

SLAMMER



By Bob Bates

A fly tier should always keep their eyes and mind open for new fly tying materials, even when getting ready for a shower. Fred Sica of Shelly, Idaho told us about this as he tied the Slammer at the 2011 East Idaho Fly Tying Fair in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

A doctor had wrapped Fred's arm with a Sports Underwrap to keep a wound clean. He took it off and dropped it in the sink as he was getting ready to shower. It floated!!! He repeatedly tried to sink it without success. To a fly tier this presented many possibilities for floating flies. He was curious so he had some friends at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks look at it with a microscope. Their report: "It contains air bubbles."

So with that question answered, he started tying different fly patterns with it. He started with small flies, #18 - #22, like Pale Morning Dun (PMD), midges and other small mayflies. It catches fish in many situations. Probably the most dramatic result is when PMDs are hatching. Throw the fly into riffles, and jiggle it a little as it floats downstream. The fish really hit it, in other words they slam it. That happened many times so the pattern's name became Slammer.

Materials List;

Hook: DaiRiki 320 #20 or 18, DaiRiki 135 #18 - #22

Thread: Uni-thread, pink 8/0

Body: Sports Underwrap

Tail: Krystal Flash, pink

Post: Polyethylene

Hackle: White

Tying Steps:



1. Lay one thin line of thread on hook. Tie the Underwrap at the back and spiral the thread over it to the front.



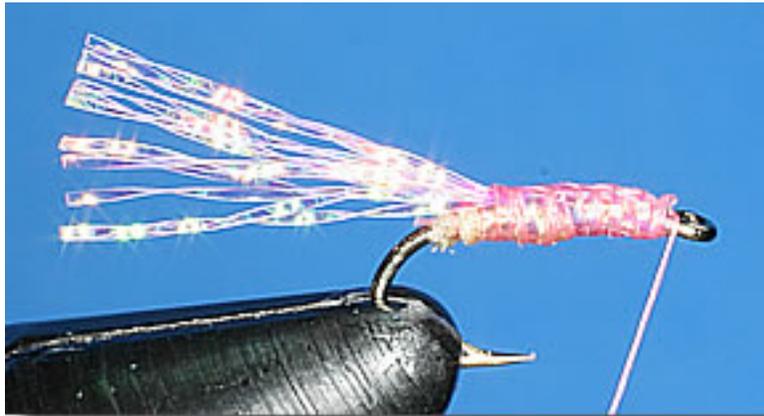
2. Gently wrap the underwrap forward to the eye and secure it. A rotary vise is convenient at this time. The underwrap will tear easily so be gentle.



3. Loosely spiral the thread back to the bend.



4. Tie on the pink Krystal Flash tail. Spiral the thread forward, trim off excess Krystal Flash at front if there is any, and leave the thread at the eye.



5. Cut the tail a little longer than most folks. It gives the fly a little stability, and helps it float higher. When the PMDs come up they sit high on the water. Pick a single strand of Krystal Flash. Tie it in across the back, return thread to eye, wrap the Krystal Flash forward in close wraps. Secure and trim.



6. Spiral the thread back to mid-shank. Cinch in the Antron post, and cut off the back piece of Antron. This is the way Fred does it, but he said you can tie the post any way you like.



7. Pick up post and put one thread wind in front. Put one thread wind around post. Cover up cut off Antron,



8. Select a white hackle with barbs a little longer than a shank length, and strip off some of the fibers. Tie it in on the side of the post away from the tier. Cinch it in well. Fred said that the barb length is not critical, generally anything less the size 14 will do.



9. Wrap the hackle around the post two or three times, tie it off in front of the post and trim excess hackle. A lot of hackle is not needed because there is floatation in the body. Turn over the fly, and put a drop of head cement on thread winds. This makes the thread a little translucent and lets a little more of the flash show through.

Closing comments: Fred uses white hackle on PMDs, grizzly or black on midges and grizzly or white on a Yellow Sally. I plan to tie a few of these flies so I went to a nearby drug store and bought a 25-yard roll of Sports Underwrap for about \$5.00 (2011 price). Of course the first thing I did was take off a piece, and I tried to sink it. I was not successful. Maybe if I used some split shot. Fred has not tied larger flies with it, except as an anchor layer on the hook for a Chernobyl Ant. It probably doesn't help the floatation, but it helps secure the materials on the rest of the fly. He likes the DaiRiki 135 hooks for tying emergers, and he ties the Undewrap a little farther around the bend. As a side note: One fellow who watched Fred tie this pattern was so excited about it that he got up at 3:00 am and tied a half a dozen. Reportedly, his wife was a little upset with the early morning tying session.

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