

THE LOOP

The Federation of Fly Fishers Journal for Certified Casting Instructors
Spring 2005

The Snake Roll

By Simon Gawesworth

Many, many years ago my father and I ran a fly fishing school in Devon, England on the river Torridge. The pool we used to teach speycasting was almost ideal. It was wide enough to throw a full line, shallow and gentle enough to wade and teach casting from both banks, and it had a nice high bank from which we video-taped casters.

The only thing wrong with the pool was lack of current. The caster would stand on the left bank (river flowing from right to left) cast a Single Spey across the pool and wait quite some time for the current to wash the line back to the dangle.

Frustrated by this delay, we used two roll casts to get the line back downstream (there were too many trees lining the pool to do an overhead cast).

The first roll cast was to get the line in the right area and the second to straighten it out. Over the course of time I started to speed the two roll casts up, merging them into one fluid movement. My father saw me doing this cast and recognized it as a cast in its own right with a number of fishing applications and so we came to name it ---the Snake Roll. I think (being a young kid in those days) that I wanted to call it the Sausage Roll, but my father's wisdom prevailed and we called it the Snake Roll.

Since starting to teach the Snake Roll as a cast on its own merits in the early 80's, I have seen the same cast done by many good casters and frequently heard it called by other names. This just goes to show that there is nothing new in the casting world. When you believe you have created a brand new cast, you are not alone. Someone else has probably been doing it for years!

The Snake Roll as a fishing cast is used in exactly the same situation as the Double Spey – with a down-

stream wind, right hand up on the right bank and left hand up on the left bank. So, if it is used in the same situation as the double spey why learn it?

In truth you don't need to know the Snake roll if you can do the Double Spey. However, casting is a skill, and, like any other skill, there is immense satisfaction in doing something well, to the best of one's ability and, in particular, being able to do everything possible. In truth, the Snake Roll changes direction faster than the Double Spey, which equates to more time with your fly in the water and, therefore more fish.

The snake roll takes about 4/7 of the time of a double spey. In other words, in the time it takes you to do 40 double speys, you could do 70 snake rolls (if you were only casting, not fishing or anything). It also makes a lot less disturbance on the water than the Double Spey and, finally, some casters find it easier to learn than the Double Spey.

For casters with the right hand up, stand on the right bank. The line is on the 'dangle' and you want to cast your fly back across the river at an angle of 90 degrees or so. Stand with your left foot forward (weight mostly on this foot) angled towards the target and your body facing mostly downstream. In your mind, draw an imaginary orange line on the water, directly between your front foot and your target.

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Simon Gawesworth is a member of the Casting Board of Governors. He works for the Rio Line Company & is the author of Spey Casting (Stackpole Books, 2004).

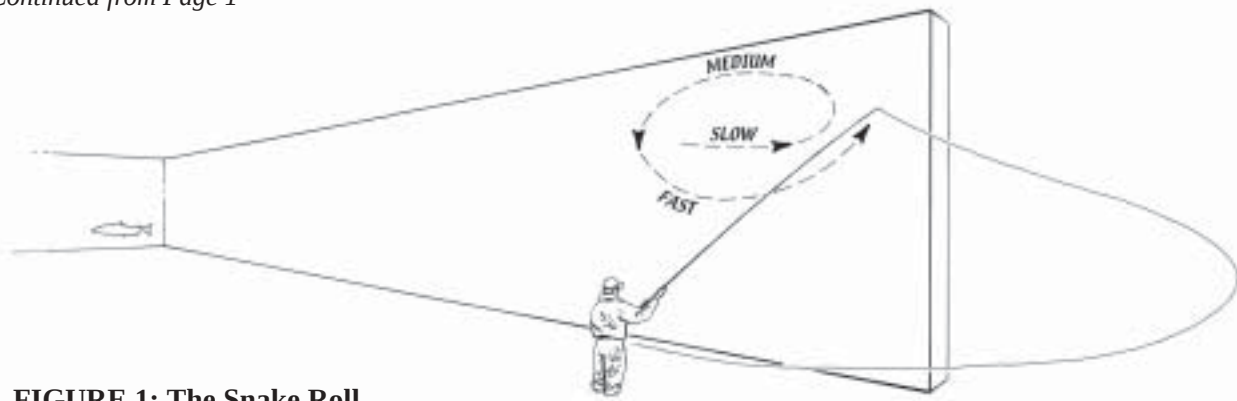


FIGURE 1: The Snake Roll

Start the rod tip pointing directly down the fly line, but slightly raised to the level of your hat peak. Draw a lower case 'e' (counter clockwise) with the rod tip --- big and bold, but finish the 'e' by lifting the rod tip up to 1 o'clock. The speed of the 'e' should be along these lines: slow, medium, fast. In other words, draw the flat, horizontal part slowly, speed up to a medium pace on the first half of the circular motion and then accelerate on the lower half of the circular motion (and up to 1 o'clock) to throw the belly behind you (See Figure 1). All the time you are drawing the 'e' shape try and keep your rod tip held away from you as far as possible. A useful analogy here is to imagine you have a piece of chalk jammed into the tip of the rod and that the chalk is resting on a brick wall. The brick wall runs at ninety degrees to your target, off your downstream shoulder. You want to draw the 'e' and the lift up to 1 o'clock on the wall and be careful not to pull the chalk away from the wall while you are doing it. What should happen, if you get the 'e' shape and speed right, is that the fly line, leader and fly will jump out of the water from the dangle and land about ten feet to your down stream side, dead straight, pointing towards your target and parallel to your imaginary orange line.

Once you have finished the back stroke and formed the belly behind the rod you should have rocked all your weight on the back foot (the right foot). It is then a simple matter of finishing off with the forward stroke. On this note, however, remember that timing is, as always, vital. The back stroke should make the entire fly line lift completely out of the water and re-land parallel to the target. The forward stroke is a Splash & Go cast. This means

there is no pause for the anchor to settle. The moment that the first piece of fly line touches the water the forward stroke must start and must drive close to and parallel to the anchor (without crossing it of course!)

Initially casters should practice this cast in two parts, working on getting the back stroke right before worrying about timing and forward stroke. To get it right, the fly and line must jump out of the water from the dangle and land dead straight in front of you parallel to the orange line and aimed towards the target. As you get more accomplished at the backstroke start to watch the anchor point of the end of the fly line (the needle/nail knot). To start with, it will be somewhere in front of you--- maybe 20 feet or so. As you get better and more control of this stage of the cast, you should get the end of the line to land directly downstream of you in your wading wake, though still facing the target. This will give you the biggest belly and load and the most efficient of all casts. However be warned, when you are tight to restrictions the big belly can be a problem and snag behind you, so a true master of this (and all speycasts) can adjust the size of the belly behind according to the amount of space there is.

Don't think that this cast is limited to the two handed rod. I use the snake roll constantly with the single-handed rod when trout fishing for a fast change of direction. It is useful in saltwater fishing on the flats for quick changes of direction. With either rod, practice with different shapes, sizes and speeds of 'e' to see what results you get. Remember that flat is good and the better you get, the flatter and more compressed your 'e' should be.

The Six-Step Teaching Method

by Bruce Richards

Since the inception of the FFF Casting Instructor Certification program I have had the pleasure of working with, and certifying, quite a few instructors. About half the instructors I've tested have failed. Some have not been able to make the necessary casts, but more have failed because they did not exhibit the ability to adequately analyze and correct casting flaws. Some of them fully understood casting, but lacked a method to clearly and concisely communicate that knowledge to a student. If followed, this 6 step procedure provides a logical way for an instructor to analyze any casting problem, and communicate the cure in a way that most students will understand.

The heart of good instruction is communication. Too many instructors try to cure a casting problem before the student even knows what the problem is or why it is a problem. Also, some instructors try to cure every problem they see at once, and don't use clear, concise language that the student will understand. All of these things lead to a confused and often frustrated student, and instructor. I have been using a six-step method that helps instructors more effectively convey their knowledge to a student.

The six steps analyze the cause of the problem from "top to bottom", then the cure of the problem from "bottom to top." The first step of the CAUSE is describing to the student what is wrong with the (1) LINE. The next step is to explain what the (2) ROD is doing to cause the line problem. The last step of the cause analysis is to explain what the (3) BODY (usually hand/wrist/arm) is doing to make the rod and line misbehave.

The CURE part of the process tackles the same steps, but in reverse, "bottom to top" order. First, explain what to do differently with the (4) BODY. Next describe what this makes the (5) ROD do differently, and then how that affects the (6) LINE to get the desired results.

Each step should be as concisely stated as possible, extra words can confuse, especially beginners. Only work on one flaw at a time, start with the one that is most detrimental to progress. Speak

slowly and clearly and demonstrate what you mean with the rod if appropriate. If you demonstrate, make sure you cast as slowly as possible and exaggerate what is right and wrong so the difference is clear to the student.

This can be an interesting exercise for an instructor. It is imperative that the instructor has a very thorough understanding of the dynamics of both good casting and bad. If you try this and find you struggle with any of the steps it may indicate that your understanding is not as complete as you thought. I often suggest posing a particular casting problem then writing down the 6 steps of cause and cure. Better yet, have someone else pose the scenario and analyze your 6 steps.

Here is an example of the process, analyzing a typical beginners big loops. Assume loops and loop terminology have been explained to the student.

CAUSE (top to bottom, line to body)

LINE - "See the big, wide loop we talked about?"

ROD - "Remember that the big, wide loops are caused when the rod tip travels in a big, wide arc?"

BODY - "See how your wrist is bending a lot and how that makes the rod tip travel in the big arc?"

CURE (bottom to top, body to line)

BODY - "Don't bend your wrist so much"

ROD - "See how that makes the rod tip travel in a much straighter line?"

Line - "Look, your loop got much smaller"

I know this seems simplistic, but it really works for both the student and the instructor in most cases. The student will probably not be throw-

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Bruce Richards is a member of the CBOG and the Product Development Engineer for Scientific Anglers. He is author of Modern Fly Lines (Odysseus Editions, 1994)

The Six-Step Method *(Continued from page 3)*

ing perfect loops after the exercise, but the loops should be improved and the student should know why.

At this point the instructor should re-analyze the students cast, decide what is now the biggest problem, and proceed to the next series of 6 steps. It may be that the loops are still too big in which case the same steps would be repeated. The caster might be throwing tight loops now, but they are tailing. Applying the 6 step process to tailing loops works exactly the same.

I will grant that this tool works best for students with a more analytical mind set and may not be effective with everyone, but no instructional technique works with all students. I have found that the technique works with a large majority of students, and offers a good, clear, easy to remember guideline for an instructor to follow. Every casting flaw can be addressed with this process, but it does demand a complete understanding of all casts. Pose a scenario for yourself and see how you do!

Test Preparation *(Continued from page 6)*

CI, and Matt Evans, CI, is an absolute necessity for anyone wanting to take either certification exam. The video clips of what is expected during the performance part of the test are priceless. The amount of time they spent developing this teaching aid shows how devoted they are in their desire to help others. Frequent visits to the site, accompanied by lawn casting outside continued to improve my casting. I remember the feeling when I first saw a tight wedge shape forming in my loops.

At our recent Tampa Bay Club Banquet, our speaker Mel Krieger, when asked about the Certification test said, "It's four times harder than it was a few years ago." Paying the price made the journey even more meaningful to me.

Pat Damico is a Certified Instructor from St Petersburg Beach, Florida.

DANISH FLY CASTING GAMES

This year at the FFF Conclave in Livingston, Montana a new event will be offered --- Danish Fly Casting Games. Casting Board of Governor (CBOG), Tony Vitale and his team of casting instructors will set up the course and be available to coach participants through the course. This should be a fun event and everyone is encouraged to participate. You may find this is a great event to incorporate into your classes or club events.

The Danish Fly Casting Games are an obstacle course for the fly caster. The name of the event honors one of the designers of the course, Paul Jorgensen. The complete obstacle course, designed by Paul and his collaborator CBOG Floyd Franke, was written by Floyd and published in Summer 2001 issue of *The Loop*.

The course consists of nine casting stations with various obstacles to a 36" ring. Scoring is 1 demerit for each unsuccessful cast and a maximum of 10 demerits at any station.

The following are descriptions of two stations from the nine station course:

DOUBLE TROUBLE

A casting ring is 35 feet from the starting point. A four foot high hazard in front of the ring requires that a curve cast must be made to place the fly in the ring. The caster must place the fly in the ring once to the left of the hazard and once to the right of the hazard. The right and left curve casts must be made without changing the casting hand.

UP TIGHT

A casting ring is 35 feet from the station. A hazard is five feet behind the casting station, limiting the fly caster's backcast. The fly must land in the ring without lodging in the hazard or breaking off in the hazard.

Save time in your Conclave schedule to participate in this event. See you at the Games!
Liz Watson

A Yahoo Discussion Group

In March 2001 I started a Yahoo Group for Certified Casting Instructors. The group currently has over 100 members including BOG's, Masters and CCI's. Since it's inception the FFFCCI Yahoo Group has hosted some very detailed and informative discussions that are still available for members to view on our web pages.

Our discussions have influenced the agendas of the BOG's and have added to the success of the Casting Certification program. The FFFCCI Yahoo Group is a discussion forum for Federation of Fly Fishers Certified Casting Instructors and those interested in becoming Certified Casting Instructors. Others may be admitted depending on their qualifications.

The topic is limited to casting and the certification process, occasionally a few fly fishing discussions slip through.

To register is free, just go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com>

and create an account. After the registration process is complete, go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FFFCCI/>

and click on "Join This Group" and follow the instructions.

Members can set up their accounts to receive individual emails of all postings or view them from the FFFCCI Yahoo Group web site.

Since it is a closed forum, email addresses will not be mined and there will be no porn or other unwanted postings to the site. If we fill your mail box on occasion it will only be with casting discussions.

Thank-you,
Guy Manning
FFF Master Certified Casting Instructor
Moderator - FFFCCI Yahoo Group

Hey Folks - a great opportunity to learn and discuss with other members. Check it out! - Denise

WHERE IS THE STOP IN THE CASTING STROKE?

To the non-discerning eye, this is difficult to see. The new or novice caster will look at the total stroke and won't be able to tell what's going on. A major obstacle for the beginner is when and where to stop the rod. They only see the total movement of the rod in the casting stroke. Hidden somewhere in there is a pronounced stop and rearward drift or forward follow through.

In order for everything to work properly, there must be a firm STOP in each cast. It isn't until the rod is stopped that energy is transferred to the fly line.

Lets take a look at a typical 30-foot cast and see what's actually taking place. On the backcast the caster draws the rod rearward applying power, stops the rod at about 1 O'clock and then drifts back to about 1:30 or 2 O'clock. (The rod during drift is moving without power.) Finally, there is a brief pause at the end of the stroke. In the forward cast the caster applies forward power to a firm stop at about 11 O'clock, follows through to about 10:30 or 10 O'clock, and briefly pauses at the end. As with drift, in follow through the rod is moved without power. The key to all of this is a casting stroke that's smooth and fluid.

Although all seems to be one simple movement of the rod both back and forth, it is not. Actually, there are 3 distinct separate components in each direction. A good caster will be able to blend them into one single piece.

Remember, the rod only has to stop for an instant to allow the line to turn over. That moment is so brief (maybe a millisecond), that unless you knew it's supposed to be there, you'd never see it. Be sure, when you practice, to work on a firm stop, a proper follow through or drift, and a pause. This will take some time so don't get discouraged. Believe me it is worth it! You'll be amazed at how much your casting will improve.

Stan Steele is a CI and lives in Keizer, Oregon

Test Preparation

By Pat Damico

My interest in fly fishing began more than fifty years ago, when at the age of ten I was fascinated by the writings of Joe Brooks, Ted Trueblood, and A. J. McClane, as well as many others who wrote in the pages of Field and Stream, Outdoor Life and Sports Afield.

Their adventures led me to a few local older cronies who, armed with fly rods, leaky hip boots and wet flies, would mysteriously spend their weekends chasing trout in streams that were plentiful in the Pocono Mountains close to where I lived. An old metal telescoping rod was my first tool that had an ancient fly reel with a screw that always came loose and dropped the spool at the worst possible time. My bicycle transported me to small creeks that contained native brook trout that were almost black in color and rarely ever larger than seven inches. Women's discarded hats supplied most of my fly tying materials.

Evolving through the stages of fly fishing growth was a continuous journey. Hand me down Sears bamboo rods, Shakespeare white Wonderods, Fenwick brown fiberglass and hybrid rods, and finally our high tech graphite rods of today all were handled and used for many species of fresh, as well as saltwater fish.

After retirement from an active Dental practice, I acquired a Captain's license and began guiding inshore, mostly for fly fishing clients. Most sports need some help with their casting, and teaching casting began to occupy more of my time. Belonging to two local Federation affiliated clubs, monthly meetings always began with some of the members casting outside. I wanted to have some direction to help me become a better teacher. Watching videos and reading books about casting styles and methods was confusing to me who had lived with this sport for many years. Someone who was just beginning had to be overwhelmed with all this information. A certification by the Federation seemed to be a way that would give me some consistent teaching methods, in order that I could more easily help a student. I sent for the test information and, on my own, prepared for the test. After all, with all my experience, this seemed easy.

The written and casting parts of the exam were accomplished, but my backcasts were a serious problem and resulted in tailing loops that were not acceptable as an instructor. In all my years of fly casting, I never, ever looked at my backcast. The fish were always in front of me.

Disappointed, I thought I should just forget about it. While milling around in my misery, I thought of a quote that I first heard at the L. D. Pankey Institute For Advanced Dental Education, where I attended several week long courses years ago that were a tremendous boost to my professional life.

"Whatever you want of a discontented man, step up, pay the price, and take it." My price was, I began taking casting lessons. Dan Lagace, an excellent teacher, and frequent Conclave instructor, from the Tampa Bay Club, spent several long sessions with me, Scott Swartz, Master certified, from Atlanta, videotaped my casting and analyzed my style, and Brad Lowman, also Master certified, and a good friend, told me, "We are going to start at the beginning. I'll work with you, but you will have to practice."

The many years of self taught casting left me with some muscle memory, and bad habits that had to be corrected. Brad started me with a relatively short length of line and we progressed through his lesson plan gradually increasing line length while maintaining constant control of the line at the rod tip. We would get together at least once or twice weekly to review my progress. When he felt I was ready, he took me through the test.

When I tested recently with Pete Greenan and Dusty Sprague, and was certified, I felt ready because I learned a great deal from several excellent, patient teachers. The love I've had for fly fishing was expanded into a desire to improve as a fly caster and teacher. Fly casting has become the most enjoyable part of fly fishing.

While researching some casting information, during this process, I came across a website www.virtualflycasting.com. This site developed and maintained by Frank LoPresti, MA, Matthew Handy,

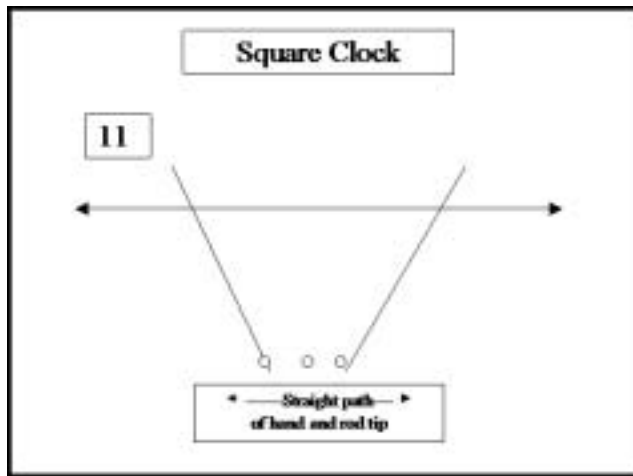
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The Square Clock

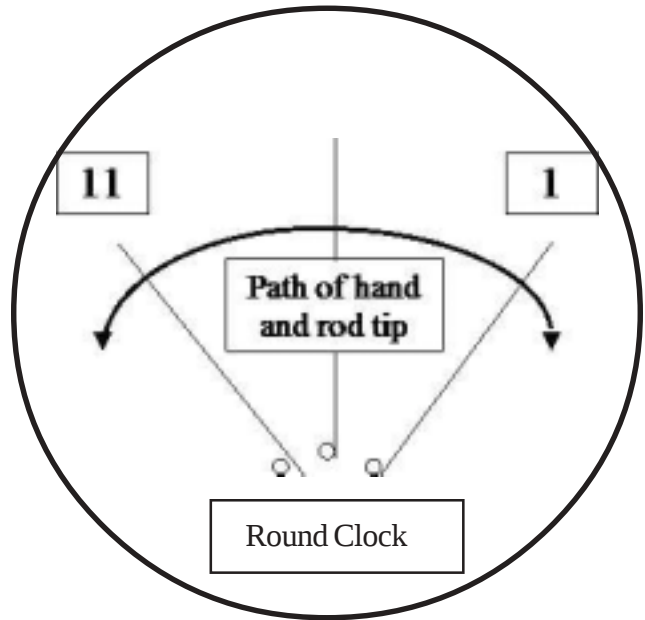
By Charlie Shedd

Conveying the concept of the straight path of the rod tip to new casters is one of the most important and often one of the most difficult tasks instructors face. We attempt to communicate the concept with explanation, pantomime, demonstration with the rod, and with the kinesthetic approach. Still, some students have difficulty understanding the concept. I've found that a visual aid, consisting of a Square Clock and a Round Clock to describe the PATH OF THE HAND, helpful in communicating this concept to the student.

New students have difficulty watching the rod tip path but can more easily watch their hand. By illustrating the hand paths with these two clocks, and emphasizing the desired PATH OF THE HAND with Square he concept. I've been able to correct a student very easily, even at some distance on the casting field, by telling them they are 'on the round clock' — they get the message instantly.



The Square Clock illustrates the desired straight-line PATH OF THE HAND and the resultant straight-line path of the rod tip, *assuming the power is applied correctly.*



The Round Clock illustrates the undesirable convex path of the rod tip generally resulting from bending the wrist too much, or pivoting at the elbow.

I make the Square and Round Clocks using one piece of paperboard material, round on one edge, square on the other, 12 inches high and 18 inches long. Clocks can be turned on the side to put into the same plane as the cast — vertical, horizontal or in between.

This simple aid has been helpful to my teaching and the students understand more quickly the most important element of the casting stroke. Hopefully, you will find it useful too.

Charlie Shedd is a Certified Casting Instructor from Glenrock, Wyoming. crazycharlie@vcn.com

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
253-581-1271
b.shirley@juno.com

Federation of Fly Fishers 6 Month Membership FFF Certified Casting Instructor Program

Please fill out student's name and contact information, sign form, and return to FFF Headquarters in Livingston. One membership per family is offered.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: ____ - ____ - _____ **E-mail** _____ **M or F /18 or under?** ____

Location of lesson: _____ **Date of Lesson:** _____

Signature of FFF Instructor & Date: _____

Mail to: FFF
215 East Lewis
Livingston, MT 59047

From The Editors

With this issue of the Loop, we continue our series on double-handed casts required in the Two-Handed Casting Instructor (THCI) certification.

In this issue Simon Gawesworth has described and illustrated the Snake Roll. Our series will continue in the next issues with the Single Spey and Double Spey.

Details of the THCI program are found on the FFF website, www.fedflyfishers.org.

We have reprinted Bruce Richard's must read article *The Six-Step Teaching Method*. By the time you receive this issue you can go to the FFF website and download previous issues of *The Loop*, containing valuable resources for all instructors.

An introduction to the FFF Conclave casting games and casting competition is provided in this issue. This year we will be providing some casting instructors to coach participants in the casting games and distance and accuracy competition. Hopefully many of you will participate in these events.

The editors look forward to seeing you at the Conclave in August. Remember that Master Instructors are invited to attend the Casting Board of Governors annual meeting at the national Conclave in Livingston, Montana, August 9, 2005.

Have a great summer!

Cheers from your Editors,
Denise Maxwell and Liz Watson

Distance & Accuracy Competition

The distance and accuracy competition and course at the FFF Conclave will be similar in format to last year's competition. The competition allows for open and restricted classes and separate qualifying times for each class. Restricted class accuracy targets are set at 30-40 feet, 45-50 feet, and 65-70 feet. Open class accuracy targets are set up at 20-30 feet, 35-45 feet, and 50-60 feet.

New this year is a separate, identical course where participants can receive instruction on their casting and coaching for the distance and accuracy competition event. Instructors will be available before and after the actual competition event. When the competition is ongoing the second course will serve as a warm-up site.

CBOG Joe Libeau and his team of Master Instructors from the Long Beach Casting Club are organizing and judging this event. There are a few spots available for additional Master Instructors to teach at this event. If you wish to participate in the instruction portion of this event, please contact:

Liz Watson, 305-849-1672 or
elizabeth@finartghillie.com

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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:

FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program

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Fax: (406)-222-5823

E-mail: castingcert@fedflyfishers.org

COMING EVENTS for 2005

Pre-registration is REQUIRED

Schedule subject to change

FFF Annual Show and Conclave - Livingston, MT. August 10-13 CI, MI and THCI testing.

FFF Southern Council Conclave -Mountain Home, AR October 6 - 8 CI and MI

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.



FEDERATION OF FLY FISHERS

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