THE LOOP

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CAST SCRIPTING FOR THE THCI EXAM
by Larry Aiuppy

One of the most valuable things to do in preparation for the THCI exam is cast *scripting* --- writing a comprehensive description of each of the necessary casts to be mastered for the THCI. This achieves some highly useful things. First, if done properly, it can gain one a truly deep understanding of each cast. Second it creates a working outline for teaching and performing each cast, which can be memorized to be called up as needed. Third, it will make you a more knowledgeable teacher. Finally, it will make you a much better prepared candidate for the THCI exam.

My journey on this quest began with a simple question posed by MCI, THCI Captain Kirk Eberhard, the estimable leader of our THCI study group. His question was: Describe the Circle Cast and how to teach it?

My initial answer to this question exceeded 2000 words -- 2147 to be exact! While this might appear to be excessive, for me it was an essential first step in a three step process to reach a truly concise correct and complete answer. The first step was to accumulate all the material possible to attain a deep understanding of the Circle Cast, and to create a thoroughly researched development history, structural analysis, teaching methodology and comprehensive written performance description of the Circle Cast. Such a lengthy treatise could not effectively be used in a normal teaching situation; it is too verbose. As we know, the directive in all effective teaching is to be clear, concise and correct.

Once I had created the initial long form I began to simplify by systematically removing extraneous elements, unnecessary to the most basic fundamental teaching and performance of the Circle Cast. Knowing a great deal about the cast made it much easier to produce a stripped down version that retained all the essential elements, without excess. Without the amassed initial material and with all the research involved, I would not have known what to keep and what to leave out in the absolute essentials of the cast as I teach it. This is analogous to the school of sculpting that starts with an initial large piece of material in which resides the final sculpture. The final piece of art is created by methodically carving away everything but the absolute essentials.

The second step condensed version of 237 words that I actually used for the THCI exam retains all the essential elements of the long version of 2147 words in a performance *script* which was relatively easy to remember and highly teachable. It was this second step cast script that I committed to memory and followed in practicing for and final performance in the exam.

I went through the same process for each of the necessary casts of the THCI exam - Overhead Cast, Roll Cast, Switch Cast, Single Spey, Double Spey, Circle Cast, Snap-T, Snake Roll, plus an additional one (Perry Poke) that I felt might have been referenced during the test. By utilizing numerous DVDs, videos, books,
magazine articles, internet web sites, many discussions and arguments with my THCI study group members and Captain Kirk, and hundreds of hours of time with rod in hands perfecting and checking techniques for

(continued on page2)

Cast Scripting (continued from page 1)

each cast, this whole process produced a terrific education in two-hand Spey casting.

For the sake of brevity I will not reproduce the entire 2147 word original un-condensed treatise on the Circle Cast. However, in the original long piece were, among other topics, paragraphs on Circle Cast usage, cast type, cast origins, teaching set-up, teaching methodology, grip, stance, foot position, beginning rod/line position, explanation of the cast tempo and timing, essential elements of the cast, notes on various forms of the cast (C Spey, Circle C, Snap-C, etc.), ways to modify the cast depending on environmental factors and situational requirements, a detailed performance description of the dangle, lift, line reposition, anchor, sweep to D-loop, forward cast and additional comments on foot position and stance, and the utilization of stance and body movement to improve cast performance or mitigate a casting fault.

Final Word Count: 2147

Compare that to the second step condensed final THCI exam version of the Circle Cast script consisting of a total of 237 words, as reproduced here:

The Circle Cast

Two direction, sustained anchor, two phase cast. Use in upstream wind. Substitute for Single Spey. Easy to learn, easy to do. Safe. Great for sink tips. Excellent lifting power, good for precise positioning of anchor. Spey waltz timing.

Essential elements:
Lift, Reposition, Anchor (sustained), Sweep, D-Loop (180 Degrees), Forward Cast

Begin with square or closed stance (if extra long working line), body squared up to target, upstream foot aligned with target line, line "on the dangle" with no slack, rod tip touching water, upstream hand on top. Lift rod into large complete circle upstream with continuous motion, continuous load, finishing circle with rod tip back at beginning point downstream, touching the water, to re-position line end upstream. Plane of circle should be perpendicular to target line, with axis about chest high directly above and parallel to target line. Rod tip should draw fat teardrop shape lying on side. Finish circle with slightly increased thrust, pulling front of line into anchor position with line/leader junction near target line one half to one rod length out, fly about one rod length upstream. For longer working line, complete circle move by swinging rod tip in toward bank, as far back as necessary (according to room available) to place anchor in proper spot. From there, with continuous move sweep rod out toward target then around, back and up into D-Loop, 180 degrees from target, then into forward cast.

Final Word Count: 237

Here is even more condensed third step version (28 words), post THCI exam, that I use as my *mind mantra* whenever making a simple Circle Cast for fishing or demonstration:

Face target, closed stance, upstream hand on top. From dangle make circle perpendicular to target. Set anchor on target line. Sweep to D-Loop at 180 degrees. Forward cast.

As you can see, each step is a significant reduction (roughly 90%) of the preceding script, but fully informed by and entirely dependent on the foundation of the preceding step. If we were to illustrate it in physical terms, the process would translate as a pyramid, with the first phase script at the base of the pyramid, and the final third step script at the apex of the pyramid, each step requiring the preceding step as foundation. The more fully you know a cast, the simpler and more truly you can perform it, describe it and teach it. So, learn everything you can about each cast, write a detailed long form performance script, then strip away in steps for the final *no fat* description at the apex of the process. It will make you a much better prepared candidate for the THCI exam.

Larry Aiuppy is a CCI and THCI. He is currently the only THCI in Montana, where he lives in Livingston with his wife Jan. They are long time members of the FFF. Larry has been an FFF member since the 1970's. He has been fly fishing for over fifty years and teaching flycasting for over 30 years.

Using Learning Styles in Casting Instruction

by Ty Goodwin

As instructors and teachers, we are charged with the often difficult job of ensuring that our students learn quickly and learn well. We bring our knowledge to the classroom and attempt to communicate it effectively. But how do we accomplish this? What is the most efficient way to present information to our students? How do we shorten the learning curve so that they progress as quickly as possible? One answer, I believe, lies in the theory of learning styles.

The basic premise of this theory is that every student approaches a given learning situation based on that individual's particular learning style. The theory states that there are three main learning styles:

1. **Visual** – Visual learners need to *see* how something is done. Demonstrations of new skills and displays of new information are important for these students. They absorb material most effectively when they can see the body language and facial expressions of the instructor. They also do well with written materials and hand-outs.

2. **Auditory** – Students with this learning style need to *hear* how something is done. These individuals benefit from lectures and verbal instruction. They may ask the instructor to repeat directions and may themselves even repeat these directions aloud. These learners also benefit from classroom discussion about the new activity. Written materials may not do much for them unless read aloud.

3. **Kinesthetic** – These individuals need to *feel* how something is done. They prefer a hands-on approach to learning. They need to be "doing" in order to learn and usually get restless in a lecture-oriented classroom setting.

The learning styles theory also says that no one learns by using only one of these three modes. No student will, for example, process new information using only a visual approach or only an auditory approach. He or she will use all three styles to learn. However, a student will almost always be stronger in one of the three modes and weaker in the other two. For example, my learning style is visual. I learn primarily by seeing. I like to see skills demonstrated. I take notes during lectures so that I can read them later for better understanding. I will also use the auditory and kinesthetic styles as I learn, but only to reinforce what I have already learned visually.

Your learning style may be different. You may be a kinesthetic learner and prefer to learn through doing and feeling. If so, you'll use the auditory and visual styles as well, but only as secondary modes to supplement your primary kinesthetic learning mode.

Think about that. How do you best learn a new skill? Do you read about it first and spend time studying about the skill before you attempt it? Does demonstration by an instructor help you more than anything else? Do you prefer to hear it described by an instructor? Do you ever read written instructions out loud to help you better understand them? Do you jump right in and attempt the skill, filling in the gaps later with written instructions, etc.? The answers to these questions will likely give you a good idea about your personal learning style. Knowledge of your own learning mode will help you recognize those of your students.

I have found that students often give me clues during a class or school that will let me know how they learn most effectively. For example, I usually have a few students in every group that will say "Can I see you demonstrate that cast a few more times?" or "Let me see that again." When I get questions like this from a student, I know that there is a good chance that he or she has a visual learning style. I know that emphasizing demonstration and "showing" in my instruction will likely enable him or her to learn more quickly.

I'll also have students who ask me to repeat instructions frequently. These people are often auditory learners. These students, in my experience, tend to be

(Continued on page 4)

Learning Styles (continued from page 3)

more vocal than others in the class, asking more questions and initiating group discussions. I also find that these students often repeat instructions while they are working through the cast. For example, a student may say aloud repeatedly "smooth acceleration" as he or she practices the casting stroke.

And what about the student who listens to your instructions and watches your demonstrations, and then seemingly tunes you out while he or she begins working their way through the casting process? A student like this may have a kinesthetic learning style. In other words, they learn by feel and touch. I find that these students usually progress more quickly when I leave them to work through the cast themselves, giving only brief instructional "nudges" to help them along. I also find that a student like this often responds well to some of the more physical teaching techniques, such as plac ing my hand over his or her rod hand and making a few casts. This technique allows the kinesthetic learner to feel the smooth acceleration of the casting stroke and the stopping of the rod.

The learning styles theory has become a powerful tool for me as a casting instructor. Even in a school or classroom environment with a set curriculum, I am able to gear my instruction to better fit the needs of each student by emphasizing his or her learning style. The student then has the best chance to progress quickly. And when my students are progressing quickly, then I am succeeding as an instructor.

Ty Goodwin is a CI from Lafayette, GA

Fishology....(continued from page 16)

butter and jelly, pastrami and rye, salt and pepper, love and marriage…..

Following up her initial question she asked, "What length leader did you want to fish?" The only word I heard was *length*. Now for me that was a simple question. Was her intent one of kindness, perhaps an act of mercy, was she trying to make me feel more relaxed? But once again I had no knowledge of what she was asking.

I was standing there with my familiar look, thinking to myself, *getting a foot hold in fly fishing is like storming the beaches of Normandy*. The bombardment of questions that will befall the innocent fly fisher can be a bit disheartening and overwhelming. For a time the fly fisher's fate can be in the hands of a sales clerk. Is this our basic training? Is this a unique experience? Got to stop watching the History Channel!

So with the latest quiz behind me, I was beginning to feel part of that special group, you know the fishers that have their own language. In a short time, I learned the meaning of such important words like *taper*, *tippet*, *and leader*, *weight forward* and *parabolic arch*. The average person will not have a total understanding of these words. They can't, they are reserved to us fly fishers. Knowing their meaning is part of earning your degree in *Fishology*.

While standing there envisioning of the day of actually using my new fishing pole, oops….fly rod, a person came into the store and confronted the sales person. She took the time to approach the person and I could not believe how fluent they spoke in fly fisher language. They spoke without any hesitation, without a pause. I heard words that I never knew existed, words like, hare's ear nymph, light Hendrickson, tailing loop, quarter cast. Amazing how a language develops. After all, how else can we identify with something? We give meaning to things that way. We even idolize those people who have originated such words as Clouser Minnow, and Royal Wulff.

What have I learned from possessing a degree in *Fishology*?

I learned that comparing the spinning rod and bait caster to fly fishing is like comparing Snoopy to Einstein.

I learned that if you don't quit, endure the training and education, acquire all the specialized tools, read the volumes of books and magazines, travel great distances, spend hours practicing and survive the elements, then you have earned the right to be included in that special group. That select group that can take something simple and make it complex. Perhaps that is why we use s*trike indicators* and not bobbers.

Louis Bruno is a CI from Waterford, NY

Do Instructors Need To Know This Physics Stuff ?

by Gordy Hill

This is a question asked by many who read the scientific material related To Flycasting.
Let's answer by trying to relate it to the various levels of understanding and teaching of flycasting mechanics.

To the ***New caster***, it may well be sufficient to have him understand the forming of a loop and propelling it to a target.

The ***Intermediate caster*** must know enough common sense mechanics to understand the concept of a straight line path of the tip of the bent rod loaded by virtue of smooth application of power. This will allow him to achieve more distance and, more importantly, to chose a loop size for the task at hand.

The ***Advanced caster*** should know enough mechanics to be able to ***control*** the cast and the loops to achieve many different casting objectives. He/she must know and practice smooth acceleration to the best stop which can be achieved for most casts as well as the mechanical methods of achieving advanced loop control.

The ***Certified Casting Instructor*** should have a basic knowledge of the physics of how all this works so he/she can communicate this to students at various levels of achievement in terms they can understand. This is why we require CCI candidates to have a working knowledge of rod loading, application of power as well as a basic understanding of acceleration needed to achieve the right amount of rod load. That information will be used to have students understand what they are doing as they cast as well as to help diagnose casting faults and come up with corrections which work.

The ***Master instructor*** should have a knowledge of casting mechanics far above this..... for the master's task is often the teaching and certifying of CCI's, as well as students and even assistance in certifying candidates at a master level. This requires a much deeper understanding of the physics behind the mechanics of fly casting. This will assist the master to achieve a wide range of methods for diagnosing complex casting faults, separating them into their component parts (as with a student who has 3 or even 4 faults at the same time), making the decision as to which fault to tackle first, and using logic derived from physics principles to come up with corrections.

The master who understands some basic physics will be able to add ***cognitive*** ways of teaching to the time honored ***visual***, ***auditory***, and ***hands-on*** (kinesthetic) methods for students who learn best by responding to a basic understanding of casting mechanics. This knowledge provides in-depth understanding of casting issues rather than the brute memorization of facts. This master will have an occasional scientist or engineer as a casting student. To be able to relate to that student using his or her own language correctly will go a long way to achieve success. The use of basic physics in teaching goes way beyond the, *Zen* concept of: *If it feels good it must be right* or the teaching methods of the past such as, *just do it this way, don't shock the rod, if you cast like him you'll be OK, cast harder if you want more distance, you'll cast better if you have a better fly rod,* etc, etc. (I've heard all of these and more in my years of teaching fly casting.)

Gordy Hill lives on Big Pine Key in Florida and is a member of the Casting Board of Governors.

(Continued on Page 6)

Do Instructors Need to Know.....(Continued from page 5)

Granted, some unscientific teaching words and concepts do yield good albeit temporary results. One example is the teaching of a student to make tight loops by simply telling him, "Try to throw your line right at your rod tip." It works but it gives the student no understanding of why it works. Similarly when the instructor, *cures* a student's tailing loops by telling him to increase stroke length. This usually works, but it's a, *Band-Aid fix*, which won't hold up as the caster gets back into the same problem as he casts with different lengths of line.

To the fly fisherman and many instructors, whether the loop forms a few milliseconds prior to RSP (rod straight position) or not, or whether the acceleration of the butt section of the rod is constant or not, makes no difference whatsoever. To those who seek detailed background information on why this all works and to improve casting methods and casting instruction, it does.

As instructors, do we need to study physics, mechanics and calculus at an advanced level ? Absolutely not. We'll leave that to the professionals among us. I commend the physicists, mathematicians and engineer instructors in our FFF for helping to educate us in these principles, for it will doubtless make all of us better instructors.

LEARNING TWO-HANDED CASTING

by Gordy Hill

These are some notes from Gordy to his study group

Study Group.....

I just got back from my trip to Nova Scotia,visiting and fishing with Dennis (CBOG) and Verlie Grant. As most of you know, Dennis is a certified two-handed instructor (THCI). He makes it seem so easy. He uses a smooth style reminiscent of the teachings of Ally Gowans of Scotland. (I had paid careful attention to Ally as he taught us at the Conclave and was impressed with his *ergonomic* method.)

We speyfished the Margaree---a truly wonderful river ! To say that I learned a great deal from Dennis is a true understatement. A lot to be learned from Dennis's teaching techniques. He'd patiently watch me as I fished, critiquing my casting only with an occasional positive comment .... "good cast". No negatives at all, though he carefully took note of my failures and faults.

Between fishing sessions, we had some serious instruction with Dennis using visual, auditory and hands-on techniques. After one session, he concluded by having me turn about and instruct another angler in Spey casting. One session was devoted to learning about matching lines to rods. Dennis brought several different lines and had us compare their castability with rods to which they were matched and mis-matched. I found, for example, that my 14' rod which was rated for an 8-9 line, actually performed best with a longer belly 10-11 mid-Spey line.

I became convinced that there are three follow-up, *situations* which helped to solidify what I'd learned.

1.) Sleeping on it. Going over the information and, casting in my dreams as I slept surely helped.

2.) Actually using the newly learned techniques. Going right out the next morning and actually using what I'd learned on the river, meeting the challenges of the currents, the changing direction of the winds (sometimes strong) and the various pool configurations gave me a pleasant, alone time---a sort of, on-the-job-training.

3.) Teaching the basics a few days later. I did this with Mark Kreider while visiting and striper fishing with him on Long Island after our Nova Scotia trip.

Great experience for a teacher to be back as a student again !!!!!!!!!!!!!! Gordy

Reaching for the Reach Cast

by Soon Lee

Some instructors teach students the reach cast by reaching out directly upstream so that the rod finishes parallel to and hugging the near bank of the river. It is perhaps better to teach the student to reach so that the rod is pointed diagonally upstream with the tip of the rod placed at fast water. There are two reasons why this "mid-stream reach" is better than the "bank reach".

Firstly a mid-stream reach actually places the fly line further upstream in fast water than a bank reach (see diagram).

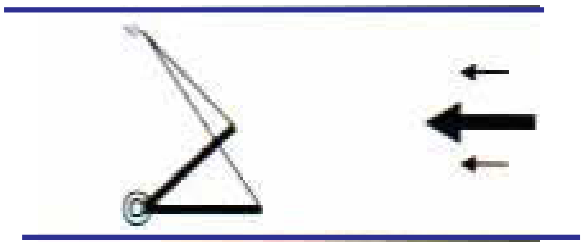


Diagram: mid-stream reach vs. bank reach

Secondly, and more importantly, drag is difficult to avoid with a bank reach. The proximal fly line in slow water holds back the fly line in fast water and drag on the fly occurs immediately. Stripping in line quickly and smoothly in tandem with the drift is extremely difficult. Lifting the rod tip vertically several feet to clear the proximal fly-line off the water produces a long hanging fly line belly which pulls the fly towards the caster.

With a mid-stream reach, all a caster has to do as soon as the fly line lands is to lift the rod tip inches off the water, pointing it at the fly as he follows the fly line downstream. The further upstream the mid-stream reach, the higher he needs to raise the rod tip as he follows the line downstream. A little judicious stripping in of the line will help to keep the rod low. Drag should not be a problem.

One circumstance a bank reach may be useful is if a flyfisher is fishing off the high outer bank of a river bend, casting to slower water on the inside bank. It must be a determined flyfisher who finds himself in such a situation.

Soon Lee is a MCI from Upland, CA.

FLY CASTING: Substance & Style

By Al Kyte & Gary Moran

In 1993, we studied the biomechanics of fly casting and discovered the common characteristics of the most successful distance casters. We decided to call these common elements the substance of a fly cast. But we also noted that, even though all the casters shared these common elements, there were many differences in their casting motions. These differences between such casters can be defined as individual style. Little, if anything, has been written that compares these different styles of fly casting. Yet anyone learning to cast can benefit from knowing not only the important substance of the cast but also something of the different ways to accomplish it. We did some additional filming and analysis of expert casters, which resulted in the information presented here.

What Is Good Form?

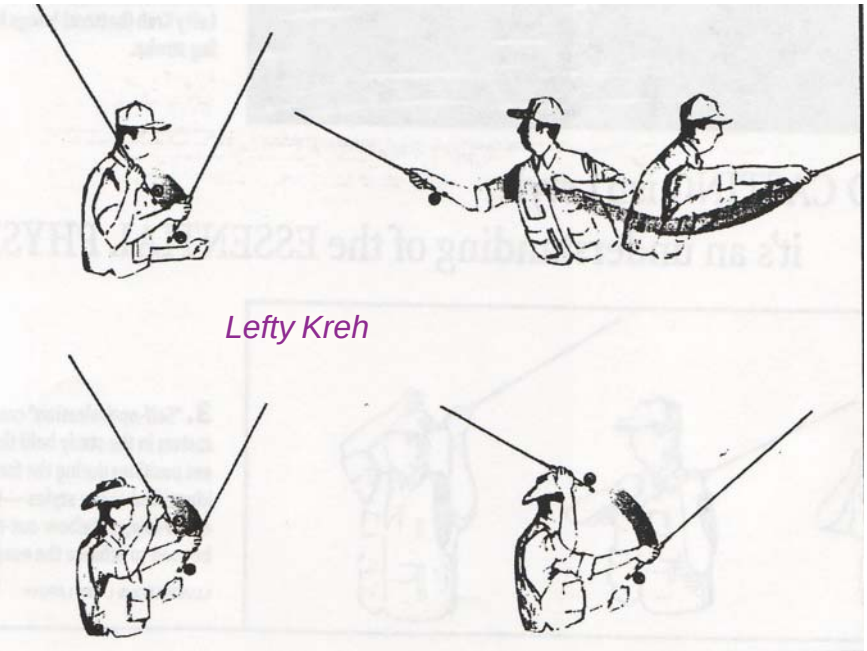
Most beginning flycasters try to copy the form of Lefty Kreh, Mel Krieger, Steve Rajeff, Joan Wulff, or some other world-class caster. Yet, these experts have very different casting motions. This can be confusing to casting instructors, as well as to students. We use the science of biomechanics to put such differences in perspective by breaking down the cast into four elements: the "essential physics" of casting, the purpose of the cast, the caster's individualized movement tendencies, and the casting equipment. Each of these elements may affect a caster's movements and, to some extent, helps define good form.

The first thing we wanted to do was to define the "essential physics" of a cast, those movements that transcend the differences that we observed among skilled casters. The most essential physics of an overhead cast may be described in three sequential *straight-line* movements that occur before, during, and after a cast. First, the caster starts a forward casting stroke when the fly line is straightening directly back from his intended target direction. Next, he smoothly accelerates the rod tip and fly line forward along this target direction. Finally, he stops the rod so that the line rolls out over itself along this same path in as narrow a loop as possible, until it straightens again.

The key to GOOD CASTING isn't style; it's an understanding of the ESSENTIAL PHYSICS involved

In our study, the "elite" casters— those who made the longest casts—differentiated themselves from the less successful "good" casters by straightening the line more completely on the backcast (with less line "sag"), accelerating the rod tip along a straighter path, and stopping the rod more abruptly — causing its tip to unload closer to the moving fly line, thus forming tighter loops. It's clear that the same physics that we teach to our beginning students continues to define proficiency when experienced casters attempt longer, more difficult casts.

If these three straight-line movements occur as described, then the caster has also accomplished some other important things. He's loaded and unloaded the rod properly, adjusted the rod angles and stroke length effectively, and achieved correct timing between casts. Thus these dimensions—rod bend, rod angle, stroke length, and timing—are variables that casters adjust in order to achieve something more important: the straight-line movement of the fly line. It is these variables that help to define different casting "styles."



Lefty Kreh

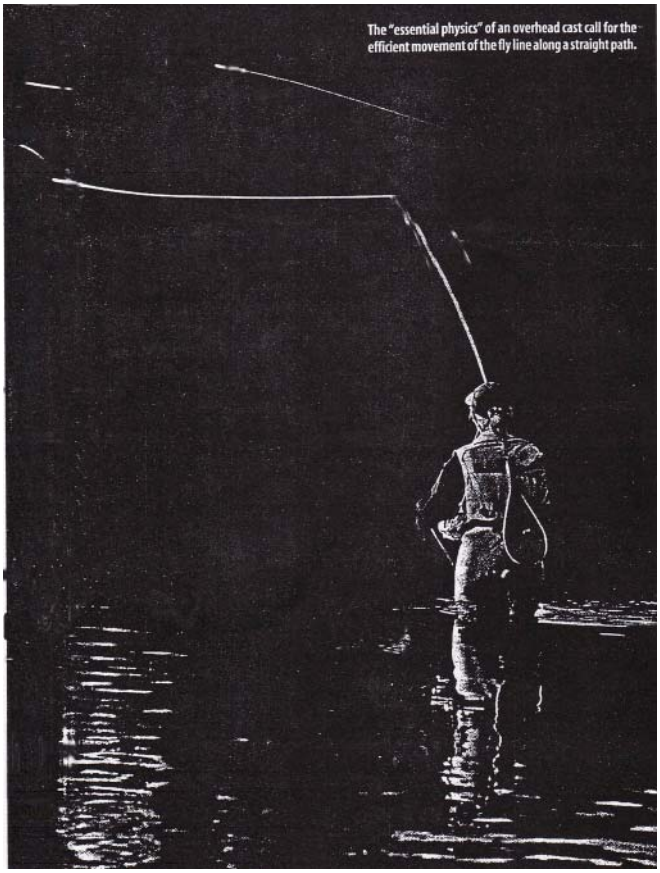
Jerry Siem

Regardless of style, all of the elite casters in the author's study made the same basic adjustments when changing from a short cast to a long cast - they moved the casting hand farther, along a different plane.

As our study shifted from the basic physics of a fly cast to other dimensions, we noticed differences in the way casters move. Some differences can be understood without looking any further than the purpose of the cast.

When casters change the primary purpose of the cast, they begin to rely on different biomechanics principles or methods. When casters focus on accuracy, they shorten the casting motion, use fewer body movements, and slow the muscular action. On the other hand, casters who are trying to generate line speed for maximum distance lengthen the casting motion, use additional body movements, and speed up the muscular contraction. Thus, factors that contribute to accuracy may decrease velocity, and vice versa. So for any cast, you should determine the most suitable line speed and adjust the movement accordingly.

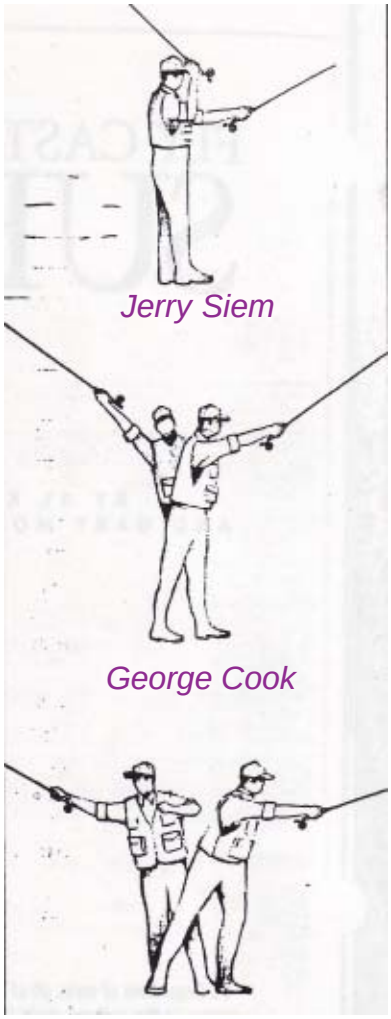
The effects of changing purposes are most clearly seen when casters change from short to long casts. This became apparent in a follow-up study we performed in January 1997, in which we filmed seven outstanding casters, including Lefty Kreh, Jerry Siem, Bruce Richards, and George Cook.



The "essential physics" of an overhead cast call for the efficient movement of the fly line along a straight path.

(continued on page 10)

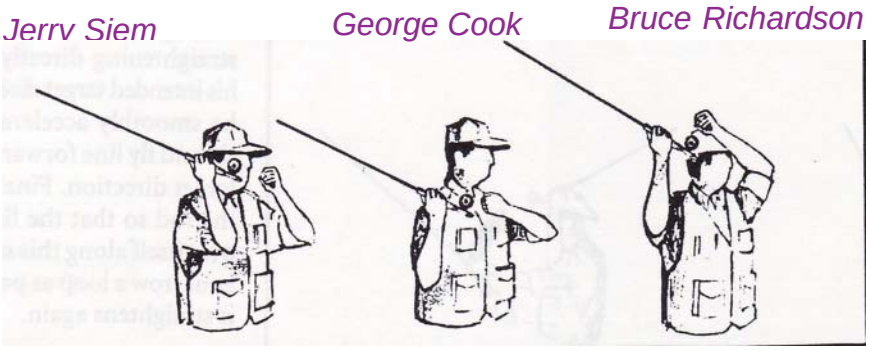
2. Among the casters filmed, there were wide variations in the amount of body movement used to achieve a long cast. Jerry Siem (top) generates force with a precisely-timed shoulder movement, George Cook (center) rotates the upper body from a squared stance, while Lefty Kreh (bottom) brings his whole body into the casting stroke.



We were primarily interested in identifying similarities and differences in world-class casters when they performed the same sequence of casts with identical fly rods and lines. Although we compared such things as rod actions and types of fly lines, the most impressive differences appeared when contrasting a 35-foot cast for accuracy to a cast of approximately 90 feet.

When comparing these casts, we first noted striking differences in the amount of rod bend and rod angle, two variables that interact closely. In long casts, the extra line weight being cast and the force applied by the caster put additional bend in the rod, which lowers its tip. The demand for a straight tip path means that the lowered tip also needs to be lowered at the start and end of the casting stroke. Casters accomplished this by widening the angle through which the rod moves during the cast, sometimes called the casting "arc."

The seven expert casters rotated the rod butt forward an average of 78 degrees during the shorter, 35-foot cast and a much wider angle of 133 degrees during the long cast. *Every caster, regardless of style, widened the rod angle considerably when casting for distance.* This comparison of short to long casts also allowed us to study differences in stroke length—the distance the hand moves the rod butt toward the target during the cast. We found that all seven experts, when changing from short to long casts, changed both the direction and distance that the casting hand moved.



3. "Self-optimization" can be seen in the way that the casters in the study held their casting elbows in different positions during the forward cast. The authors have identified three styles - (from left) elbow-forward, elbow-low, and elbow-out-to-the-side - all of which can be used to achieve the essential physics of a good cast.

The hand movements during the forward stroke of the 35-foot cast were short and more downward than forward. During the long cast, the hand movements were substantially longer and directed more forward than downward. This difference between the stroke length of short and long casts supports the teaching concept of "shot cast, short stroke; long cast, long stroke.

But despite the fact that the most impressive distance casters in our studies were characterized by wider rod angles, increased rod bend, and longer hand movements, such departures allow the caster to achieve the same straight- line physics that we expect with the shorter, basic cast. The purpose and movements may change, but the "essential physics" do not.

Self-Optimizing

Casters do move differently from one another, even when the casting purpose is identical. Although an instructor may require exact movements, students soon begin to differ in such things as length of casting strokes, hand position, and degree of wrist firmness. We refer to this phenomenon as people's tendency to "self-optimize" or unconsciously select movements that seem to work best for them.

This tendency to self-optimize grows out of differences in anatomy, physiology, size and strength. For example, a tall person may cast farther than a shorter person, owing to the greater tip velocity that results from moving a longer lever system (the arm and the fly rod) at the same speed. A shorter person may cast longer by possessing the strength or arm speed to move his or her lever system faster than the taller person. People begin to rely on slightly different movement patterns to gain an advantage, often without realizing how this advantage is achieved.

We see self-optimizing in the way a distance caster uses his body to provide additional force to the casting arm. Lefty Kreh's "open stance" uses the entire body to apply force. George Cook achieves a long forward movement primarily by rotating his upper body from a squared stance. Jerry Siem applies force explosively with a more limited but precisely timed shoulder movement.

We also see self-optimizing in the casting arm. Most noticeably, casters position the elbow differently for a forward cast. Jerry Siem exemplifies the "backward elbow" style. This style frequently develops in tournament casters who keep both the forearm and fly rod vertical to help achieve extreme accuracy. Lefty Kreh's arm is closer to a "low elbow" style. Lowering the elbow provides a strong hand position close to the body to assist in applying force to heavy or stiff rods, which makes it well-suited to the demands of saltwater fly fishing. Bruce Richards exemplifies the "elbow out to the side" style, which is often seen among float tubers and deep waders who need to keep the casting elbow out of the water. The elbow remains out to the side as a stationary pivot point, while the shoulder is used to rotate the hand forward. Although their styles vary and utilize muscles differently, these casters all start applying force to the rod before the casting hand moves forward of the body. And each of them accelerates the fly line along an unusually straight path.

A student of casting can benefit from this knowledge that experts move differently. You don't have to be an exact replica of your instructor. The important test is in the straight-line physics of line movement, including loop control.

Making It Work for You

Whether you are learning a basic cast or fine-tuning to add distance or increase accuracy, the concepts presented here can help guide your practice. Keep your primary focus on the most basic substance of the cast — moving the fly line along as straight a path as possible. You can tinker with the other dimensions of the cast — rod angles, stroke length, loading and unloading, timing, grip, and stance — to find the combination that gives you the straightest movement and tightest loops. This combination of adjustments defines your style.

Start by checking the path of the fly line during the cast by bringing the rod tip down parallel to the ground. This sidearm cast allows you to watch the line straightening behind the rod tip, the tip moving along a straight path, and the loop being formed as the rod is abruptly stopped. There's no better way to obtain a visual picture of the most important straight-line concepts of the cast. You can also find a large mirror or reflective window for viewing the path of the fly line.

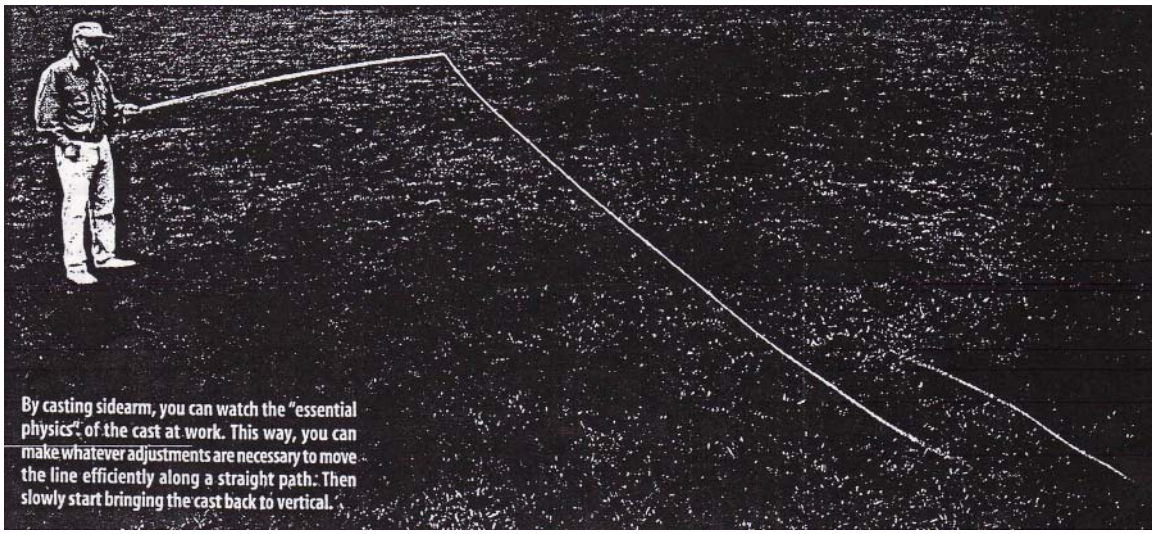
(continued on page 12)

Experiment by intentionally varying rod angles, the amount of force, stopping points, grips and movements, and note differences in the rod tip's path and the loop it creates. Typically, people find they need smaller loops, and they learn to limit the angle the rod butt moves and to stop the rod more abruptly.

If you have been casting side-arm and have gained control over the path of your fly line, gradually return your casts to an upright angle. Then experiment with longer casts. If tailing hoops suddenly appear, try a longer hand movement or a wider rod angle. If your loops open too much, you hove probably overdone one of these adjustments.

Sometimes fly casting is presented as a precise sequence of movements, and any deviation is treated as an error.

This tendency to teach style as if it were substance often leads to confusion about casting form. Don't be intimidated by some of the great casters you see at outdoor shows. As long as your fly line moves in a straight path, there is no reason to feel self-conscious about your style.



By casting sidearm, you can watch the "essential physics" of the cast at work. This way, you can make whatever adjustments are necessary to move the line efficiently along a straight path. Then slowly start bringing the cast back to vertical.

Al Kyte is a professor at the University of California at Berkeley. He has taught fly fishing and casting for 30 years. Gary Moran has a PhD in anatomy and kinesiology, and he is a research, medical, and forensic biomechanist.

Al was a member of the Casting Board of Governors from its inception in 1992 until he retired in 2007. He served as Chairman of the CBOG, served on many committees, helped prepare the exams and was a very active ambassador for the Casting Program.

Watch for his new book The Orvis Guide to Better Fly Casting, scheduled to be released in May 2008 by Lyons Books.

This document was first printed in American Angler Magazine (March/April 2000) and is reprinted with permission in the printed Master Study Guide.

From The Editors

In this issue, we have reprinted some articles that appeared in past Loop issues or in past magazine issues. The reason for this is two fold: first, they are good articles and should be read again and are not readily available. The second is probably more important. Mel Krieger, who was the founding inspiration for our Casting Certification Program is retiring from the Board this year. We've come a long way since the beginning and owe Mel a sincere thank you for starting this. Joan Wulff is also retiring from the Board this year and last year, Al Kyte retired. Thanks to all of them for their dedication and input to our program. Some of our founding members are passing the torch to us to carry on this great program. Let's keep improving it.

Several years ago the CBOG meetings were closed meetings. Electronic mail was not so readily available and the meetings were used to make key decisions and policy. Documents arrived by snail mail and took forever. You can imagine the clashes that occurred at those meetings. It was hard to get agreement on anything. No blood though!

Our meetings have come a long way as well. They can be almost 'boring' compared to the first ones as all of the work of the committees is done by e-mail during the rest of the year. Those committees can be quite entertaining though. By the time of the Board meeting, reports are finalized and presented and quite often, all we have to do is vote. It is a good time though to renew old friendships, make new ones and catch up on the past year.

We have a great selection of articles this issue. Larry Aiuppy's article on preparing for the THCI is an excellent resource for all. As examiners, we are always looking for short, concise answers and this is a good way to reach that point. This method can easily be used for preparation for the CI and MCI.

Please check out the article on the Casting Program Awards.

As always, we couldn't produce your newsletter without your input. Many thanks to those who support us with great articles. Hope you enjoy it.

Spring is on the way. Crocuses are out, tulips are on the way and the cherry blossoms can't be far behind. Hopefully the snow is behind us as well. A wicked winter this year for some.

A new casting/teaching season is coming. Get out and practice your casting and if you have the opportunity to go fishing, catch one for us.

Talk to you soon.
Denise & Liz

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You can have a link from your FFF website listing to your own e-mail address.
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 Program's 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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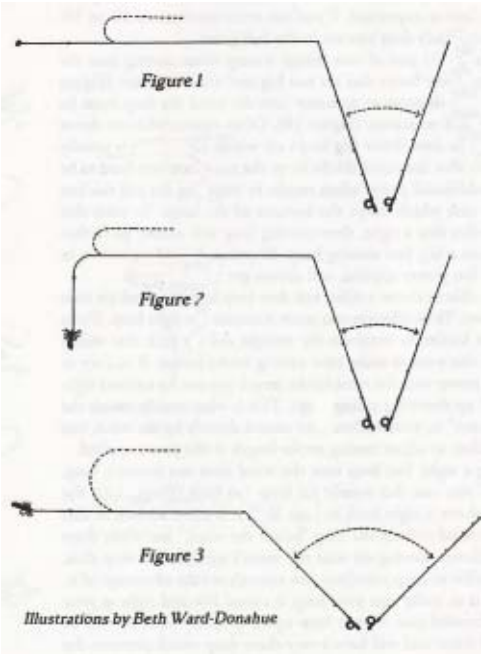
Casting Big Stuff

by Bruce Richards

The spring season is upon us, and that often means throwing streamers and weighted nymphs, especially early and late in the day when water temperatures are cool and dry fly activity limited. Although we probably should, most of us don't change rod and line when casting these larger, heavier flies. By making some adjustments to yourcasting stroke and leader throwing bigger, heavier flies with your light dry fly rod and line can be much more pleasant, and successful.

When throwing dry flies we usually try to cast a rather tight loop, as seen in figure #1. The taper of the fly line and leader effectively dissipate the energy of the cast so that when the loop completely straightens there is no energy left and the fly drops to the water gently. When the same loop is used to throw heavier flies problems often occur.



It takes more energy to throw heavy flies so the caster must increase the amount of power applied to the cast to make sure the fly gets to the target. If this extra power is applied through the same tight loop used with dry flies, the heavier fly will reach the end of the cast with considerable energy left. When this happens the fly will "kick" down forcefully (see figure #2) making it difficult to control your loops or be accurate. This affects not only the delivery cast, but each false cast also making it very difficult to maintain a good smooth casting rhythm. Another problem is that the extra power needed is often applied abruptly which causes tailing loops and wind knots. There is a solution to this problem.

The speed of the fly at the end of the cast can be controlled much better by throwing a larger loop (see figure #3). While we need more power to move the bigger flies, we want the fly going more slowly when the loop opens. By throwing a larger loop fairly hard we can apply enough power to effectively move the fly. The larger loop is more wind resistant and will slow more quickly than a tighter loop. Also, the fly doesn't abruptly change direction at the end of the cast as it does with a tight loop, but more slowly makes a big radius turn which dramatically reduces the "kick". While these loops are less efficient than tight loops, they are very effective at reducing the impact of a large, heavy fly on a relatively light line.

Another important thing to consider is your leader. Long, light leaders don't handle large flies well. For best results, leaders with heavier butts and shorter, heavier tippets should be used, especially with streamers. Leader butts should be no lighter than .022". Tippets for streamer fishing can be quite heavy (2X-0X), fish chasing streamers are not usually leader shy. When nymphing, your leaders will often have to be longer, with longer tippets, but don't make them any longer than they need to be, the casting will be much more pleasant.

By adjusting your casting stroke to throw a wider loop and your leader to better handle larger flies you will find throwing the "big stuff" will be much more enjoyable.

This article is reprinted with permission from Fly Fish America magazine and the printed Master Study guide. Bruce Richards is the Chair of the Casting Board of Governors.

The Mulson Wind Cast – Key Elements

by Gordy Hill

In 2004, Joe Mulson and Dan McCrimmon published an article on a highly specialized cast which I have found capable of solving the problem of presentation of the fly with deadly accuracy on the flats in the face of a howling wind.

The idea is to get the leader to turn over and deliver the fly accurately without it crashing down and spooking the fish. Very different from my usual high speed tight loop variation of the, "thrust cast" which cuts through the wind just fine but often sends the fish off to the next flat.

This is a very special cast which takes a great deal of practice to learn and is well worth the effort.

As I see it, these are the key elements:

1.) Very high line speed with a narrow loop.
2.) Low, horizontal forward trajectory.
3.) Rod leg of the loop is placed quickly onto the water as an, "anchor". This is done by rotating the wrist sharply to a low stop with the rod tip moving forward and down, close to the water.
4.) The line, "anchor" thus formed, provides resistance to the rod leg of the loop.
5.) The fly leg picks up speed and quickly unrolls in a, "V" shaped configuration presenting the fly to the target.

Since only the highly energized fly leg of the loop confronts the weather, the wind effect is minimized.

The main value of this cast is that side winds and quartering winds cannot blow the cast off course because of the anchoring of the rod leg of the loop to the surface film of the water. This is why the cast, done properly, is so accurate.

Also important, is the fact that the high speed low to the water loop pierces a head wind effectively preventing, *blow back.*

Joe and Dan have published their description of one highly successful set of hand / rod movements to accomplish this.

We have found that casters can be taught this cast with the use of alternative styles as well, as long as the basic key elements are maintained.

Gordy Hill is a BOG and a frequent contributor to the Loop

A degree in "Fishology!"

by Lou Bruno

As a fly fisher I could recall hearing several times that I was a member of a very special or select group. At first I didn't understand that I was. But reminiscing at my humble beginning to becoming a fly fisher, I soon could relate. Neither did I have any idea what I was in store for. The education and training is not for the faint at heart.

I was about to graduate from a spinning rod and a bait caster; I could use both, I found them quite easy to use and fishing with them came to me quite easily and brought, over time, much excitement. Simply they weren't that difficult to use or learn.

So, as I eagerly walked into the fly fishing store, supported by my confidence, I was greeted by a gracious sales person. After revealing to this gracious sales person that I was interested in buying a fly fishing pole, her answer stripped me of my confidence. I was about to go from 1st grade straight to college. My education in *Fishology* was beginning.

If I was in 1st grade then the sales person had to have her doctorate degree. From the first question she asked, I knew she certainly understood much more about fly fishing then I. She asked, "What weight rod did you have in mind?"

Weight, what did she mean by asking what weight? I certainly had an idea on the length, but sadly, the simple answer was not the correct answer to the quiz. Never ever did I need to know anything about the weight of a fishing pole in order to use it and certainly not before I bought one. Did I really need to worry about carrying it out of the store? As a matter of fact, to this day I couldn't tell you how much any of my fishing poles weighed.

Standing there I was asking myself, "Why do we take something as simple as catching a fish and make it so complicated?" As I was thinking to myself, she sensed my uneasiness and perhaps she wanted to ease my uneasiness by asking me another question. She asked, "Do you want a single handed or two handed rod?" I was anticipating her asking me what length I wanted, again. Attempting to place significance to the question, I had to admit I had no idea what she was referring to. Failure was coming easily to me. I failed yet another quiz…..

If I was earning a degree in *Fishology* then it took me a while to pass *Fly Rod 101*. But eventually I did pass and was about to walk out of the shop with my new 6wt fly rod. I never anticipated that in order to walk out I had to pass another quiz….but I did. She, while I was making the motions to begin walking, asked me, "What kind of line do you need?" For me, there must be an automatic response I have when someone goes ahead and puts before me a question that I absolutely have no idea what is being asked. My head assumed the posture that the RCA dog has…the blank stare with tilt look! And again she must have sensed my uneasiness and asked me, "Do you want a weight forward, double taper and a floating line?"

Well, I did eventually come to understand the difference in the fly lines and I did manage to equip my new fly rod with the matching fly line. Considering if a fishing pole has to have matching fishing line then perhaps, it gives it a new purpose.

With this new purpose comes a new name. Amazing, I am learning quickly.

I heard of "fight or flight" but putting it into action was not what I had intended. I was about to put it to test…..I was just about to do an about face and run out of the shop when she gave me another quiz. She asked "What size leader and tippet will you require?" I certainly heard the question but again like the last two questions put before me, my body had the same response and my head was about to assume the *tilt*! In a brief moment, I thought that each question put before me was getting slightly more difficult. After all if I am getting an education, then the next grade should be more of a challenge. And what did she mean *require*? Did I truly know I had the option of not getting a leader and tippet? In a matter of seconds, the neurotransmitters in my mind were firing, working overtime sending me their electrical impulses of thought. I thought how pleasant the words leader and tippet sounded. Like they should be together; like peanut

(Continued on page4)

Casting Board of Governor Awards

Are you aware that the Casting Board of Governors has two different awards to present to individuals each year? It wasn't until recently that we had the opportunity to recognize individuals who have contributed to the success of our Certified Casting Instructors Program. That's not to say that our members haven't been recognized with other awards, but now we have some specific awards to be presented by the CBOG.

Nominations do not have to come from the CBOG. Although our Board is very diverse and come from all parts of the US and Canada (and now the world), we don't know everybody, so if you think someone should be recognized, the criteria are outlined below for nomination and eligibility for these awards.

Our organization is on a volunteer basis and the success of the Casting Program is mainly due to the support and dedication of our members who believe in what we do. Sometimes alll we can do is thank them for a job well done. Now we can give them an award in appreciation for outstanding service.

Here is a brief description of the two awards and the past recipients.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN FLY CASTING INSTRUCTION WARD

An award given by the Board of Governors (BOG) of the FFF Casting Instructor Program in recognition of those who have made significant contributions to the art of flycasting instruction. Past recipients are:

2007 - Al & Barbara Rohrer
2006 - Leon Chandler
2005 - Jim Green, Lefty Kreh, Mel Krieger, Joan Wulff

Criteria:

1) The award will be given annually, if warranted, to a person, a couple or persons who have dedicated their lives to flycasting instruction
2) The recipient(s) need not be members of the Federation of Fly Fishers
3) The recipient(s) may be alive or deceased

Additional Criteria - that may be considered in selecting recipients of this award:

1) The candidate should be a teacher or instructor of the art of flycasting
2) The candidate may be an innovator in flycasting techniques
3) The candidate may be published as a writer in the art of flycasting
4) The candidate should be known as a motivator of students
5) The candidate may be known as a "legend" in the flycasting world
6) The candidate may have committed his/her life to advancing the sport of flycasting
7) The candidate may have been instrumental in developing FFF's Casting Instructor Certification Program
8) The candidate may be known for sharing his/her knowledge of teaching with others
9) The candidate has made a significant, long term contribution to the art of flycasting instruction

(Continued on page18)

MEL KRIEGER FLY CASTING INSTRUCTOR'S AWARD

An award given by the Board of Governors (BOG) of the FFF Casting Instructor Program in recognition of those who have made significant contributions to the FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program, have dedicated themselves to flycasting instruction and have shared their knowledge with others.

2007 - Joe Libeu

Criteria:

1) The award will be given annually, if warranted, to a person, a couple or club who have dedicated their lives to flycasting instruction
2) The nomination must be made by an FFF member
3) The recipient must be a member of the FFF
4) The recipient must be an FFF Certified Instructor

Additional Criteria - that may be considered in selecting recipients of this award:

1) The candidate should be known as a motivator of students
2) The candidate is known for sharing their knowledge of teaching with others
3) The candidate has made a significant, long term contribution to the art of flycasting

The Process

1) The BOG Awards Committee will be appointed by the BOG chair.
*2) **Nominations for the award must be received** by the BOG Program Coordinator at the FFF Headquarters by mail or e-mail **no later than April 1**. Nominations should include the full name of the person being nominated, their current address and phone number if available, and a short description of the reasons why the person they are nominating should be considered for the award.*
3) A person need not be a member of the FFF in order to submit a nomination.
4) The BOG Awards Committee will recommend a ballot to the BOG Chair no later than May 1.
5) The BOG Awards Committee may recommend presentation of the award to more than one recipient.
6) Ballots will be distributed to the BOG no later than May 15.
7) Ballots will be returned to the Program Coordinator no later than June 15.
8)The returned ballots will be tallied by the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will report the results to the BOG Chair.
9) Presentation of the award will be authorized by a majority vote of the BOG.
10) The BOG Chair will report the results to the BOG Executive Committee, the BOG and the recipient(s) no later than July 1.
11) The recipient(s) will receive a plaque, with a plaque awarded to each person or couple. A permanent plaque will be displayed at the FFF Headquarters.

If you want to nominate someone, download the nomination form from the web site: (Home - Awards - Nomination form) and gather your info. Remember the deadlines.

Cheers - Denise

Simplicity

by Mel Krieger

(reprinted from the Loop first issue 1994)

"Have you ever thought, not only about the airplane, but about whatever man builds, that all of man's industrial efforts, all his computation and calculation, all the nights spent working over draughts and blueprints, invariably culminate in the production of a thing whose sole and guiding principle is the ultimate principle of simplicity.?"
"In anything at all perfection is finally attained not when there is no longer anything to add, but when there is no longer anything to take away; when a body has been stripped down to its nakedness. " Antoine de Saint-Exupety

Despite my feeling that the style and flair of Brownstones and Victorians have more appeal than the efficient geometric shapes of modern buildings, there is the strong ring of truth in Saint-Exupery's principles of simplicity. The perfect flycast is a good example; straight lines of line and rod with no extraneous force or movements or motions of hand and body, all energy solely directed through rod and rolling line to the fly. These principles of simplicity are also an integral part of both communication and instruction.

Nelson Ishiyama, a friend and the editor of my flycasting book, did more than help me with words. Early in our work together, he asked me if the purpose of the book was to teach people to cast. The real truth was that I wanted to show my peers and the world that once and for all, the flycast would be completely and perfectly analyzed and that it would be carved in stone forever and ever, and that Mel Krieger would be recognized as the author of flycasting's theory of relativity. Somehow I had trouble admitting this feeling, so I agreed to adopt the "Will this help someone learn to cast?" question to everything we did in the book. We spent a lot of time attempting to reduce complicated and involved theoretic concepts in flycasting to more basic truths and to simpler explanations. We eliminated photos and illustrations and many, many words. A funny thing happened to me and, like my transition from killer to conservationist in catch-and-release fishing, I began to feel very good about this new direction, finally embracing it, not only for the book, but in all of my teaching.

Do not confuse simple with elementary teachings only, or for that matter easy instruction. In fact the reverse is usually true. Helping the advanced flycaster commonly requires the most fundamental of adjustments. It may happen, for example that a small change of hand position will solve a tailing loop, timing, velocity or any or all of many other casting faults. That fine tuning, finding a basic common denominator does not come easy. Simplicity invariably requires more time, effort and usually experience. A famous author once said at the end of a letter to a friend, "My apologies for this long letter. If I had more time, it would be much shorter."

Over teaching, a universal problem in flycasting instruction consists of two major parts; not allowing the student enough alone time – time to learn without the impediment of instruction, and of course, too much instruction.

Have I solved this relatively easier explained problem? Hell no! My own biggest difficulty in teaching continues to be too much explanation, too many words, too much critique, too many "let me show you" casts – in short – over-instruction. For all of us, however, understanding is the first step to improving that complex relationship (almost a dichotomy) that exists between the simple 'helping someone to cast a fly' and the healthy ego that is a necessary part of being a good instructor.

I hope it also means that we will continue to grow.

The quintessence of learning is doing.
The quintessence of teaching is inspiration.

Derivatives of the Overhead Cast

by John Lynde

The Horizontal Cast

In principle a horizontal cast is an overhead cast performed sideways, but since its plane is horizontal instead of almost vertical, the force of gravity affects it in a different way and there are subtle differences in the mechanics of casting. The horizontal cast serves at least two purposes: first to enable the angler to fish under obstructions such as tree branches, and secondly, by keeping the rod low, to avoid spooking a wary fish in clear water.

The horizontal cast is primarily a dry fly cast, so your tackle should include a double-tapered floating line and a general purpose leader with a small fly. Stand with your feet slightly apart and your left foot towards where you are going to cast. The first thing to do is to get the feel of casting in a horizontal plane, so lay about twenty feet of line on the water with the overhead cast, then pick up sideways and make a number of false casts with the rod moving horizontally at your right side. If you imagine a horizontal clock face around you with nine o'clock pointing in the direction of your casts, your rod shuld be moving back and forth between ten-thirty and twelve-thirty (Fig. 32). Watch your rod carefully to make sure it stays in a horizontal plane all the way, without drooping at the ends of the arc or lifting. Check that the line is making a narrow entry in front and behind, and that there is sufficient speed in your false casts to keep the line well up. Two or three minutes should suffice for this exercise.

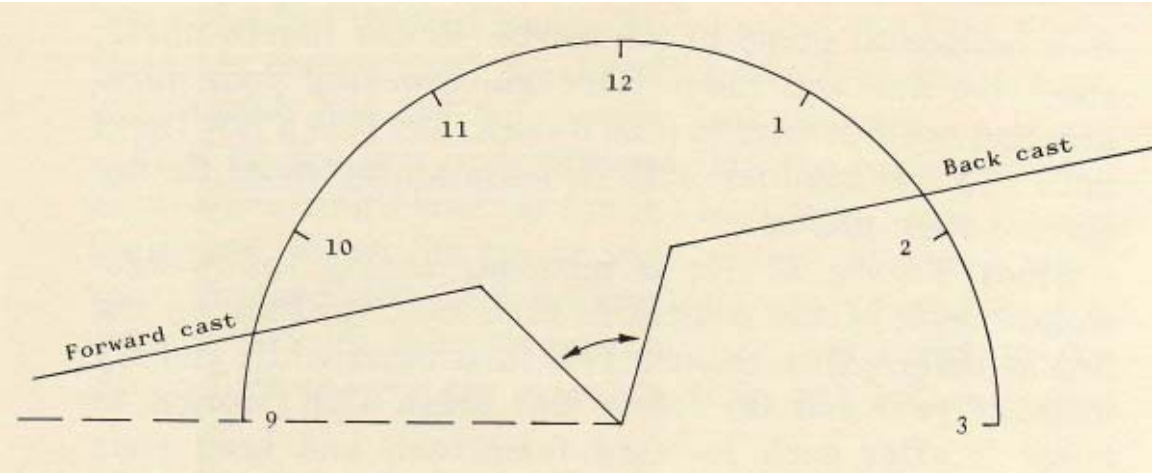


Figure 32. Plan of the horizontal cast exercise.

Now you are ready to start on the real horizontal cast. In the first phase, raise your forearm and rod sideways so that they reach a horizontal position at approximately ten o'clock, simultaneously drawing line in with your left hand. Continue into the second phase by speeding up the rod tip in a gradually rising plane to

twelve o'clock for the back cast (Fig. 33), drifting the rod to twelve-thirty during the pause. In the third phase, cast forwards in a horizontal plane to ten-thirty. In the fourth phase, shoot the line and follow through, lowering your forearm and rod sideways to ine o'clock. Try this a few times until you feel familiar with it, maintaining equal timing for the four phases.

Study Figure 33 for a moment, noting the wedge-shaped orbit of the rod tip in false casting. Pick up the line as before, then make a few false casts while you try to make your rod tip follow this orbit. Don't forget to lower it after each forward false cast, and keep your casting arc restricted between ten-thirty and twelve-thirty (Fig. 32). Finish your cast by shooting your line and following through to nine o'clock.

Pick up the line again and limit yourself to two false casts and a complete cast, shooting to lengthen your line at each of the false casts. Practice with increasing lengths of line, gradually working out to about fifty feet. Try to achieve accuracy by dropping the fly on floating objects in various directions. Keep a wary eye on your rod to ensure that it is still more or less horizontal and following its orbit correctly.

When done properly the horizontal cast has a fair amount of speed, but it is a delicate cast to perform and little effort is necessary. The line should follow a flat trajectory forwards, dropping the fly quickly on the water without any fuss. While the true horizontal cast is carried out in a horizontal plane, there will be occasions when it is desirable to cast in an intermediate plane somewhere between the overhead cast and the horizontal cast.

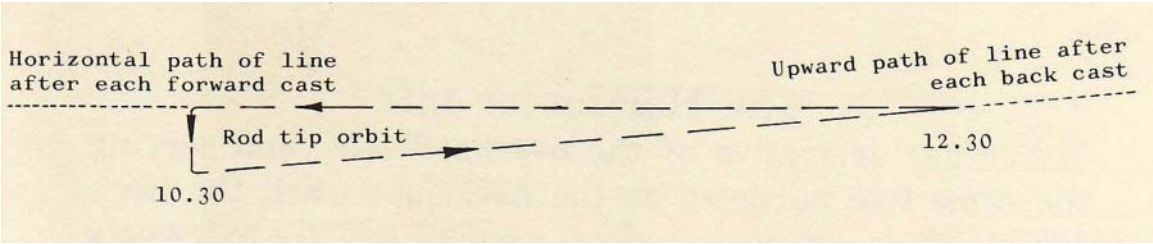


Figure 33. False casting

The Horizontal Lift

Another derivative of the overhead cast, and serving the same two purposes as the horizontal cast, the horizontal lift is adapted to drop a small dry fly extremely lightly.

This cast requires the use of a double-tapered floating line and a fine tapered leader with a small, light fly. Stand facing to the right of the direction in which you are going to cast, and lay out twenty feet of line.

Pick up the line and continue into the back cast in a gradually rising plane, as for the horizontal cast. During the pause, lower the tip of your rod slightly and make your forward cast in a horizontal plane (Fig. 34), following through with a quarter turn wrist roll to the left to flick the rod tip upwards (Fig. 35) before lowering it to within a few inches of the water. The timing is the same as for the overhead cast or a little quicker, and the horizontal arcs are the same as for the horizontal cast (Fig. 32).

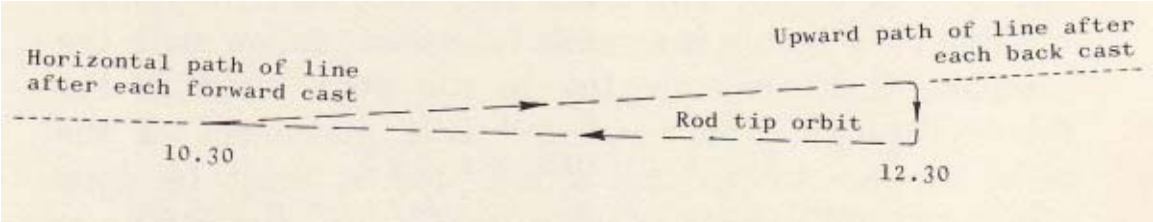


Figure 34. The horizontal lift

(continued on page 22)

Note the orbit followed by the rod tip in false casting (Fig. 34) and compare it with the orbit for the horizontal cast (Fig. 33). Now make some false casts, guiding your rod tip through the horizontal lift orbit, until you are accustomed to the new movements. then pick up your twenty feet of line and make two false casts, lengthening line by shooting it at each false cast; follow with the complete cast, remembering to roll your wrist in the follow through. The wrist roll is a movement of the wrist similar to turning a key, but it must be done smartly to achieve its effect, and of course the rod must be held at an angle in relation to your forearm (Fig. 35). The height of the lift is controlled by adjusting this angle, a greater angle causing a higher lift, and vice versa.

If your completed cast is a success, the leader and fly will rise in the air as the line extends, dropping to the water as gently as thistledown.

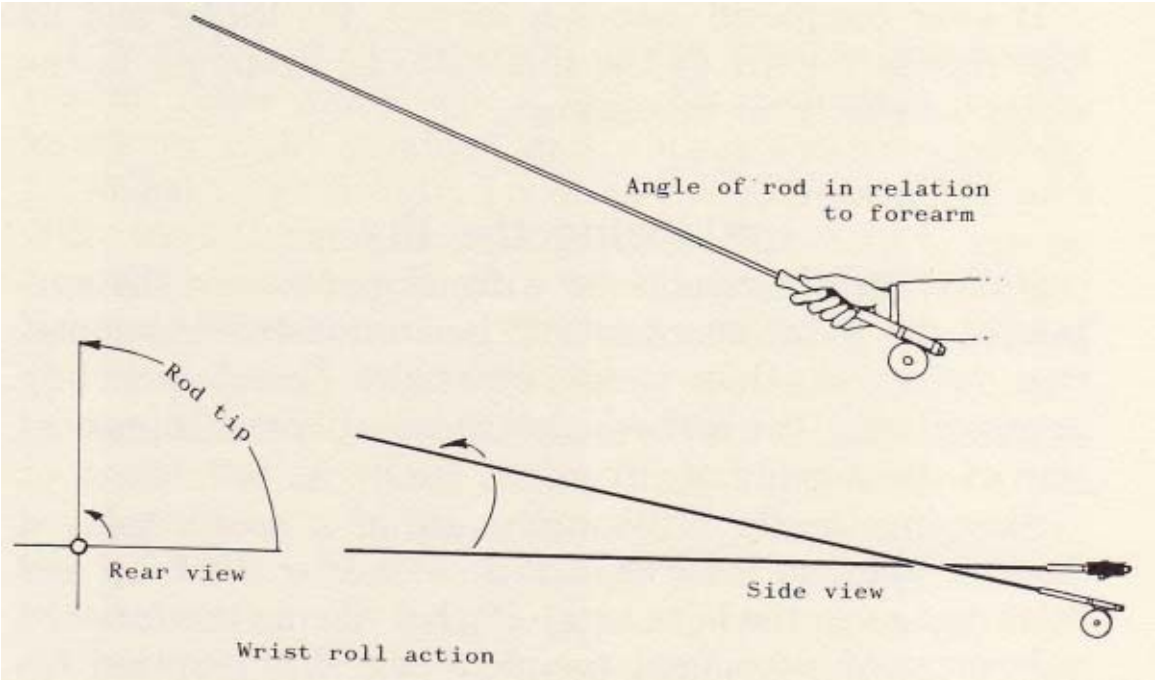


Figure 35. The lift

Skipping the Fly

Under certain conditions a fly skipped over the surface of the water may prove to be an irresistible temptation to a fish that would otherwise ignore your fly presentations. The cast which will be explained is a variation of the horizontal lift minus the wrist roll.

Skipping the fly requires the use of a double-tapered floating line and a forward tapered leader. Pick up and false cast as in the horizontal lift, but during the forward movement of your final complete cast dip your rod tip just a little and raise it again, shooting line and following through normally. This action will cause your fly to strike the water on the way to its destination, and the forward tapered leader will then arch forward so that the fly bounces up and over, alighting before the line has had time to fall (Fig. 36)

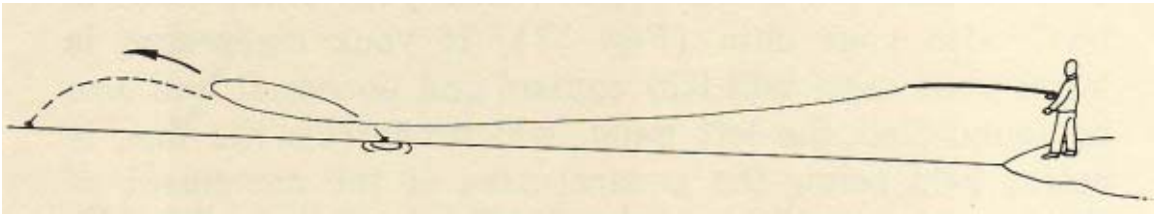


Figure 36. Skipping the fly

The Backhand Cast

The backhand cast is a necessity for those of us who are not entirely ambidextrous. Moreover it has further applications which will be used in performing certain other casts which will be explained later, therefore it should be learned and practiced even by an entirely ambidextrous angler.

Use of the word 'entirely' is not made without good reason. Some years ago I had the misfortune to dislocate my right shoulder, and while I was convalescing I decided to go fishing. I can cast a fly reasonably well with my left hand, but every time a fish rose to my fly I reacted by attempting to set the hook with my right hand, which held the line. The task of casting left-handed and immediately changing hands was easy enough, but having fished out the cast it was a very clumsy operation to transfer all my loops of line to my right hand without causing a tangle and then to have to transfer the rod to my left hand without interfering with the loops.

Returning to the matter in hand, you will require the double-tapered floating line and a general purpose leader. Take up your casting position facing half left, with your right foot forwards.

The mechanice of the backhand cast are essentially the same as those of the horizontal cast (refer to Figures 32 and 33) except that the cast is performed backhanded, but the secret of success is to keep the right arm up high so that with the forearm horizontal your right hand is level with your chin (Fig. 37). If your right arm is lower your casts will lack control and power. It will also be found that the left hand, which controls the line, is better held below the general area of the movement of the butt end of the rod instead of behind your left hip.

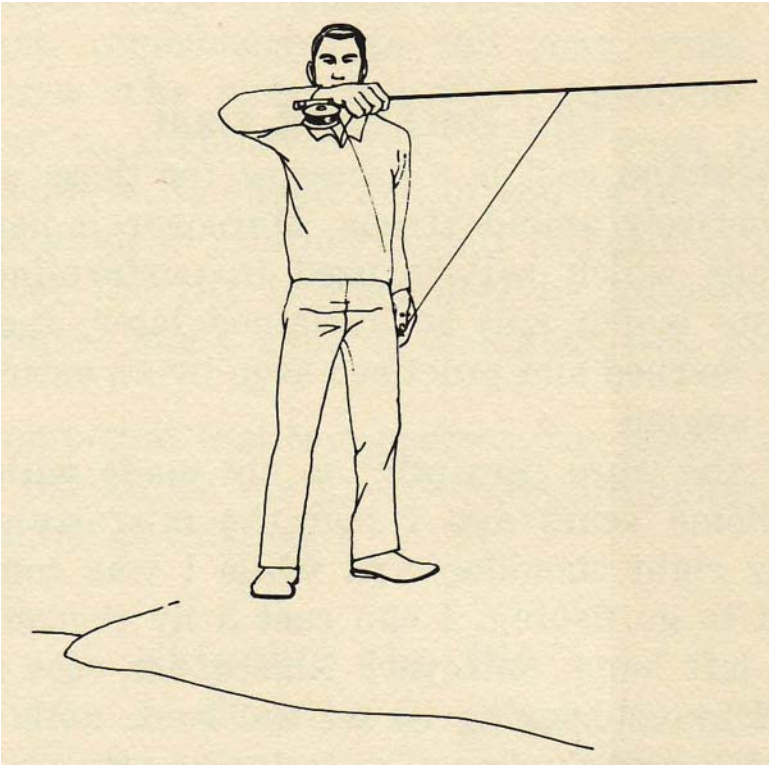


Figure 37. The backhand cast

Besides enabling you to cast in otherwise difficult locations, the backhand cast is useful when a wind is blowing from your right-hand side too strongly to allow an overhead cast over your right shulder to be performed with safety. On such occasions a backhand cast which is higher than the horizontal plane will be more convenient, and will be referred to as a backhand-overhead cast.

This excerpt was taken from the book "34 Ways to Cast a Fly" by John g. Lynde. It was published in 1969.

Beethoven and Fly Swatters

Part One of this article is a letter sent from Mike Rieser to John Matson. John Matson is the originator of a teaching method he now calls, Beethoven and Fly Swatters.

Read on....

John, it has been a busy guide season since returning from Mexico with lots of begining fly fishers coming through the shop. It is encouraging to see that there is still a keen interest in learning to fly fish. All of these new folks have provided plenty of opportunities to apply Beethoven and fly swatters as a teaching technique for fly casting. To say that Beethoven and fly swatters has been successful is an understatement, as well you know from our Salt Water clients.

Well it works great for the trout fishing guide situation as well. The other twelve guides in the shop, who at first were skeptical, have become true believers after seeing the results with my clients. They have either picked up the technique or want a 'train the trainer' session.

The shop owners and guide service provider definitely want to set up a seminar with their guides to learn how to teach the method.

The beginner is a very common guide/client situation here, and one that before you introduced me to the technique, created a certain degree of stress of how to provide a fun fishing day to the client. The teaching method has proven itself so many times now that I am able to focus more of my time with the client on other aspects of the fly fishing experience. The client enjoys their first fishing experience and I still enjoy guiding after 30 years.

A good number of beginning clients stand out in my memory of this summer. One special trip involved a young lady of 13 years swept along with Mom, Dad and Brother. The later three are avid about fly fishing while the young lady was pleasantly going along with what the family chose to do while on vacation. I joined them as a guide on their third day of fishing.

The young lady was still game to participate with her family's passion, but was obviously frustrated with the whole experience. Twenty minutes into the day she was sitting on the bank skipping rocks into the river. It was also clear that engaging her into the family experience was priority number one for Mom and Dad.

So, I asked her if she would like a special casting lesson. Oh yes she replied. Taking the cue, the other guide took the rest of the family up river while I cut a willow stick as a fly swatter substitute. My guide pack served as the wall and we proceeded with an impromptu casting lesson. Fifteen minutes later and no small measure of giggling, she was throwing nice loops of thirty plus feet. Half an hour later she was mending line and catching fish.

We rejoined the family group with an enthusiastic new member of the fly fishing fraternity. I am not sure who was prouder, Dad or his young daughter, radiant with newfound confidence. The enthusiasm never dwindled through the rest of the day. When the other family members were ready to call it a day, the young lady was asking for one more cast, just one more fish.

As a working guide I have taught lots of clients in various settings over thirty years, from formal seminars to impromptu sessions on the water. The hardest situation is the client that shows up wanting to learn how to fly fish, never having held a fly rod in hand before. Your teaching method excels in this situation. The objective of the day is usually to learn about fly fishing, have fun and hopefully catch fish. An all day casting lesson is not what they usually have in mind. Until you introduced me to the fly swatter that is normally what happened. The

simplicity of teaching the cast now frees up the majority of the day to introduce the clients into obtaining good drifts, setting the hook, playing fish, breathing deeply, relaxig and have fun.

I believe the method works so well and with most people because the client learns the casting stroke kinesthetically, developing muscle memory before they ever pick up a fly rod. Defects in the stroke are easily corrected without delving into the precise mechanics of the stroke, which for the majority of beginers is confusing and distracting while also trying to learn to fish. And isn't the end objective to learn how to fly fish and have fun?

Traditional teaching methods have excellent application in a seminar situation where a good portion of the time is dedicated to learning one aspect of fly fishing, the cast. Yet even in the seminar situation the teaching approach is heavy on the auditory approach, explaining the mechanics and painting an auditory picture of the casting stroke. This is reinforced with a visual learning approach with the instructor demonstrating. With time the student hopefully connects the description of the stroke with what they see the instructor demonstrates. They eventually self teach by doing, in other words, a kinesthetic learning method. Beethoven and fly swatters jumps right to the kinesthetic, builds confidence along the way and opens the student to delve into a break down of the mechanics after they build the basic casting stroke. Brilliant!

Well John, I have rambled here for a bit, just thought I would share some reflections on my experience as a guide, leading folks past the first big and often intimidating step of learning to cast. Thanks for developing and sharing this method with us.

Mike

Now that you are wondering what this teaching method is, let me relate what I learned after talking to John on the phone. I work as a fishing guide so I could instantly relate to what was said in Mike's letter and I know that a lot of our members are in the guiding industry.

How do you deal with a client who shows up for a guiding/fishing tripand knows nothing about flycasting or fly fishing? You don't have time to conduct a 1/2 day casting course so John developed this method and 'sharpened' it over ten years or so. He now teaches it and calls it 'Beethoven and Fly Swatters".

A nice catchy name to grab your attention. A great problem solver for guides.

There are two parts. The first is the basic casting stroke:

PART ONE

1. Stand with your back against a wall with fly swatter in your hand (or something solid like a tree will do. Use your imagination if you don't have a wall).
2. Take a half step forward from the wall.
3. With the fly swatter in your hand, imagine a fly high on the wall behind. Make a back movement with your hand and the fly swatter, hit that fly and leave the fly swatter on the wall. (Use your imagination again if you don't have a fly swatter, a branch will do - you can also look to aim). You can't get too wristy with this method either.
4. Now to the tune of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which goes something like this - Da, Da, Da, Dum, do it again. Da becomes back so move the fly swatter back and count - da, da, da and then come forward and say dum. You can hum along. Don't drop the fly swatter too far in the front or you will 'hit the water'.
5. 'Cheating Beethoven' - if you cheat by one note on the backcast, you 'cheat Beethoven'. A light way of correcting a timing mistake. When you cheat, the line doesn't have time to roll out and load the rod, etc.

Fly swatter and bungee cord

6. How loud you hum can differentiate between casting for saltwater (loud) and trout (quiet and soft)

PART TWO - the Double Haul.

If you look at the picture of the fly swatter, it has a bungee cord attached to the handle.
The bungee is a loop of cord that is approximately 24" long and 3/16" in diameter.
As John says and we all know, when you teach the double haul, everyone makes the initial pull but they forget to go back. The bungee takes care of that.

So for this part, we change tunes. To the Blue Danube by Johan Strauss which is a world famous waltz, we add the down and up of the double haul. Don't forget to hum along to get the timing correct.

As you make the back stroke, pull down on the bungee and the bungee will pull the hand back as you wait for your three count of da, da, da - then come forward and pull again and let the bungee pull your hand back.

It takes about 20 minutes for this part.
So after Beethoven, comes Strauss and once you get 'casting', the two tunes are interchangeable.

Handle of fly swatter and separate bungee

The rest is easy. Make the switch to a fly rod and fly line, etc.
Include as much explanation as needed and your student/client can be casting and fishing in record time.

John Matson is from Swan Valley, Idaho. He and Mike Rieser are partners in Baha Fly Fishing Co. Mike Rieser also guides out of the Steamboat Springs area.

Teaching Your Six Year-Old to Fly Cast

By Joan Salvato Wulff

Temperatures are up, days are lengthening, our creeks and rivers are healthily full of water. It's spring, and as we turn attention to our favorite sport, it behooves us (there's an old word) to set-aside time for the introduction of a youngster to the family's fly fishing heritage.

When is a child old enough to learn to fly cast? If he or she is under six, only after they've been introduced to fishing with simpler tackle. When grandson Alex was three we gave him a closed-face spinning reel to use with worms and minnows. That summer he caught perch and sunfish and was himself hooked on the sport.

I gave Alex his first fly casting lesson at age five when life first became exciting for him; when he could take instruction. His interest was burgeoning in swinging a bat, throwing and catching balls, and taking the training wheels off the two-wheeler.

His second lesson was given one year later (I'm not always a good grandmother). He remembered. I had taught him the roll cast. In the second lesson I taught him to roll cast backhand (off his left shoulder, instead of his right) and he did it easily. Then I took him to a basic cast -- taking line off the water and putting it back down. In spite of the dramatic difference in backcast motions (one leaving the line on the water, the other lifting it off and throwing it with force into the air behind him), he didn't confuse them; he was able to distinguish between the mechanics.

This is interesting. When I teach adult beginners, and there is no assimilation time allowed between the roll and basic casts, they often get confused on the backcast. Children apparently don't carry " baggage" or think beyond what they are being taught ---they just follow directions (which had better be good ones). It's wonderful.

With one exception, Alex was the youngest child I have taught successfully. Several years ago, a phone call from the local inn asked me to set aside lesson time for a father, and a son who was 6 1/2 years old. I agreed, anticipating difficulty with the boy, either through lack of concentration to correct will be as natural, but all wrong cast, or in the restricted length of his periods of concentration.

I was wrong on both counts. My two sessions with Daniel turned out to be the highlight of my teaching season. Not only did he listen,but he could direct the use of his hand, forearm and whole arm once he was shown their effect on his cast. It was uncanny; I found myself wondering if he wasn't a man in a child's body. In two 1-hour sessions,shared with his father, Daniel learned the roll cast, the basic cast, false casting, and shooting line -- no mean feat even for an adult. When he showed weariness I taught him how to retrieve line, pretend to strike a fish on a dead-drifted fly, and how to play and land a fish (I was the fish). It was fun for both of us.

Daniel was not a man in a kid's body. He was a motivated child, the essential element in all successful teaching. If your youngster isn't interested, don't waste your time or his; and when he or she is interested, age won't make much difference.

Here are some guidelines:

Rod length and weight and diameter and length of the grip, are number one in importance. Daniel used a 71/2 foot rod for a #5 line. Alex, who is not as sturdy as Daniel,was comfortable with a 7 foot glass rod with a #4 line. When Alex was doing well with it I asked him to try my 8 foot #6, 2 5/8 oz. graphite rod and he found it too unwieldy. For 8-10-year-olds, and 8-81/2 foot rod for a #5 line should be appropriate. The tackle must include a leader (71/2 feet) and a yarn fly.

(continued on page 28)

Teaching Your Six (Continued from page 27)

Have the child use *two hands* on the rod grip, one in the normal position, thumb on top and second at the very end of the grip, thumb in line with the other (See Figure 1).

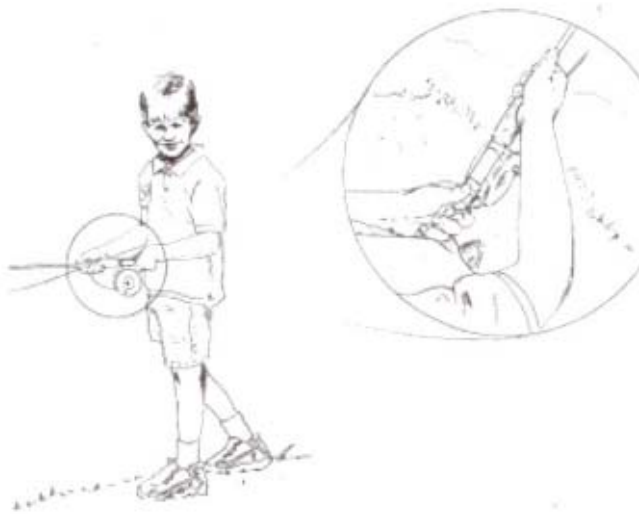


FIGURE 1: The Grip (for strength) - Primary hand with flexed thumb on top; secondary hand holds very bottom of grip, thumbs in lline.

Most children under age 11 or 12 lack the strength to end the accelerating casting stroke with a forceful **stop**, especially on the backcast. The combined strength of two hands solve this problem and keeps the cast in line, vertically, as it should be.

Set out or identify a target of any kind so there is in an obvious goal and instant reward for a good cast. Don't use of the terms like *loading move* and *power snap*. Use "slow-fast," "easy-hard," "lift-snap." Limit the session length to the time the child will concentrate and end it on a high note. Be honest. Offer praise when the cast is perfect and non-committal comment when it is not. Use "not so good," "good," and "perfect. " Teach the role cast as a first technique, off both shoulders to handle wind and stream conditions.

Step 1. Strip line from the reel and then release it while stroking the rod from side to side with a lowered rod tip. The fly line will slide through the guides and pile up in the water.

Step 2. Leaving the line, leader and fly lying on the water, lift and draw the rod backward slowly, tilting it outward until there is a belly of line behind the shoulder (See Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: **Roll Cast Set-up Position - Line stays on water but is bellied behind the shoulder. Rod is tilted outward; primary hand puts thumb at forehead level.**

Step 3. Hestitate, to let the line come to a dead stop, then make a forceful stroke forward, pushing the rod hand's thumb right toward the target, and pulling up on the end of the rod grip with the second hand (Figure 3).

Once the roll cast is done surely, relate it to fishing . Put the line under the middle finger of the rod hand and retrieve it, smoothly or with strips. Stroke it out again, "fish it," retrive it. Have the child watch the water under which the fly swims.

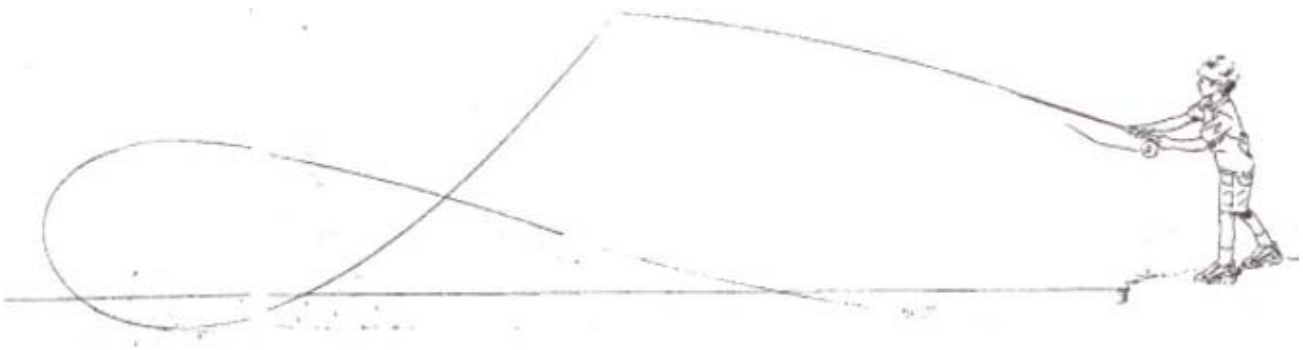


FIGURE 3: Forward Stroke - Rod hand's thumb pushes to the target while second hand pulls end of rod upward.

Pretend there is a strike! Strike and playing instruction is extremely important. A child's natural instinct will be to just hold tight and not give an inch when he feeels the fish. Instruction should include when to put pressure on the fish and when to let it run, when to pull in line by hand and when to reel it in.

Introduce a real fly with a hook; point out the dangers and the importance of good casts to offset them and, when the child is casting safely, go to fishable water. Pick a time and place when chances of success are high. Introduce dry flies only when conditions are right and the fly can be seen easily (I hope it will be a Royal Wulff).

Practice dry fly strikes. After the roll cast and the basic cast, teach false casting and then shooting line. Those four techniques make everyone operational as trout fishermen.

Obviously older children will progress faster than younger ones but I've focused on the 6-year-old because that is the age it will become ingrained; they won't remember when they started fly fishing. They will always think they "just did it naturally."

My second grandchild, Andrew, will be four- and -a half this spring and already wants to fly cast because Alex knows how. It'll be fun to see if he's ready.

This article was originally published in Fly Rod & Reel, July/August 1999. The figures are drawn by David Shepherd. The article was published in The Loop, Spring 2004.

Casting Instructor Program

Want to know how we are doing?
Here are the numbers:

CI - 1,020
MCI - 170 (includes BOG's)
THCI - 46

COUNTRIES - 23

Dyna-Flex Powerball

Liz Watson

It never fails to intrigue people walking past my desk. I really should move it so I can get some work done.

"What's this"?

It is about the size of a yo-yo, which is often the first guess. It consists of a clear sphere containing another sphere. Mine is bright yellow and orange.

"It's an exercise gyroscope," I respond, not looking up from my work.

"It's a what?!"

"Here, let me show you. Grasp it in your dominant hand with the arm pronated. Then twist you wrist at about 15 degrees, alternating to the left and right. Good, now faster."

"Wow!"

The gyroscope exercise ball takes off. The rotor speed climbs, the internal led lights come on, and the unsuspecting person has to really hold on and work to keep the rotor in motion.

"Now place it in your non-dominant hand and see if you can keep the rotor spinning."

With most people the motion is uncoordinated, the lights go off and the rotor speed falls off. The inquisitive person rarely stops there. They can't seem to get enough of it.

"Hey, let me try it again."

And so it goes.

The Dyna-Flex powerball is not a new device. In 2001 the Dyna-Flex Powerball was named as one of *Time* magazine's top 10 digital devices. A rock climbing friend introduced it to me almost 10 years ago. The Dyna-Flex Powerball is a wrist and arm exerciser for building strength and co-ordination. It emits a light when the gyro rotates. The rotor can reach speeds of 9,000 RPM and puts out a 35 lb torque. It has been touted as an rehabilitation tool for people with carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow (check with your health care provider before using if you have an injury) and an exerciser for shooters and golfers. When I showed it in one of my casting classes, students wouldn't put it down. Now, I often bring it out in various casting classes. For those new to casting it is simply a fun way to strengthen the hand and wrist and may have special benefit for those with limited hand strength Nearly everyone can spin the rotor with their dominant hand. However, it is a different story when they switch to the non-dominant hand. Non-dominant hand casting classes are where I primarily bring out this tool. Learning to cast with a non-dominant hand is like learning to cast all over again with a hand that sometimes seems disconnected from the brain. The *muscle memory* and the muscle must be built. It is a process of repeating the correct mechanics, building coordination and strength.

This qyroscope exercise ball requires coordination and strength. The powerball utilizes a prehensile power grip, flexion and extension of the wrist and the supinator and pronator muscle groups in the forearm. The exercise gyro is just one tool for getting casters accustomed to using their non-dominant hand. It is a fun way to get them warmed up for class. We have one person start it and pass it around with our non-dominant hands, keeping the rotor going. The tool is small and can be used at home or at work, which is why I originally put it on my desk. I pick it up daily ---as soon as I am prompted, "What's this?"

There are numerous internet sources for purchase of the Dyna-Flex Powerball. Prices range from $30-$40.

Liz is a BOG and USCG captain in the FL Keys.

Upcoming Events for 2008

Seattle, WA Denise Maxwell	Kaufmann Spey Days THCI -Skykomish River	Mar. 8-9, 2008
Mtn Home, AR Chuck Easterling	Sowbug Round Up 3/15 - CI	Mar 13 - 15, 2008
Sandy, UT Jeff Wagner	Salt Lake City ,ISE Show CI, MCI	Mar 13 - 16, 2008
Minneapolis, MN John Breslin	Great Waters Expo CI	Mar 15- 16, 2008
Lakeland, FL Dusty Sprague	Nat'l Fly Fishing Expo 3/28 -CI Registration closed	Mar 28 - 30, 2008 3/30 - MCI
Lakeland, FL Dusty Sprague	Nat'l FlyFishing Expo Instructor Prep/Workshop	Mar. 29, 2008
Pertenstein Lasse Karlsson	GERMANY CI, MCI	April 19 - 20, 2008 Int'l Test Payment
Tokyo/Kanagawa Bill Higashi	JAPAN FULL	April 3-6, 2008
San Francisco, CA Tim Rajeff	Jimmy Green Int'l Spey-O-Rama 2008 Golden Gate Park	Apr 18-20, 2008 THCI - Mon. Apr. 21
Redding, CA Guy Manning	***Instructor Prep Class/Workshop	May 10-11, 2008
Portland, OR Al Buhr	Sandy Clave Oxbow Park	May 17-18, 2008 THCI
Whitefish, MT Rick Williams	2008 FFF Conclave / Show CI, MCI 7/23 -Two-Handed	July 22-26, 2008 Sign-up not available yet
Redding, CA Guy Manning	***Instructor Prep Class/Workshop	Oct 4-5, 2008

CONGRATULATIONS

New Casting Instructors

Carrie Roche -	CA
Randy Mandt -	AZ
Pat Peterman -	WA
Ryan Smith -	WA
Mary Ann Dozer -	OR
Andrew Chicone -	FL
Kevin Liddell -	PA
Richard Kovars -	NH
Joe Mahler -	FL
David Lovell -	CO
Erik Kyrping -	Denmark
Craig Buckbee -	NJ
John McKernan -	NH
Brian Donovan -	NH
Ed Phelan -	CA
Anti Guttorm	Italy
Massimiliano Perlet	Italy
Thomas Berggren	Norway

New Master Instructors

Matthew Howell -	Australia
Tom Woods -	UK
Giacomo Catellani -	Italy
Stener Skogmo	Norway

New THCI Instructors

Thomas Berggren	Norway
Peter O'Reilly	Ireland
Liam Duffy	Ireland

CONCLAVE 2008

Where: *Whitefish, Montana*

When: *July 22-26, 2008*

What: *FFF Conclave*

Who: *All members are invited to attend the CBOG meeting on Tuesday, July 22.*

Why: *Great workshops, great casting, great friends.....*

Have you made your reservations yet?