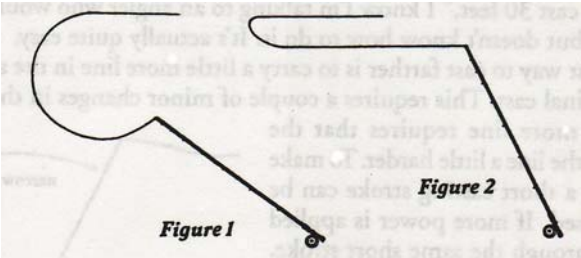
Delivery Problems

by Bruce W. Richards

Do you find that your casts often don't go where you want them to, especially on windy days? Do you find that your leader doesn't consistently straighten out when you want it to? Does you fly land on the water long after your line and leader? If the answer to any of the above is 'yes', the cause is likely related to one of two common delivery problems.

Stop That Stroke

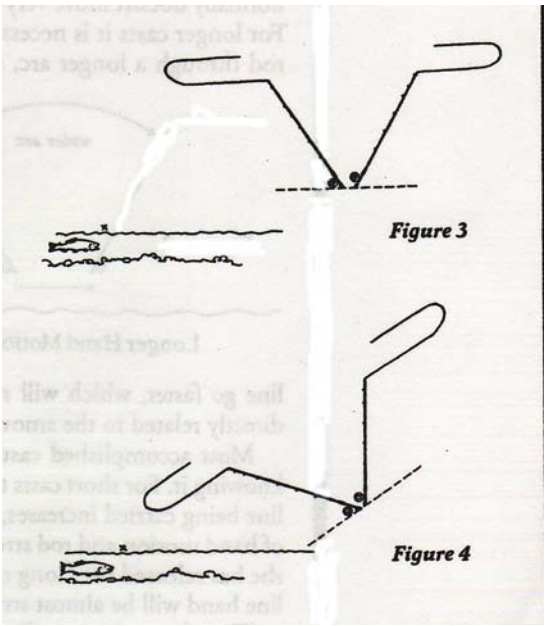
The most common problem I see negatively affecting accurate delivery is caused by not stopping the rod properly on the last (delivery) cast. Many anglers anticipate the delivery cast and stroke the rod nearly to the water, hoping to force the line down. If the rod isn't stopped fairly high on the last cast, the result is a big sloppy wind-resistant loop that will collapse before the leader fully extends (Figure 1). The only cast that really counts is the last one. If your delivery loop is larger than your false cast loops, then concentrate on stopping your rod sooner on the delivery cast. The problem is in the wrist: don't bend your wrist as much on the delivery cast. By stopping your rod high, the loop will tighten and deliver the leader and fly more effectively (Figure 2).



Many anglers try to apply more power on the delivery cast which can open the loop (and cause tailing loops if not done smoothly). Usually, no extra power is needed on the delivery cast unless it's a really long one.

Incline That Plane

The other delivery problem I commonly see is caused by not aiming the loop properly. To effectively deliver the leader and fly, the loop must be aimed at a spot just slightly above (higher than) the target. The loop should open no more than a couple of feet above the water – not six to eight feet up, which is what happens with a loop thrown *parallel* to the water (Figure 3) These high, parallel loops result in the fly taking quite a while to get down to the water. Since the fly line is heavier and less wind resistant than most flies it drops more quickly, dragging the leader and fly down with it. The leader lands in a heap, with the fly somewhere in the middle of the mess.



To make this aim adjustment, change the plane that the hand travels in during the casting stroke (Figure 2). The fly line travels in the same plane as the hand, so to produce a low forward cast your hand should end it's forward motion in a position lower than it does on the backcast. If your hand travels in a plane that is lower in front and higher in the back, your loops will be lower in the front and higher in the back - which is exactly what you need to properly deliver a fly accurately under nearly any conditions.