

THE LOOP

*The Federation of Fly Fishers Journal for Certified Casting Instructors
Summer 2005*

The Single Spey

By Al Buhr

The Single Spey cast is a two-directional roll cast in which the fly is cast on the upstream side of your position. Therefore, this cast provides a level of safety when encountering an upstream wind. The line and fly positioned to the upwind side will not be blown onto you on the forward delivery. This cast is a good choice for a limited backcast area since the "D" back-loop may be formed on the riverside of your position, well away from obstructions on the bank. Keeping the fly away from the bank minimizes the chance of a broken hook or the line entangling in the tree limbs along the shoreline.

This is a simple and quick cast that minimizes line position moves and maximizes fishing time. It makes very little disturbance on the water surface, which is important in successful fishing. This cast can and should be mastered with both right and left hands to accommodate either side of the river. Two-handed casting does not rely on a dominant hand, rather it utilizes the leverage between the upper and the lower hands, which allows casting to be easily mastered from the right or left.

The Single Spey is not just limited to two-handed casting. It is a useful and simple change-of-direction rollcast for single-handed casting as well. This cast is an effective and simple way to quickly reposition the fly. By forming a "V"-shaped back-loop with a double haul a noticeable distance can be achieved with a single-handed rod.

The Single Spey is not a difficult cast to master. This cast is no more than a two-directional aerialized live line rollcast, also known as a Switch Cast. It is a simple cast that has a lift and a line reposition move followed by a Switch Cast.

With the fly on the dangle, the rod is swept from downstream to upstream. This will bring and set the fly to the desired anchor point, aligning just upstream of the intended forward cast. The rod then rotates its direction aligning to the forward cast and drives forward to complete the cast.

The first step in mastering this cast is developing a good lift. When forming a lift, it is important to begin with a strong thrust tempo. This assures the line will clear the water surface and "set" to the anchor smoothly.

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The Shotgun Lift

The Single Spey *(Continued from page 1)*

There are two traditional ways to start the Single Speycast. They are the old Scottish gillie “figure of eight” or Crescent lift and the Shotgun lift. Beyond these two traditional lifts there are several more modern lifting techniques that have their own unique benefits.

The Shotgun lift, the more popular lift, is easy to master, provides a smooth anchor, and “D” or “V” back-loop transition. This will be the lift used to describe the Single Spey.

Executing the Single Spey cast:

1. While standing on the left bank, start with 60 feet of line plus the leader out from the reel with the line laid out straight at the end of the dangle. Hold the rod tip low to the water surface with the right hand on top. The cast starts with a “lift” and “set” movement that will “lift” the working line (the line beyond the rod tip) from the water surface and “set” the fly and leader to the anchor point. A good lift is vital to a good cast.
2. The “lift” is done by raising the butt of the rod to bring the rod tip from a low position near the water surface to a 30-degree incline, or the upper hand about eye level, in a smooth vertical lift. Do not make the lift by tilting the rod, but raise the rod with the arms to the top of the lift. This bends the rod butt maximizing the power applied into the lift. The lift motion will aerialize about half the working line from the water surface. The remaining line will clear during the start of the sweep to reposition the line upstream.
3. As the rod tip rises to the top of the lift in a continuous motion, sweep the rod tip with a low rotating swing upstream with a slight dip followed by a gradual incline. The start of the sweep or dip is where the maximum effort is applied to lift the remaining line clear from the water surface.

Apply this effort smoothly with minimal dip of the rod. Then, direct the tip path upward. Maintain a slow increase in tempo throughout the sweep.

This positions the body of the line on a rising incline and assures the leader will set on the water prior to the line. This is key to forming a good anchor.

Apply the effort or thrust at the beginning of the sweep to aerialize the line from the water surface. The amount of effort may vary with the length of working line and the flow of the water.

Too little effort and the line will not rise clear of the water surface or the fly will anchor below the path of the forward cast, causing an error. Too much effort will cause the line to shoot past the desired anchor point and/or too large or abrupt of a dip in the sweep will cause the line to crash into a pile on the water surface or create a “Bloody L”. All of these errors will affect the forward cast. The amount of effort needed comes as a “feel” that is developed with experience.

Use the tempo of the incline sweep to temper the thrust of the lift. This will smooth and harmonize the cast. When the line is “set” properly, it will be positioned smooth, straight and aligned in the direction of the forward cast. Do not drag the line to the anchor point. The “feel” of this move is as if the leader and line smoothly hops or jumps from the dangle to the anchor point.

Scribing the upstream sweep of the rod with a slight dip on an inclining swing will “set” the fly and leader to the anchor point while directing the belly of the line to be aerialized on a upward path. The proper anchor point will be to the upstream side and adjacent to the forward cast. This is about a rod’s length and slightly forward of your position.

4. In a smooth continuous motion from the upstream “lift” and “set” move, the rod now rotates to a new path that forms the “D” back-loop opposite to the direction of the forward cast. The rod drives back with authority then “circles-up” forming an oval “D” back-loop of line.

The “circle-up” is the transition move from the rod driving the line back and forming the “D” back-loop as it rotates into the “Key” position for the forward cast. This “circle-up” is a swing around move that redirects the rod path from back to forward. This is done in one continuous fluid motion to maintain a smooth constant tension in the cast. Constant tension throughout the entire cast is vital

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The Single Spey (Continued from page 2)

is to all types of spey casts. It is the smooth flow of tempo that bonds all the rod positions moves in one continuous movement from start to finish.

5. The rod rotating into the "Key" position accelerates smoothly forward loading the rod. The rod drives forward, flicks into the stop, the loop forms and zips out well above the water.

At the start, make a slight change of direction of the forward cast. As experience and skill builds, increase the angle in the change of direction while developing tight forward loops that roll out well above the water surface. Use the upper hand as a pivot and the lower hand as the driver to control the instincts of single-handed casting. As your casting skill builds, use the top hand to apply additional thrust into the cast. This will further balance the shared work between the hands to an ideal 50/50.

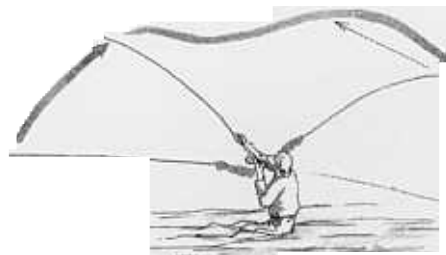
Slowly develop the ability to direct the position and shape of the "D" back-loop into a "V" back-loop. By forming a deep elongated "D" back-loop a strong lift with more energy will be delivered into the forward cast.

A "V" back-loop will be more dynamic, reducing the vertical lift and applying a maximum amount of energy into the forward cast.

Adding a slight back flick just as the rod drives back into the "circle-up" creates the "V" shaped loop. As the loop size reduces and the shape tightens, the line speed will increase accordingly.

Do not hurry the movements of this cast; use slow, smooth, continuous fluid motions. Focus on lifting and setting the line to the anchor point smoothly. Control the lift and avoid piling the leader and the line into the anchor point. Minimize the amount of lift and dip during the start of the cast. Less is better. This is the key to having a smooth anchor point and also makes the cast more efficient.

Of all the casts I have come to know and use, the Single Spey remains the most useful, simple and reliable fishing cast. Single or two handed, the Single Spey is an effective change-of-direction cast that is a must for all who seek successful fishing.



Al Buhr is a member of the Casting Board of Governors as well as the Chair of the THCI. He is also the author of A Handbook on Instruction of Two-Handed Casting, which will be available in December of 2005

Larry's Hybrid Cast

By Bruce Williams

It turned out to be a perfect morning to sight fish the flats of the Laguna Madre for redfish. Early morning clouds had melted away, giving the sun a chance to expose our ephemeral quarry. The tide was falling, but the hard sand flat, flanked on both sides by encroaching beds of oysters, was covered with six to twelve inches of water- plenty of cover for foraging redfish. Mullet were popping and skates cruised the flat. The southeast wind was freshening to 15-20 mph, and at 9:30 we were fishing with the wind and the sun at our back. Heading south from a series of spoil islands, the flats extended for miles, but only in a few choice spots were they the right color and consistency for optimal wade fishing.

Larry Allen has been coming to Port Mansfield, Texas to fish for reds for over 17 years, and Larry invited me to join him. He is as enthusiastic about fishing for reds today as he was the day he started, and an invitation to fish with him is an opportunity to learn from a master (in more ways than one: Larry is also an FFF Master Certified Casting Instructor). My lesson today was to learn a unique cast, which Larry has developed to cope with the challenging conditions so often encountered when fishing the saltwater flats.

Larry spotted a fish about forty feet to the left. The fish was just in front of us, but moving slowly in the opposite direction. The wind was stiff and at our back.

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Instructor's Rod Program

I taught a Positive Practice clinic recently at the SEC Conclave in Callaway Gardens, GA. Both students and instructors took the class. When demos were called for, I used a bright yellow instructor's rod strung with an international orange line. This combination makes a highly visible teaching tool which allows students to see rod movement and line placement against most backgrounds and surfaces. Students cast the rod throughout the class to view their own line placement and rod position.

A couple of instructors in the class wondered (as well as Tom Jindra, later) if the yellow teaching rods were still available. I contacted Rick Pope, head of TFO rods.

Rick has made this generous offer to FFF certified instructors only: Hi-vis 'Yellow Jacket' instructors rods in sizes 5- thru 8-weight with warranties, \$50 per rod. Limit 2 per instructor. *David Lambert, Atlantic Beach, FL*

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Teaching Tips

By Bill Spicer

I am approached periodically by would-be casting instructors whom want to certify with the FFF. Most have very good intentions, are very good casters, but are lacking in one skill, and that is teaching. When I put on a teaching clinic here are the topics I cover.

Don't stand in one place and analyze a cast, move around the student for a look from all angles. You will be surprised at the casting faults you will pick up.

Next use the simplest terms you can, for instance when a student is casting a very open loop and the problem is the wrist; don't say you're over-casting or you're cocking your wrist. Simply say you are bending your wrist too much when casting. Try to use a stiffer wrist. This will tighten the loops. You will have students who will need a more detailed analysis. Dig into your knowledge and give a more descriptive explanation.

Use the word *energy* not *power* in your description. It is a more accurate term.

With *all* students, especially female students, ask if you can get close to them, or touch their hand when helping with their cast. This is an important professional courtesy. Everyone has their personal space. Don't invade it without first giving their permission. Most men do not like their hand to be touched, but holding the rod above their hand is acceptable.

Never tell a student, "you making a mistake." Always say, "the problem that you are having is.." Men

especially don't like to be told they are making a mistake. You get a much more positive response when you tell them "the problem that your having is.."

Use a six-step procedure (described by Bruce Richards, *The Loop*, Spring 2005) when analyzing the cast. Here is how it is done ----- the first three steps are for determining the casting fault, and the last three steps are for the cure.

1) What is the line doing?

Example tailing loop, open loop, etc.

2) What path is the tip on?

Example, concave, convex or straight line.

3) What is the hand doing?

Example is "creep."

4) Correct what the hand is doing.

5) Show how the path of the rod tip is now correct.

6) Show how this correction has improved the loop.

I had the pleasure of working with Bruce Richards and he was the one that taught this method to me, and it works every time. The more you teach the better you get. When in the presents of other, more experienced instructors observe what they are doing, and try and pick up some pointers. Never think your method is the only one.

Learn as much as you can about the cast, and why things happen as they do.

Engineers are the best people to talk with; they make you think about why the line acts as it does, and your understanding will improve immensely.

Bill Spicer is an F.F.F Master Certified Casting Instructor and the owner of Proven Techniques School of Fly Fishing in Hamilton, Ontario Canada

Updating “The Essentials Of Fly Casting” Booklet

By: Paul “Sodie” Sodamann

With all due respect to my friend Bill Gammel, I believe the *Essentials of Fly Casting* booklet needs some rewriting. I have used the information in this wonderful booklet for several years as a basis for teaching my fly fishing classes for Kansas State University. Having spoken with Bill from time to time, I understand he has taken several close looks at the information presented within *The Essentials of Fly Casting* and is constantly updating his own perception as to the accuracy of the text. However, the “Terms to Know” section is in dire need of revision, or at the very least, expansion of definitions so as to cover a more accurate and broader view of how the terms are currently being used. The following are incomplete suggestions for additions to the book. The published definition will be first, followed by at least one suggested additional definition. Other definitions may be added which apply to a user’s specific needs.

1. **Casting arc** – As used in this booklet, the angle between the rod at the beginning of the casting stroke and the rod at the end of the stroke.

Addition: The area covered by a fly fisher while standing in his/her favorite hole. This area is measured in a complete circle the radius of which is the absolute maximum length of line said fisher can successfully (or unsuccessfully) cast. This area, if encroached upon by another fisher, may cause a plethora of foul language to emanate from the person claiming to “own” said hole.

2. **Casting stroke** – The movement of the hand and arm to apply power to the rod, excluding any pick-up, drift, or follow-through movements. This is the movement made in false casting. The casting stroke is made in either a backward or forward direction.

Addition: The medical condition resulting from a poorly executed cast from which the slap of the line put down a potential record breaking fish. Symptoms include stuttering, mumbling, grumbling and the occasional breaking of fly rods. Proper medical treatment usually requires many adult bev

erages and ample ridicule from comrades who witnessed said casting stroke. These group interventions will need to be repeated if symptoms have long since subsided, just to insure the inflicted does not suffer from a relapse.

3. **Creep** – To allow the rod to move forward (without power) before the unrolling back loop has straightened. This is a serious fault in fly casting. *Addition:* The person who has just encroached upon one’s casting arc (see #1).

4. **Drift** – The repositioning of the rod (without power) that comes after the completion of the back cast. This is usually a backward movement of the rod occurring as the back loop straightens.

Addition: The action the mind takes while standing waist deep in cold water, fully incased in foul weather gear. Usually the drift ends up in a warm, saltwater destination and one envisions oneself in shorts, sunglasses and wading boots.

5. **Fly casting** – The use of a flexible rod to propel a weighted line, in order to present an essentially weightless fly.

Addition: The rapid, repetitive motion of first picking up and then discarding every fly in one’s box in an attempt to figure out which one will be successful at fooling the finicky fish one has been throwing to all morning.

6. **Follow-through** – It is a second, separate motion of the rod and casting arm (without power) which follows the complete stop at the end of the forward casting stroke.

Addition: Something your fishing buddy lacks, as when he tells you he will provide the beer for the trip, or pay for the gas, or tip the guide, or...

7. **Line hand** – The hand which anchors and manipulates the fly line during casting and fishing.

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Updating (Continued from page 6)

Addition: A fly fishing restatement of “handing you a line,” related to follow-through, in other words the line of BS you were handed by your fishing buddy prior to a lack of “follow-through.”

8. **Loading the rod** – The bending of the rod through the correct application of power.

Addition: Usually something you forgot to do and discovered too late. Can also be attributed to your buddy lacking “follow through” when he told you he would do it. Possibly he was using his “line hand”.

9. **Loop** – The shape of the fly line during the cast.

Addition: Something you were thrown for when you buddy actually did follow through on one of the many promises made to you. Can also be something you are kept out of when friends are discussing their favorite fishing hole a.k.a. Casting arc.

10. **Pause** – As used in this booklet, the elapsed time between the application of power in one direction and the application of power in the opposite direction.

Addition: The elapsed time at an unmarked intersection of a highway (or hiking trail) during which time you question your buddy as to his promises to bring the map. Also the elapsed time used counting to ten before a heated discussion with your buddy defining “Follow-through” and “Line hand.”

11. **Pick-up-movement** – The movement of the hand and arm in order to lift the line from the water before making a back cast.

Larry's Hybrid Cast (Continued from page 4)

The sun was at our back as well, high enough to provide good light, yet low enough to cast a long shadow. In shallow water, the fly must land in close proximity to the fish, but in a manner that does not alarm it. I made two overhead casts, but the wind blew my fly wide of the mark. Not only was accuracy an issue, but also a vertical cast risked throwing a line shadow over the fish. Next I tried a couple of horizontal casts low to the water, and they were even

Addition: Action taken by your buddy in a bar after spotting an interesting member of the opposite sex. Most likely this action will include excessive use of “line hand”, lack “follow-through” and create a “loop” of some sort or another. This loop usually entails who is driving home with whom and who gets the car keys.

12. **Rod hand** – The hand which holds the fly rod during the casting stroke.

Addition: When you were younger, this was your father's hand after playing hooky from school to go fly fishing. As you have become older, this is the hand of your significant other, the rod is replaced with the “to do” list on which you were supposed to be working. Sometimes a “line hand” will get you out of this situation. It is lack of “follow-through” that put you in the situation in the first place.

13. **Turnover point** – The point at which the rod stops, reversing its bend from one direction to the other, and converts energy of the bent rod to the line.

Addition: The place in the river where you reach down and pick up a rock to see what critters live on the underside. This action is usually followed by “flycasting”

These are only suggested additions to the “Terms To Know” and many instructors will need to modify the list and definitions to correlate with their own specific needs. I am sure Bill will agree that the *Essentials Of Fly Casting* booklet was meant to be a growing work and not one which was set in stone. As for myself, I tend to drift all too often!

Paul Sodemann is a FFF Master Instructor from St George, KS

ess accurate. Too much power was needed to turn the fly over straight into the wind. I handed the rod to Larry, and he showed me his ingenious cast, which efficiently addressed all the obstacles.

Starting out low and horizontal, Larry executed a Belgium-style backcast with the cast angled toward the water. On the forward cast the rod remained in the horizontal plane, until the power snap was executed with a rolling forearm, thus forcing the loop to become vertical.

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Larry's Hybrid Cast *(Continued from page 7)*

The hand began palm up and ended with the thumb on top. The vertical finish resulted in the straight and accurate delivery of the fly with a soft presentation. The cast was executed low to the water, so the risk of shadow was minimized.

In this situation, the backcast was with the wind, so there was no need for extra power. The power and quickness of the forearm rotation drove the fly accurately to the target, yet allowed for delicacy of presentation. I was amazed at the results.

While our situation was particularly appropriate for this cast, Larry uses this cast often during the course of a day on the flats. The cast fuses the positive attributes of the horizontal cast to the accuracy of a vertical cast. I encourage you to give it a try.

Bruce Williams has been a dedicated student of fly casting for twenty-five years, and achieved his Master Certification in 2004

FFF Offers Free Memberships to Your Casting Students

The Federation of Fly Fishers would like to offer a FREE six month membership to your casting students. We would like to reward your students for selecting an FFF Certified Casting Instructor and wish to show you our appreciation for your efforts on behalf of the Federation and fly fishing. It is also hoped this offer will encourage more people to use FFF Certified Instructors, that more casting instructors will become Certified, and that more people will be exposed to the Federation and will become more involved with us and in fly fishing.

In the near future, a standardized form will be distributed to you. For right now, copy and reproduce the form below. Please, fill out all information asked for, sign and date the form, and return it to Headquarters in Livingston. Initially, we are asking that each instructor fill out the form and return it to us for the student.

Bob Shirley, FFF Membership Committee Chair

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From The Editors

It's Conclave time again and we hope to see many of you at our annual gathering. I (Denise here) will be at the Conclave for the first time in a few years and am looking forward to seeing old friends and taking in some of the great workshops and topics offered this year.

The THCI program is gathering momentum. I will be taking the certification and hope to pass but as with all our levels, there is no guarantee. (Study, study, study, cast, cast, cast!) This program is unique in that all the testers must take and pass the exam.

We continue in this issue with a great article on the Single Spey from Al Buhr. Al is the Chair of the THCI program and keeps it running smoothly. As you can tell, his favorite speycast is the Single Spey. More spey articles to come in future issues. If you think that the THCI program is not for you, don't forget that the speycasts are equally effective with single-handed rods. If you haven't taken a look at the THCI performance test, check it out on the new FFF web site.

I know that we have mentioned this before, but the Loop is entering the age of electronic delivery. ***Please make certain the FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program in Livingston has your current e-mail address. If you change your e-mail address, please notify them or you may not get your issue.*** Also please give them a long term e-mail address that you use frequently. They will send you an e-mail notification that the new issue is ready and give you a link that takes you to the web site.

This issue is only available with the e-mail notification and will not show on the web site for the general public until the next issue is delivered. You can then download the issue to your computer or read it on-line.

If you do not have a computer or access to a computer, the staff will be printing a few hard copies of the Loop and mailing them to those who contact them and tell them.

Part of the reasoning for electronic delivery is to speed up the delivery, part is to cut down on the staff work of getting it printed and mailed, part is to cut down and eventually eliminate the cost of printing and mailing and the rest is to give you the choice of keeping an electronic copy or printing it out for your library. The choice is yours!

Cheers from your Editors,
Denise Maxwell and Liz Watson

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You can have a link from your FFF website listing to your own e-mail address. Contact the casting certification office in Livingston.

We welcome your submissions via e-mail or disk. Please attach a short (1-3 sentences) instructor biographical statement, including your location and Certification level. Please indicate whether or not you are willing to allow your submission's possible re-publication on the Program's web site. Any illustrations should be in TIFF or JPEG format.

The Loop reserves the right to decline any submission for any reason, and to edit any submission. All submissions should be sent to the National Office:

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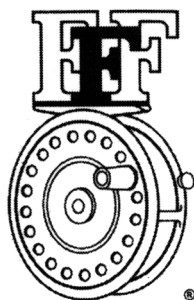
COMING EVENTS for 2005

Pre-registration is REQUIRED

Schedule subject to change

FFF Conclave - Livingston, MT. August 10-13 CI, MCI and THCI testing.

Contact The Program Coordinator at (406) 585-7592 for pre-registration (A \$50 test fee for Certified Instructor or \$100 test fee for Masters is required to pre-register)



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