four head length categories complicated. In single hand, when line types are matched to the recommended line size noted on the rod; the line weight may change as a normal selection process. For example, in the past when WF lines were commonly 30-feet long, a reliable rule for selecting a fly line to match a rod is: DT-match the rod weight number, WF-up one weight size, ST-up two weight sizes.

The two-hand line standard strived to recognize different head lengths and their specific weights within the scale.

Multi numbered size designations can be confusing, especially when the fly line is made to a specific weight. Fly line manufacturers extrude a line with tightly controlled parameters to assure uniform profile and weight.

Most manufactures make WF lines to the AFFTA standard, the ST and Skagits are in flux, yet maintain a like weight as per size designation. Understanding that a fly line profile is specifically made to a weight linked to a single size number from the AFFTA standard can make the use of dual or triple number designations difficult to objectively understand. This ‘confusing multi-number designation’ is additionally compounded when the same brand labels will have single size number notation on single-hand fly lines; underscoring an inconsistency that perpetuates further confusion.

An objective to having or following an AFFTA line standard is to aid and simplify tackle selection for people new to the sport; as in, those making the purchase, as well as, the fellow at the fly shop. A recognized number designation allows matching up a rod and line combination to a reasonable degree, good for all, in all ways. At the other end of the spectrum, those who know their tackle intimately often perceive the fly line in grain or gram weight. Rightfully, as each person gravitates to a personal ‘feel’ to how a rod responds to a line type, head length, and fishing technique or situations. Personal ‘feel’ is a perception, which may not be a proper recommendation to an entry level caster.

Skagit lines can be simplified if just considered as a simplistic sink-tip shooting head, recognizing that there are floating tips and all floating versions as well. Previously (in the 1980 era) these lines were referred to as a ‘winter line’. Having a large diameter, short (17 to 20-foot) floating body; suited a 16-foot-9wt rod well (then common), and hoisted bulky flies with heavy sinking tips. In the early 1990s, a weighted fly with a shorter sinking tips became popular, influencing the floating body size to shift longer. The Skagit lines became a retail fly line around 2004. To some degree Skagit lines gravitated to a near extreme diameter and weight, as a consequence most retail lines (if tips are included) come with light to medium weight tips, as most cannot reasonably hoist heavily weighted high-density tips and weighted fly without overloading a rod.

To put things into perspective; a realistic 20-foot tip will weigh 225gr to 350gr, 8ips to 10ips, if looped to a 9wt Skagit (600gr), the head is well over 50-feet long and 900 gains. Then, try adding the bulky weighted fly. Change the line body to a realistic length and weight, the same heavy tips are castable.

In the past few years, Compact Skagit versions have become popular. Like the early ‘winter line’ sink tip, the Compact Skagit lines are much more nimble, handle greater extreme tips lengths and weights, and are much easier to cast.

Airflo, devising the modern poly-leader, as well as sinking tips with mono-cores, elevated sink-tip use to a new level. In the past, the design of a sink tip (sinking tip and floating body combined) could be a daunting task. Matching the tip density (usually the fastest) and its weight, required to get the fly down. Added, is a floating body diameter and mass to be large enough to drive the tip’s mass with minimum hinging, yet to be light enough for the rod to handle. The mix can be difficult to find harmony. When done right, the sink tip is super smooth, and extremely effective. The introduction of mono-cored sink materials and leaders, allowed a mass reduction, and a reduced line diameter for equal depth penetration of nylon cored sinkers. Mono-cored sinking material is now made by several line manufactures.

Experiencing directly the development of the two-handed rod, as well as a number of fly lines and techniques used in the Northwest has been a great opportunity. Today, it is sad to see the DT line disappear from the market, a fantastic fly line to learn by. However, the DT’s lethargic nature which demands good casting skills and techniques, in turn, could not compete with the superior performance of modern WF lines.

There is no magic, no great secret within two-handed lines. Loops are loops, and lines are lines, neither knows how long the rod is. Each responds to the energy instilled during the cast, and profile shape in flight. The fundamentals within single-hand casting transfers across.

Where differences can be experienced is in the scope of ‘constant tension’. The hand grip at a greater width, and the rod at a longer length; combined, allow for movements and responses to be amplified with greater cause and effect. The two-handed rod can be a tool to seek more depth as to “the cast” without regard to discipline (single or two-handed). **AL**

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Will Turek sent some questions on Spey Lines for Al Buhr :-

Regarding Al's response to spey lines. Al says, "To put things into perspective; a realistic 20' tip will weigh 225gr to 350gr, 8ips to 10ips; if looped to a 9wt Skagit (600gr), the head is well over 50' long and 900 grains. Then, try adding the bulky weighted fly.

Change the line body to a realistic length and weight, the same heavy tips are castable."

I understand the 50'+ length of the line. Take 27' head + 10' cheater + 20' sink tip = 57'. (Cheater length is to compensate for the head length to rod length ratio of 3-3.5x @ 16' rod - this is a generally accepted formula used in both Skagit and Scandi casting). I also understand the approximate weight calculation. 600grn = 9wt. 600 + 280 (20' T14, my choice for sake of argument) = 880.

My understanding has been that since the weight of the sinking tip is not part of the D loop, it does not contribute to the loading of the rod.

Therefore the only weight that loads the rod is the 600grn and the rod is not overloaded. 57' is 1' longer than the upper limit of the 3.5 ratio, theoretically a 16' rod should still be able handle this. So, at what point does the sink tip begin to inhibit the castability of the entire line system. Not how does it affect the castability, but at what point expressed in a percentage of mass of the head does the tip cause adverse effects to casting.

In this example the tip is almost 50% of the weight of the head.

I have been led to believe that as long as the tip weighs less than the mass of the head, the head will load the rod sufficiently to handle the mass of the tip + fly.

Can Al please comment on this? Also, please give a concrete example of what the 'change to a realistic length and weight' would be for this particular set up.

In addition, I would like to know Al's take on the compact Skagit and Scandi heads being used with light weight switch rods. For sake of argument, limit it to 11' rods. Specifically, what solutions has Al implemented for fishing 5', 10' and 15' tips on 20-23ft heads. What compensation needs to be taken into account regarding head length (I'm thinking of the head/rod length ratio) and/or grain weight limitations has he encountered.

That be None,, to little,,, to a notable degree...

Detailed answers to Will's questions from Al Buhr :-

First, some of this confusion comes from some rules that are more like myths. I will expand on the facts I trust as true. This 2-hand game gets many strange rules never seen in single-hand, too bad, it fuels confusion.

Next: Will, thanks for the questions, they're good, and full of those spey myths (more good). So, sorry Will, but I am going to trample on most of myths, or rules you noted, they simple do not hold up when scrutinized. Not your fault, these silly ideas have been around for a while. All I ask is for you to test all things, including my comments and statements. Proofing ideals is healthy for the mind. I will (well try to) supply an exercise to get you started in proofing these silly myths, which can hinder the fishing experience.

1) Forget the 'cheater'; by adding it, the line becomes equal a short-belly WF with the tip section looped off. Just get the right line at the start. Avoid the looping on long line sections to extend a head, as the loops will snare and jam when yarding in the only fish of the day,, you loose...

Simple line outfits can be extremely effective tools.

2) **A factor X times rod length** is an old (archaic) way of measuring working line length; the DT has passed away, time to move on. Since 1994, 2-hand fly lines are available in varying head lengths, each head length is suited for or excels in a water type or chose by caster preference.

A 14-foot rod can handle a 32-foot shooting head or a 75-long belly WF, and all available as retail lines. A two-handed rod has a wide range to fly line's weight and length; regulated greatly by personal 'feel'.

It is misleading to state rod length determines the proper line length, since other elements of a rod have great importance.

Rod length, rod weight/size, and rod action will interact and harmonize naturally with a given line length (single or two-handed). This is detailed in my line booklet.

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In teaching, it can be confusing to students to refer to line lengths as X-times-rod-length; not in following with the 'Keep it Simple' approach.

In Single-hand there is no defined X rod length limitation to rods. It is accepted a 9-foot rod can cast short bodied WF in a spring creek, then false cast a SA Expert WF at 90-feet prior to the final delivery. Very possible a single-hand 5wt. could have an 80-some-feet variance in length (short to long casts). This corrupts the X-rod length thought.

Exercise: use different WF head lengths, try a short-belly and a long-belly. Use a Switch cast; it is very important to note where your hand travel starts and stops, don't look at the loops, look at your arms/hands. The mid-50' line will have a shorter stroke than the mid-70' (by several inches). Mix in a 40' or shorter shooting head and shorten the stroke again.

Most 'spey casters' struggle to change-up their stroke lengths; yet in single-hand, visible change of stroke length is common/normal. 'Spey casters' who fail to shorten their stroke, may compensate by increasing line weight/mass; likewise some Skagits are 2 to 3 line weights heavy (by trade). If you include a Skagit head into the exercise, you must lower in line size or the casting stroke will naturally lengthen. Certainly additional head weight will help to cast an extreme sinking tip; however, excessive head weight affects the casts ability to contort within a fishing situation.

Think of stroke length as the adjuster for the varying sinking tip weights, densities and fly size/weight.

Having control of stroke length, to change-up, is critical to adjust within the situation. As in: gain a position to get the strike, cast from that location; rather than, stand to make the cast, have a poor presentation, to make additional casts.

3) The 3x rod factor for a Skagit line, is a Myth.

For a good ten years (thru the '80s) on the Skagit, a common combination was 15-foot tip with 17-foot floating body used on a 16-foot rod: factoid. The latest trend into compact lines (Skagit and Scandi) is a return to line systems used in the past.

Why this works well? Easier to control the backloop when in tight situations, and rod tip closer to the sinking tip makes hoisting them free from the surface easier.

Cure for the X-rod myth is simple; buy one of Timmy's Airflo Compacts (a great line and popular [Hmm, guess why?]). Better yet, cut your Skagit to 20' length and weld in your own loops. Explore beyond your T-14, there is seriously high performance material with low mass available.

4) Top (rod-leg) of the D-loop loads the rod, False (to a measurable degree). Easily proven so:

-If the top D-leg (rod leg) is the source of rod loading, then stop anchoring the fly/ leader/ lower D-leg onto the water. . . Leave the anchor placement hovering in the air, this should work out well, since the lower D-leg does not contribute to the cast.

-Why do anchors skip loose when a D-loop is over tension during the forward stroke? Tension from rod loading.

-How is it possible to make a 'dead line' roll cast, with an extreme shallow backloop that is static (less than 2' behind the rod shaft). It works due to the resistance of the lower D-leg (fly-leg).

Past long term use of the DT fly line for spey casting, floating and sinking, corrupts the thought that fly lines predominate mass must be in the upper leg of the D-loop. Furthermore, some high performance long-belly line profiles specifically do not have the predominant mass in the top D-leg; as in directly behind the rod tip.

-An anchor has two tasks; trap the fly/leader establishing the D-loop depth (to some degree), and to provide rod loading into the forward cast. In addition, the grip of the anchor must exceed all energy generated into the forward cast (there are techniques to regulate/increase anchor grip).

The lower (fly-leg) of the D-loop weight does not contribute to rod loading, False. A "dead line" Roll cast derives loading from the lower D-loop leg.

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Exercise: Use your Skagit line (undersized by two line sizes), loop on these three tips and switch cast an:
Airflo 14' 'Extra-Super-Fast' (6.1ips) it weighs 115 gr.
Airflo Custom cut 330, cut at 14' (9.5 ips) it will weigh about 230 gr.
Airflo Custom cut 470, cut at 14' (11.5 ips) it will weight about 330 gr. (substitute with Rio or SA material, just match the weight)

Avoid using a pause in the D-loop, use a degree of constant tension to swing the 'circle-up' around and forward, smooth as silk, firm as steel, progressively..

The Skagit line will respond differently with each line, since the resistance of the lower leg of the back loop is a source of rod loading. Equally, the sinking tip weight is accumulative with the floating body weight; as would be in any fly line type/profile, shooting head or long belly; single or two-handed.

The fly size-shape-materials-weight, combined, will shift how the head body and sinking tip will respond.

5) Let's by-pass a short bit, and look at rod loading, via D-loop, with a round-world spin to a more clear path. This will help validate correction of some myths.

[**Note:** For those strongly fixed to straight-line, some concepts will not/cannot come to potential, due to related consequences of a 'stop']

Agreed, as the working line length (line outside the tip) increases, the stroke length increases; consequently, greater rod bend, or rod loading can be attained.

Increase in stroke length allows greater time (cycle duration) for the fly line to respond to applied forces, in turn allowing for more applied force; the fly line's prospective.

The rod as an entity, with regard to bend or loading, recognizes the fly line as resistance.

Therefore, as a set head length shortens, its weight proportionally will increase; as the head lengthens, the weight proportionally decreases (an old line building rule). This shift in mass allows a stroke length (to some degree) to centralize. As an example, the old rule of line selection; DT- rod size, WF- one up, ST- two up from rod size.

Standard retail Skagit bodies have an elevated mass that shifts the natural casting stroke to a longer range of motion. A long-stroke can somewhat assist heaving a sinking tip, but is a significant hindrance within frequent confined fishing scenarios. Whereas, an old style Skagit lines, much like the new Compact Skagits, retains the mass-per-foot to hoist heavy tips, without comprising the moderate casting stroke length.

To expand on line resistance within a D-loop (constant tension); the rod reaction (bending) to the due to the line's resistance can be derived from: the lines mass, or friction/resistance placed onto the line, such as the 'anchor'. For instance, a 'dead line' roll cast lower D-leg develops loading resistance. Likewise, a sinking tip, by its nature, is a reliable loading resistance. Accepting an anchor placement as a source of loading, the overall mass of a skagit body does not need to be excessive heavy. Reducing body weight, the head system will be less harsh on the water, improving fishing success.

6) The sinking tip section and to the floating body work together like a marriage. The tip presents the fly to the desired depth; the body delivers the tip to the target. Each has a vital role in an effective presentation; combined work in harmony with the body supporting the tip.

The tip draws the fly to the strike zone. When selecting a tip, choose the length for the approach/water type, pick the 'ips' rate of sink for the needed depth, use the minimal diameter size that will carry the fly (less mass; easier to cast).

The Body drives the tip, and regulates the unroll during flight. A level body will conduit sufficient energy to hoist any heavy tip, consequently can have a harsh lay-down. A tapered body, reducing to the tip, will compromise lifting/heaving strength for a smoother lay-down. A good compromise is a 25% front taper / 75% level body. A 25/75 will heave the chunkiest tips and ugliest flies; yet throttle for a quiet approach.

A line building guideline for matching the sinking tip to the body for a somewhat smooth casting head is: Select the head's floating body section with an equivalent or slightly greater weight-per-foot than the sinking

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tip. Consider the sinking line's density as well. In extreme situations with high-density sinking tips, the weight can exceed 28 grains-per-foot, or more. In these instances, the floating body weight-per-foot can be 80% (near a maximum ratio) of the heavier sinking tip weight-per-foot. Ultimately, the fly rod's size, length and action will dictate the limitations to how extreme the sinking tip can become.

This is clearly detailed in my new line booklet. (Like computers that become outdated in three months, my booklet has updates; now v21 is 48 pages)

7) The switch rod, a Gary Anderson vision, has evolved and fulfilled a useful niche.

(Gary Anderson also specializes in several series of ultra light 2-hand rods, down to a standard length in a 3wt. size)

The switch rod is in its own little world, not a single-hand rod and not a two-hand rod; yet, it goes both ways,, With a half size handle, the switch rod is nice to single-hand cast, change the grip to both hands and it becomes a light snappy spey casting machine.

The light models, below 5wt. are effective for high-sticking, multi fly set-ups, or big indicators.

SAGE has a 11' - 6wt that has a spunky tip, perfect for poppers – just love it, the ultimate cross-over rod.

The larger lines sizes (still at 11-foot) can be effective with sink tips in small rivers with close surroundings, like some mid-west steelhead rivers. Henrik Mortensen has a 11' 4" – 8wt with the new keen Zpey handle that is super smooth with lots of lifting power.

Lines can be simple, but you may need to experiment a bit to get the perfect match or 'feel'. Switch rods are a pinch stronger than single-hand, so one can select a single-hand line and up one or two sizes.

The Airflo 40-plus is liked by some. Royal Wulff has the Ambush line, a single-hand Skagit one-piece line (has running line molded on).

My performance for a wet fly is a shooting head with mono, all performance (all floating or sink tip).

For popping, my favorite is a Royal Wulff Bass Triangle Taper, a nice marriage.

The compact Skagit lines will suit any rod. The retail single-hand Skagits match up to the switch rods well, and tend not to be clunky to cast.

The compact Scandi lines become popular in the 13-foot and shorter rods and in light versions will match up with the switch rods.

The limitation to line choice is only limited by the wiliness to try, and your preferred 'feel'. AL

Answers to the spey line quiz.....(continued)

7. How do the answers given in (5) and (6) vary for the following conditions:

a) - Standing on a casting platform? Both should be very easy.

Provided that the platform is not too high it might be possible to make slightly larger loops than normal.

b) - Wading ankle deep? Both should be relatively easy.

This is the easiest situation.

c) - Wading up to waist level? This is the most difficult casting because of the restriction of the height of the rod out of the water when the cast is made. The double Spey and 90deg. change should make the cast even more difficult.

Water above elbow depth is when casting really starts to get difficult but even at waist level the amount of line that its possible to contain in the D loop will be reduced. In practical terms this means that an extra wading step depth may not be worthwhile!

8. What can be done to increase the length of line aerialised in a 'D' loop for a Single Spey cast and what is likely to deteriorate during the casting sequence as this length is increased? Adding energy to the "D" Loop. You would more than likely cause a problem with the anchor placement on the cast and have line stick on the water could both be problems.

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Good recognition of the likely problems! The usual way to increase the size of the D loop is to start with an in-swing and as said the likely effect is a less predictive anchor and a little more disturbance. (A perfect anchor lands softly and moves continuously under tension.) In good conditions 6 times rod length is possible with skill and practice but it is seldom comfortable.

9. What determines the maximum mass of a custom fast sinking tip attached to a Spey line? Line Density. Or the rate you want it to sink.

The maximum mass of anything transported by a vehicle is determined by the size of the vehicle. A fly line is a delivery vehicle and its mass determines what it can carry. In addition, to help turn over a mass taper and use of materials of similar stiffness is advantageous. Skagit lines are designed on this principle, to cast weighty tips and flies and that is why they are so heavy, they are effectively large vehicles, the tractors of the casting world, “agricultural” but powerful!

10. When Spey casting with a fast sinking tip how can you reasonably sure that the line/fly will cast cleanly? Cast a wider loop to prevent kick back.

I’m not sure what “kick back” is; it may mean elastic recoil from an overpowered cast in which case I agree. But here is a useful rule of thumb, if you can ensure that half or more of a sink tip is kept aerialised, tensioned in the D loop its odds on that the cast will go cleanly. Any slack between the D loop and the fly or failure to ensure that a good portion of the sink tip is out of the water are likely to cause difficulties.

11. How does the leader/fly assemblage influence Spey cast and for Underhand casting? Use the leader you use for the type of fish you are after. In The Spey cast the leader and some of the line will be used as an anchor. The leader should be 15 to 20 Ft long because none of the line should be in the water. This leaves only the leader for an anchor.

Leader length and the fly’s bulk and mass affect the resistance to lifting the anchor in Spey casting (I was asked to demonstrate casting with a Bunker fly in a four foot wave in the sea in NJ some years ago and that was the most difficult Spey casting that I have encountered!). In Underhand casting the ideal is that all of the shooting head is out of the water and suspended in the D loop between overhang and the leader. This sometimes requires long specially tapered leaders but not if a tungsten bottle tube is being used! The general leader design rules always apply; heavy/bulky flies need shorter and heavier leaders. In both instances the leader and fly have to “balanced” to achieve useable tension. Leader too long and/or fly too heavy - too much drag and the line won’t lift correctly and if it does it probably won’t turn over nicely. Leader too short and the “anchor” will lift too soon and if the cast goes out the leader/fly is likely to recoil or land heavily.

12. Who popularised the modern Underhand cast? What are the advantages and disadvantages of Underhand casting compared to Spey casting? Goren Anderson.

1. Less energy expended to make the cast you don’t tire as easy. Makes you use the lower hand to apply power thus helps those who have problem with a dominate hand.

2. Lower hand position makes casting from waist deep water difficult. May cause Tailing loops unless good control of the line.

Advantages also include ease of changing to different lines without having to travel with a host of reels. Works well in confined spaces and is ideal for sinking lines where you would have to shorten the line significantly to lift it anyway.

The main drawback of the Underhand cast is management of the shooting line, especially if you are going for long distance and using monofilament. Shooting line can be difficult to hold because it is thin, it tangles easily, catches herbage and if allowed to drift in the current it provides a lot of drag to the outgoing line. Worst of all is when it encounters a leaf which starts spinning!

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13. The rear portion of the head of many WF Spey lines is comparatively heavy, why? To make sure the bulk of the weight ends up in the “D” loop. This loads the rod.

Good answer!

14. What disadvantage (from a fishing perspective) is encountered due to the heavy rear portion with certain types of line? You must get the belly out of the rod tip. This may not be easy in the excitement of fishing.

Lines with really heavy rear bellies drift more slowly in the current (they have more resistance to movement - drag) which can be a disadvantage or benefit depending on the circumstance and in the air the heavy rear portion (cf the taper) can cause poor turnover at long distance unless the running line is retarded.

Sinking lines sink “belly first” which is a problem because the line bottoms and drags the hook into snags. This can be rectified by using a hi density tip or leader.

15. What type of line was preferred by Scotsman Alexander Grant who often cast over 160ft without shooting any line over 100 years ago? What type of cast did he use? What type of rod and where did it get its name from? Which of the modern lines most closely compare with Grant’s line?

1. Silk – *Yes but a square plait (solid construction) continuous taper for the total length of the line which incidentally could not be “shot” because of its rough surface and the folding rings that Grant preferred.*

2. The Switch Cast – *Yes although it was sometimes referred to as “The Planet Cast” because the rod tip made a horizontal ellipse-like orbit in the air.*

3. 21’ Traditional Greenheart SPEY Rod. “The Grant Vibration”.

4. The name comes from the Vibration Frequency Principle. *Yes - Resonance – each part of the rod was tuned to E flat I believe.*

5. Scientific Anglers XLT Spey Line. – *Wulff’s triangle taper Spey line is closest and is a great line for surface and “greased line” fishing with light flies but the beautifully fine taper is not ideal for large flies or heavy tips.*

16. What do you expect to see if uncontrolled running line is used with a shooting head and:

Tangles, Lack of good turnover of the cast. Control is needed to allow the shooting head to accomplish a good light.

a) - The running line is too light/lacks friction? An unwanted wanted pile cast of the shooting head.

b) - The running line is too heavy/excessive friction? Reduces the distance of the shot.

c) - Imagine that you are wading waist deep in a fast flow. Describe how the drag effect of loose running line can be reduced whilst casting Managing the line as I strip into the head while dividing the running line in to two segments .

d) - How can turnover be improved? Manage the running line carefully by using the line hand to stop the running line while momentum is still in the line. Use stripping gloves.

Good answers – obviously gained from experience! In (c) it is often necessary to hold several loops of line on different fingers to cast long distances whilst wading in running water. Holding line in the bottom hand is the best method.

17. Howling upstream wind, standing on a long steep bank four feet above the water (the bank rises to 100 ft). Fishing with a type 3 sinking line into deep water. What cast would you suggest? Snap “T” for anchor placement and switch to the wanted angle. If needed roll the line to the surface.

Good answer I think that the “Circle C” allows more control of the anchor position. The “snap based” casts are by far the easiest to use from a high position. Being forced to stand a distance above the water makes all forms of Roll and Spey casting more difficult because it alters the stroke length/ D loop relationship. (D loop becomes high and shallow).

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18 - Wind is downstream and you are positioned back against a wall built right at the water's edge with no possibility of wading? Choose an outfit and casting method to make best use of the situation? Reduce length of line for the cast do a snake roll, floating minimal "D" Loop. You can use Skagit Double Spey.

Snake roll would be very difficult when you have a wall at you're back, and so would any form of Double Spey. Here the rule book goes out of the window and you really need to use the upstream hand with a sustained anchor to ensure safety. I would choose a short Scandinavian shooting head and use a Circle C or low plane Switch Cast with it depending on how much angle change I needed. A Skagit system is also well suited for this. I have this situation right here on my doorstep. There are many times when the casting hand has to be changed to suit conditions.

19 - For what purposes was "Skagit" casting styles developed? What techniques are common to all Skagit casts? A compact style for tight spaces. The waterborne sustained Anchor is the technique Used in all Skagit cast.

Good answer – might have added heavy tips and large flies.

20. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a double tapered line for Spey casting? The cost of a DT line is less initially and you can reverse the line and get a longer life from the line. The disadvantage is the loss of distance.

Good answer. You can pick up as much line as you can handle, you don't have to worry about head lengths, less tangles, shoot up to four line pulls easily, for small rivers DT is fine. Disadvantage is simply that they are more difficult to cast longer distances and less able to cope with a variety of tips which I guess is why nobody offers a DT multi-tip line.

Here are just a few additional questions asked by Rick Whorwood:-

21. What is the primary function of the rear taper of a Spey line ? A smooth transition to the running line.

22. Which is better, a long rear taper or a short one ? Along rear taper allows more control longer distance cast.

23. Is it necessary to have a rear taper on a Spey line ? No.

24. Can you think of any advantage to using a shooting head rather than a full Spey line ? Allows 'quick sinking rate changes

Also allows head/belly length changes to be made to suit conditions and the use of various shooting lines (choice of materials and densities). Easily transported and good in confined places.

25. Do you know of any group of Spey fishermen who are known for cutting off the rear taper of their Spey lines ? Could be steel headers. This is only a guss.

26. In general, how are Spey lines rated ? Belly length and a weight point.

Jim Bass

From Kirk Eberhard :

Here are just a few additional questions asked by Rick Whorwood:-

21. - What is the primary function of the rear taper of a Spey line ? **Mending/control, smoothness,(transition between running line and belly)**

22 - Which is better, a long rear taper or a short one ? **In general a short rear taper.**

23 - Is it necessary to have a rear taper on a Spey line ? **Generally yes, there are exceptions. ("Spey Lines" can be a multiplicity of line types/designs.**

24 - Can you think of any advantage to using a shooting head rather than a full Spey line ? **Yes, less back space/room required, distance with less effort/efficiency, lighter reel/outfit, versatile/interchangeable heads for varying conditions, less fatiguing, easier to change direction.**

25 - Do you know of any group of Spey fishermen who are known for cutting off the rear taper of their Spey lines ? **Folks who build/customize shooting heads. "Skagit/NW casters were noted for this approach.**

26 - In general, how are Spey lines rated ? **AFFTA line weight standards. Head, short, medium and long belly. Head lengths of 30-50 ft, 50-60ft, 60-70ft, 70 plus ft**

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Pearl #3 - Distance casting practice...

You have just passed your CI exam. You made the 75' distance cast just fine with a nice straight layout. Now you wish to prepare for the MCI exam. The best distance you can achieve is 80' under very good casting conditions.

QUESTION: How do you practice distance casting to eventually reach 90' with ease and a good layout most of the time ?

From Jerry Puckett on practice distance casting. Gordie's comments in bold blue italics.

Having had the privilege of watching the Best of the West distance casters I have practiced each style as I have observed it. Do we get set in one particular style without exploring another style (or selected aspects of a style) to see if we can add distance to our cast? *Sometimes I try to do exactly that as I practice distance. Interesting to me that on some days a change of style from my default way of casting (more of a Lefty style) helps. On other days it doesn't...?????. As you do, I sometimes use my own style but change one aspect at a time to experiment. I think by doing that it teaches me more about ME. G*

Other thoughts:

1. a clean line verse one that is really drag dirty can add 5-10 feet to the cast in my distance casting practice.
2. each of the distant casters in B.O.W. competition always stretch the line prior to a competitive cast. (I think we have already covered this one.) *Both 1 and 2 deserve repeating ! G*

3. Already mentioned but recommended to me by Bruce Richards is practice as manyways as one can to carry more line while false casting. (increasing stroke length) Obviously this would include what I call break down of each aspect of a cast— solid foundation with tight loops for the maximum amount of line carried, balanced double haul with as much speed as possible on the delivery cast without creating a tailing loop.

*Yes, indeed. (I was hoping someone would bring that up.) On one of my messages to this Group several years ago, I outlined the way I do it in steps. When I get close to the amount of line I can carry with decent loops I'll make my next cast concentrating on the **tight loop**. Maybe a few more. Then I go to concentrate on **bending the rod** adequately. After that, I might go to concentrating on **trajectory**. Then the **haul**. I might go to trying the delay of rod arc by using more **"drag"** (translation) Then **stroke length** relative to rod arc.... and try to increase **tip travel** with body motion and maybe even a step or jump forward, etc., etc. This is exactly what you have labeled as **BREAK DOWN OF EACH ASPECT OF A CAST**.*

Ladies have what they call "bad hair days". I have some "bad casting days". When I do, I back track and try for even more perfect casts by going for no more than about 60 - 70 feet. G

This is especially important to me as I get older (I'm 78).... and my strength isn't what it was a few years ago. Even as I strive to improve, that "last 5 %" does require an element of strength, so most older casters find that their total distance achievements diminish . That's life ! G

4. Working on and watching the back cast.. I have watched Steve Rajeff and without fail as you have mentioned, he looks at his back cast for the forward cast he wants and then lets it fly! In comparison the other distance caster's back cast had loops that were very open compared to Steve's. So lots of work on the back cast to set up the forward cast. Helps to look and also suggest video of the back cast for a best view for study. *Sure. We must remember, **THE BACK CAST IS THE SETUP FOR THE PRESENTATION CAST ! I remember back when Bob Andreae wrote an article on the importance of the back cast..... entitled it YOUR MOST IMPORTANT CAST ! G***

5. I use a 200 foot tape for practice and stand at the 100 foot mark and work on 180 degree trajectory from a lateral standpoint occasionally, without looking, let the line fall on the ground for critique. Also work on beginning the forward cast as the back cast fully reaches 180 degree for the forward cast trajectory. *Yes. Joan Wulff's "see saw".*

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6. I talked with Steve and Rick at length after the competition and this was their answer to my question - define and describe your stop on the final cast to which they both replied, "when I run out of arm!" I would describe this move as one with rocket speed but truly a thing of beauty to see. Has helped me add distance. *That is also the secret to Lefty's wind cast called by the Borger's, the "thrust cast". Works great for blasting a tight loop into a strong head wind. G*

7. Elbow position in its natural position close to the body allowing the shoulder muscles to work efficiently without contraction tension. Very important, also reduces fatigue. *The more we cast with the elbow up and out, the quicker we fatigue, distance casting or no. G*

8. Lastly get a good instructor who not only can cast distance but can teach it. *No question about it. The instructor can see things the caster simply can't. That reminds me of Molly Semenik who found serendipitously that while practicing distance casting in front of her home in Livingston Mt., that she could see herself and her cast in the large 'mirror' provided by the big -picture window when the sun was just right. THAT is seeing a side image of your cast in real time ...better than a video. G*

This is the journey I have taken to increase my five weight cast from 75 feet to a consistent 90 to 100 feet in practice over the last three years. Gordy, if this is too long and to much of a repeat then just delete, it has served me well in thinking about ways to improve my distance cast! Great string!

Two issues re distance casting practice by David Lambert (His diagram follows on next page) -

Two concepts on distance that I haven't seen mentioned:

1) Pause for a microsecond longer on the final backcast to allow the line to drop a bit, then adjust the angle of your delivery cast upward slightly to maintain effective SLP. This alters your trajectory upward, allowing more time for your line to unroll before gravity kicks in. Attached, not a distance cast rod bend, but it shows a slightly rising back-front casting plane. *Yes. See Joan Wulff's FLY CASTING TECHNIQUES; LONG CAST TRAJECTORY, p. 123.*

2) Mac (Brown) introduced me to the 'vector retrieve' to bring in line quickly. For those who don't know it: pinch the line off at or just above the rod handle with rod hand. With line hand, take the line to retrieve from above pinch - off area and retrieve (not from below the line finger as in a conventional retrieve), keeping the line close to the rod and your body. If you have a 6-foot wingspan and bring in a full stretch of line, you will retrieve 12 feet with each retrieve, 24-25 feet in two strips. This moves more line than a two-hand retrieve and is useful for enticing speedy fish such as barracuda, musky, and other fish who want a fast chase.

Note: CASTING ANGLES by Mac Brown ... drawings on p. 144, text, pp 145-147. Chalk it up to my not getting really good at this. My own preference is the two handed retrieve when practicing for two reasons:

1. I can do it faster.

2. It allows me to place my rod in my armpit so I'm not holding it in my hand for hours of practice.. Incidentally: Here in the Fl. Keys, we used to catch lots of barracuda by using a very fast retrieve all the way. Now the fish are getting spookier and less inclined to strike. What works best for me, is to cast way out beyond the cуда and off to one side (so you don't line him). Let the fly hover in the water for a moment or two.... then begin a very slow retrieve. as the fish turns to see it and begins to go toward it, retrieve ever faster and faster. Sometimes they'll strike just before you pick it up near the skiff. Point is that they seem to go for the ACCELERATION better than pure speed. If you start it as fast as you can, you can't accelerate ! I've only caught one musky on fly, so I can't say that this works with that fish. G

It's a bit ungainly at first, but the comfort level increases with a bit of practice.

Right. Clearly, I need to practice it more. G

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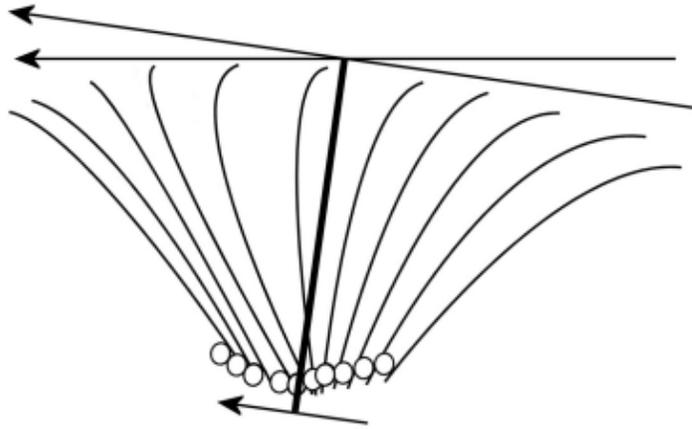


Diagram by David Lambert

Jim Laing . My comments in his text in bold blue italics G Gordy, In the 80' range and after a fresh CCI pass, I would recommend the candidate read Al Kyte's articles in the master study guide for a thorough understanding of the key ingredients that make up a good distance cast. **Agree G** The first thing I would work on would be perfecting a very straight back cast carry at an optimal distance for that 90' cast. I think its important at first to measure back cast progress as Tom states by laying down and measuring the BC carry just as the loop begins to deteriorate. Then measure those BC distances after shooting the line. Keep track of how much your carrying and shooting - what is the percentage of distance increase after the shoot?

Good point. Also, the back cast direction. If it is off to one side, then you are not likely to track well on the forward cast. Practice AIMING the back cast to a target behind you helps a cloud, tree, building corner, etc. As I think you know, I favor marking your line at the point where you consistently do OK but where you loops start to deteriorate if you carry more. I do this, not with a marker, but with something I can FEEL like a not too tight nail knot tied with 4 lb. mono. Even if I don't feel it as I slip line with my line hand, I can hear it click in the guides as soon as I've false cast a bit too much line. It is easy to remove and re tie. as you get to carry more

With any of these drills its important to practice a controlled pick-up and slipping and shooting line while maintaining perfect loops (front and back) until that optimal carry is reached. I like to see consistency in the loops through that variable rod arc as length is increased. The goal at this point would be to make the rod tip travel in a straight line path from the time the rod begins to move until loop formation on every cast. **Yes. G** Video analysis from front and side views would be a good way to measure progress by studying your loop shape. On the flip-side, try casting at night. It is impossible to see the line, so focus on feeling the rod bend and unbend as you lengthen the carry. Try varying the speed of the cast - slow to fast/ fast to slow...**Nice addition. Casting at night teaches us to add the FEEL of what is going on as another parameter. G** Always practice casting into the wind. Ideally a slight wind of 3-4 mph. If your working on your BC drills, then put your BC into the wind..... **and then practice with wind from different quarters. G** After the candidate has reached his goal of effortlessly and flawlessly casting 100' in just a few cycles, 9 out of 10 times, experiment with style - try casting like Paul Arden, Steve Rajeff and Rick Hartman. Make an effort to understand how they achieve similar results with different style. **This is a good idea even if it reinforces your need to return to your own default style. Might well make you tweak your own way of casting. Also helps when fishing when (distance or not) you need to change style to meet a particular fishing/casting circumstance. G** Jim

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Tips on shooting line when practicing distance casting by Gary Eaton....

My long standing foundation task for distance (and to establish readiness for double-haul) is one hand shoot. With Scientific Angler's Expert Distance I can routinely shoot 80% of the amount of fly line I am carrying when the carry is 25 to 45 feet. It really gives distance oriented students pause to see consistent casts over 75-feet with one hand. With ideal conditions, or if I am having a good casting day, I will shoot 120% or more of amount carried beyond the rod tip. This applies to shoot only on the delivery cast, not back cast shoot.

As you probably know, Gary, Conventional "wisdom" in fly casting circles has been that one can't shoot much more than an additional 50% of the line carried outside the rod tip when false casting. As you have done, many have proved that dictum to be incorrect. Better casting techniques with tighter loops and higher line speeds along with modern fly line designs with either textured surfaces (sharkskin lines and the "Ridge" lines) as well as those with super slick surfaces as well as new types of fly rod guides have combined to make this possible. Another thing which helps change the formula, is the technique of shooting lots of line on the last back cast allowing the momentum of the rapidly traveling and unrolling back cast loop to add an element of "pre-load..... Your # 2, below.) Other techniques such as the "thrust" in the direction of the cast can help, too. G

Performing this demonstration has helped me realize a few things that I try to get my accomplished casters to hone:

- 1) Light SW 7-weight performs much better for loop consistency over 50-feet than most freshwater designed rods.
 - 2) High, tight back casts are the key to developing loop momentum that carries line into the shoot.
 - 3) Clean line gives about a 10% advantage; Sharkskin about 5%; but these percentages decrease dramatically as one approaches their individual performance limits.
 - 4) As one approaches their individual single-handed performance limits, percentage of shoot compared to amount carried becomes inverse. In other words, carrying 30 feet you can get to 70 pretty easily compared to carrying 60 feet and trying to turn that into 120. feet. *The principle of diminishing returns. G*
 - 5) The view from the rod handle makes the back cast appear to be at a more upward angle than it is from the side. Canadian Lou Steven alluded to this in his book Improving Your Fly Casting. Seek the most upward back cast you can generate without losing your loop- then drift to a reaching start point for your forward drag to forward cast. *I wasn't aware of this ! G*
 - 6) Tom White used to tell me not to throw every distance cast I could. He expected me to know when I had a winner in the air and be disciplined enough to appreciate that letting it fly was for my gratification, not my development.
 - 7) One hand shooting makes the line to-be-shot management less of an issue than when double hauling. Still needs to be managed, just a little different.
 - 8) The most valid feed back one can generate for self-study is video imaging as long as you get the loop included in your video. *That isn't easy to do when you're carrying over 60' of line. G*
 - 9) Casting in an alley or lane helps produce good 180-degree acquisition. This relationship reduces mis-spent energy. *Yes. This forces one to track more accurately. G*
 - 10) When rod leg, fly leg, and the rod movement plane are most closely aligned, the longest shoots become possible. High line speed, tight loops, and good timing remain essential.
- I may have more later, Gary Eaton, MCI

(continued on page 40)

From Jim Valle:

Great string of answers from the group on distance casting.

Couple things I would mention as more **basic** stuff that is often overlooked.

Stance - getting the proper balance and stretch from the body is a function of the basic starting stance.

Leaning back and stretching forward requires a broader stance ... this is really extension of the stroke length...

Long Line...Long Stroke...!

While stance ranges from style to survival, with distance casting most elite casters find that an open stance works best. G

Drift - ... Extend that stroke length for the next stroke

Layback - some stroke and drift combined

Yes. Drift, Layback or Lefty's technique of simply bring the rod tip way back in the first place. (Technically, both Drift and Layback are really performed after RSP, when the loop has formed. Layback done too early, during the stroke, can have the effect of an out of control wrist.) Layback and Drift can be combined. G

Tracking - If you are drifting off the perfect 180 degrees on your backcast you are throwing an inefficient curve and losing energy.

True, indeed. This is one fault which may not be picked up on video taken from the side, because this yields a loop which is wide or open in the horizontal loop plane.

(Check the drawing on p. 30 of Joan Wulff's FLY CASTING TECHNIQUES.) G

Wrist - ... if your wrist or arm is rotating during the cast you are putting a curve in there somewhere

This next one is my favorite....which everyone forgets to consider!

Grip - If you are trying to cast in a vertical or near vertical plane you either are breaking your thumb or wrist or twisting something.... Try a grip that will allow more rod angle change, like a 3 point grip (Gary or Jason Borger)

Or Lefty Style...(Note: this is a real advantage of the Lefty style ... you don't fight your physiology, long extensions without inefficient twisting ... stay on the shelf)

For me, the use of Lefty's style with thumb on top has worked best. Some elite super distance casters as the Rajeff's, use a modified V-grip. G

And quit false casting so much!

I can't quarrel, however, with making that one more perfect back cast before going with the delivery cast. If you keep trying and not getting it, however, simply continuing with the false casting will lead to fatigue. G

I know this helps!

Jim V

COMMENT: I'll never be a Steve Rajeff or a Rick Hartman, but I do have a little self made "rule" which I use when I'm alone practicing to increase or maintain my distance casting ability:

As I gradually increase line carried, I use Bill Gammel's method of making my loops ever faster. Once my cadence is as fast as I can make it and my loops have not deteriorated, I make my distance cast to a target.

I do not go to the next line length, however, until I can duplicate this 5 times in succession !

Gordy

MCI Test Preparation

It's all about the journey.....

by Pat Damico

Several Masters recommended I put thoughts about my recent test in an article for The Loop. “When you get back home and things settle down, put something together,” one suggested. Well it’s 3 a.m., two days after the test, and I am tossing and turning as these thoughts and feelings run through my mind so I will try to put them on paper.

Don’t try to make the journey alone! Take advantage of the talent of a very diversified group of Masters. I had taken three performance pre-tests with two BOGS and one Master to get me ready. Each offered their insight and suggestions that were invaluable. Thank you, Dusty Sprague, Phil Gay and Jim Valle for each giving me a wealth of information.

If you’re not 100% prepared, reschedule! When I walked with my three examiners to the field where my test would be conducted, was I apprehensive? Absolutely! However, I felt that I had prepared as well as I could and finally I had an opportunity to perform in front of an audience that would appreciate my efforts. David Diaz, Jim Penrod, and Pete Greenan were very professional and did their best to make me feel comfortable. Gentlemen, I am very grateful.

You’re a Master, take the test like one! This was one of Jim Valle’s quotes when he wished me good luck a few days before my test. The night before, Dr. Scott Schwartz, who helped me years ago, came to my room and said to me, “Dr. Damico, you passed your dental boards, as well as many other difficult tests professionally in the past; this is just another test that you are prepared to pass. You will be fine.” A positive attitude is absolutely necessary!

If successful real estate transactions are guided by, Location, Location, Location, then Practice, Practice, Practice, should be your mantra for the Masters exam. I laid out and covered the performance test too many times to mention on my own, but my practice partner, Bill Whitebread and I, would also meet twice weekly for several months to critique each others performance and add as much insight and information to try to strengthen our knowledge about all the ramifications of each task. We questioned each other and discussed lines, rods, mechanics, teaching approaches and fishing applications for each task. When I took my test I tried to imagine Bill and me going through our routine. Thanks Bill!

When asked at the start if there were any questions, I told them I may not be brief enough and to please stop me if I get too lengthy. They said, “Stop!” two different times after I made a brief answer and was going to add something else. Areas that were unclear, such as how to do a 55 foot roll cast with a single haul could be performed with a static or dynamic loop or as a switch cast. I asked if I could do all three and they complied. I did my 85 foot cast as my first task before the wind became a problem and they allowed it. Later when we came to the 85 ft cast in the normal test sequence, I asked if my first one was ok. They said, “Yes, can you do it again?” I said of course and repeated the cast. After completing the normal roll cast, they asked me to do one horizontally close to the water and I complied. I told myself this is a Masters exam and gives me an opportunity to show my diversity. Several times after completing a task I asked if they wanted to see other examples and they always gave me the opportunity.

(continued on page 42)

When I finished my last task, my examiners asked me if there was anything else I felt should have been covered. I felt the test was conducted very well and thanked them. I recommended the Performance Test first format with more oral testing for any weak areas not covered as a much better venue. I sat in on a three hour oral test a few years ago, and the candidate asked me half way through it if I really wanted to subject myself to this? When I left his test my enthusiasm for a Master's Certification was put on hold.

When my examiners completed their conference and told me they were recommending me for a Masters Certification, my knees buckled and I had tears in my eyes! I was elated!

Brad Lowman, Gary Kell, Floyd Franke, and Dave Rothrock all contributed to my test preparation. Leigh West and especially Dan Lagace of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club were always available to share their insight and knowledge. I am grateful to all!

My first lesson was many years ago after watching Lefty Kreh give one of his casting demonstrations. Since that time I have watched and listened to him so many times he recently said to me, "Pat, haven't you got it yet?" Before his injury, at the end of a long day at a show in Tampa, he took Brad Lowman and me to the casting pond and spent almost an hour showing us some of his newer teaching techniques. He exemplifies the consummate teacher who is still continuing to help us all "get it." Lefty, you are the best!

Does Gordy Hill ever sleep? The pride that Gordy exhibits when one of his Master Study Club members is certified is understandable. As most of you do, I keep a file of his e-mails and find I am constantly using them as a reference and looking forward to opening each new one looking for "pearls."
Thank you Dr. Hill!

Pat Damico, MCI
St. Pete Beach, FL



One hand helps the other

by Carl Zarelli

In my two-handed journey I was once told that two-handed casting would make me a better single-handed caster. At the time I was unsure what this meant. But as one instructor told me some time ago “I filed it away” and thought someday the comment would again surface and make sense.

While acronyms to describe techniques and movements of casting are sometimes handy, I have noticed that most students roll their eyes after I get past a few minutes of describing the meaning behind the acronyms. So I have adhered to the one acronym that rings true in my ears. “Keep It Simple” and you will get your best results. For years I have endeavored to keep my explanations and casting examples to as few words and movements as possible. Sometimes this has proven to be a difficult task .

As we all know, any time a student can perform the cast rather than watching it being done for them, it can be the single best way best way for the student to learn.

In some students, particularly in intermediate casters I sometimes notice a tailing loop at the end of the forward cast. They often times have trouble correcting this small rotation at the end of the cast and continue to tail the loop even when they are told to rotate the wrist over slightly at the correct time.

I searched in my past history of instruction and it occurred to me that the motion required for the two handed turn over of the rod tip prior to completion of the cast was really no different than the single hand technique. As we all know the mechanics are the same .

I borrowed from this two-handed technique and have asked single hand casters with this problem of tailing loops to use their bottom hand to grip the butt of the rod to help them turn over the last portion of the forward cast.

While this may seem like a simple approach to the correction of tailing loops in the forward cast, I can get results from students after only a few attempts and they suddenly realize what they have been doing wrong. It seems that this additional control from the non-dominant hand is just enough to smooth out the cast and the tailing loop.

They also realize they cannot rely on using two hands and quickly get the proper turnover to correct the tail using one hand. Some have told me that this helps them self correct this problem of tailing loops when it arises and they use it occasionally until they are able to perform the cast correctly. Sometimes the tips or tricks to correct casting problems can be a simple technique of one hand helping another.

Upcoming Events for 2010

Denver, CO ISE Show Jeff Wagner	Jan 9, 2010	Instructor - (3) Master	For more information on the show http://www.sportsexpos.com/ index.cfm?section=viewlocation&locationnumber=3
Marlboro, MA Fly Fishing Show Rod McGarry	Jan 15 - 17, 2010	Instructor - FULL Master - (2)	For more information on the show http://www.flyfishingshow.com/ Marlborough__MA.html
Somerset, NJ Fly Fishing Show Jim Valle	Jan 22 - 24, 2010	Instructor - (5) Master - TBA	For more information on the show http://www.flyfishingshow.com/ Somerset__NJ.html
Salt Lake City, UT ISE Show Jeff Wagner	Mar 20, 2010	Instructor - (3) Master - TBA	For more information on the show http://www.sportsexpos.com/ index.cfm?section=viewlocation&locationnumber=7
Mtn Home, AR SowbugRound-Up Chuck Eaterling	Mar 20, 2010	Instructor - (6)	For more information on the show http://www.northarkansasflyfisher.org/ SB%202008.html
New Braunsfels, TX FFF Gulf Coast Council Conclave Al Crise	Apr 8 - 10, 2010	Instructor - (6) FULL	For more information on the show http://www.gulfcoastfff.org/ index.php?page=conclave-2010
Ellensburg, WA FFF Washington Council Fly Fishing Fair Don Simonson	Apr 30, 2010	Instructor	For more information on the show http://www.washingtoncouncilfff.org/ 2010FFFFrameset-1.htm
EWF Fly Fishing Show Monastery Furstenfeld, Germany William van der Vorst Uwe Kaptein	April 17-18, 2010	Instructor Master	This is an International Testing event More details to follow

*Please see the FFF web site for registration deadlines,
testing class limits and contact information.*

CONGRATULATIONS

New Casting Instructors

Jim Bass - Keller, TX
Doug Spieske - Redlands, CA
Zsigmond Kovacs - Hungary
Clarence Button - Canada
Zsombor Punkosti - Hungary
Adam Denes - United Kingdom
Zoltan Farago - Austria
Harsagyi Balazs - Hungary
Erno Paskay - Hungary
Jason O'Riordan - Ireland
Uwe Utzel - Germany
Anita Wolf - Canada
Patrick Siebeling - Netherlands
Christer Appelgren - Sweden
J David Alford - Magnolia, AR
Troy Anderson - Minnetrista, MN
Charles Blaschke - Lavaca, AR
Jerald Lewis - Longview, TX
Mike Hawkins - Longview, TX

Staffan Dahlbom - Sweden
Douglas Behrman - Tallahassee, FL

Teemu Tolonen - Finland
Sergey Babin - Latvia
Gordon Middleton - Atlanta, GA

Tony Lindberg - Sweden
Leonel Henriques - Placida, FL
Aleksey Teriaev - Russian Federation
Alexsey Ryabenco - Russian Federation
David Rutar - Australia
Stephen Dunn - Australia
Darrel Luty - Somerset, NJ
Marco Boretti - Italy
Paul Regan - Australia
Steve Smith - Canada
Mauro Battistella - Italy

New Master Casting Instructors

Gary Kell - Warren, PA
Mark Roberts - United Kingdom
William Holmes - United Kingdom
Leslie Holmes - United Kingdom
Les Rosenthal - Gig Harbor, WA

Peter Morse - Australia
George Revel - San Francisco, CA
Pat Damico - St Pete Bch, FL
Gary Meyer - Wilton Manor, FL
Brian Henderson - Australia

New Two-Handed Casting Instructors

Ray Bianco - Newhall, CA
Andrew Ryan - Ireland
John Vanderhoof - Long Beach, CA
Philip Maher - Ireland

From The Editor

It has been a busy fall for me. I am sure it is the same with all of you. After a busy guiding season, I am looking forward to getting back to work on FFF activities which includes this issue of the Loop.

Our lead article is about the new CI Testing Protocol. The CI Workshop/Test Committee has been working on this document for two years to get it right. It is all okayed and comes into effect on January 1, 2010. Please take the time to go to the web site and read it, whether you are an examiner, candidate or someone who helps prep candidates.

There are two other equally important documents that came out of this two year period from the same committee. The '**Hints, Suggestions and Recommendations**' will be extremely useful to CI candidates preparing for the test. The other is a **Teaching Skills Workshop** outline. This outline is based on the international workshop that our travelling examiners use and is a great example of a CI workshop so take a look.

This issue took on a 2H focus as it came together. In the Pearls column, Al Buhr has contributed a great article on lines for 2H rods and the spey line quiz is sure to increase our knowledge of lines whether you are 2H or not.

With the show season approaching in the New Year, Pearl #3 may be appropriate. It focuses on practicing for distance. I'm sure that some of you attend the shows and may even enter into the competitions. Read the article and get out there and practice.

Check out the Conclave Pics in the following pages. Our casting members are very active and garnered a number of awards again this year.

Rick Williams, one of our Casting Governors was awarded 'Federator of the Year' - truly a prestigious honor and richly deserved. As well, Barbara Wuebber, our Casting program staff member, was awarded a President's Pin. Barbara is our contact person and the one we all 'go to' when we have a question or request. A well deserved award and overdue!

I would also like to thank Les Rosenthal (a new MCI) for his generous offer to be my proofreader for the Loop. Amazing how many little grammatical mistakes get by me!

This is the last issue of the Loop for this year. As Christmas and the New Year approach, I would like to wish all of you a festive, safe and memorable holiday season.

It is the time to look back on the past year and remember the good things that happened. I hope that the New Year will be even better and make some great new memories. Hopefully that will include some great fishing and casting times as well.

Here's a toast all of you who have helped make our Casting Program and the Loop a success! Cheers!

**Talk to you soon.
Denise**

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We welcome your submissions via e-mail. When you submit an article(s), please attach a short (1-3 sentences) author/instructor biographical statement, including your location and Certification level on every article.

Also be aware that the back issues of the Loop are posted on the FFF web site. Any illustrations should be in JPEG format and submitted separately, if possible.

The Loop reserves the right to decline any submission for any reason, and to edit any submission.

Submissions may be sent to the editors or the National Office:

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For UPS & Overnight Shipments:

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The Loop is a quarterly publication of the Casting Board of Governors for the FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program.

CONCLAVE Pics - 2009



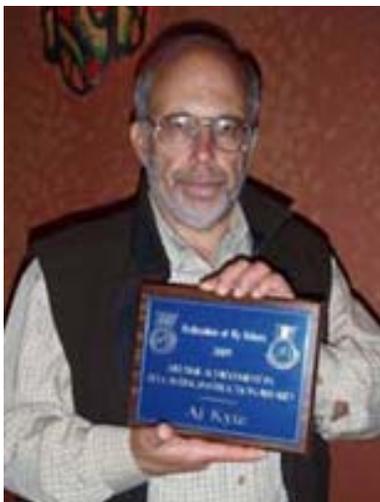
Dan McCrimmon, John Van Dalen, Chuck Easterling, Bruce Richards, Denise Maxwell and Dusty Sprague holding the award presented to Al Kyte.



Our own Barbara Wuebber received a President's Pin



Rod McGarry with his award



Chuck Easterling received a and is holding Al Kyte's Award



Rick Williams is the Federator of the Year.

More CONCLAVE Pics - 2009



Peter O'Reilly and Dan McCrimmon



*Don Simonson, Al Buhr, Carl Zarelli
and Soon Lee*



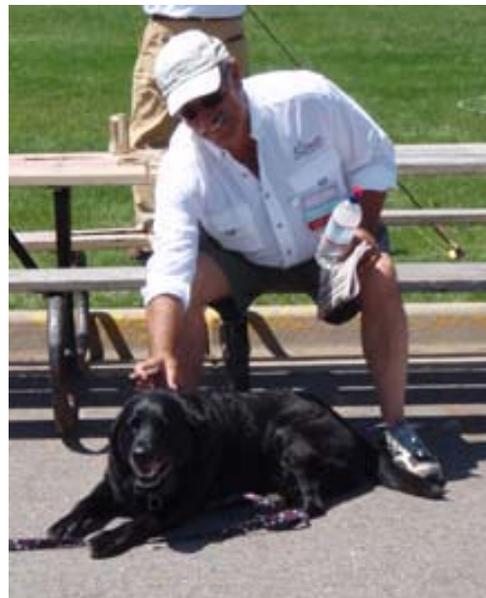
Workshop in the hotel parking lot



Jim Valle, Molly Semenik & Gordy Hill



Workshop at the school



Carl Zarelli and Max