

# THE LOOP

*The Federation of Fly Fishers Journal for Certified Casting Instructors  
Spring 2008*

---

## ***THE DIFFERENCE IN GRIP TYPES***

*by Tomonori (Bill) Hiigashi*

As a fly fisher and an instructor, I believe that as long as you are comfortable you can grip the rod handle in any manner. However, if you know the pros and cons of typical grip styles, it will help choose the best one for your students.

One way to categorize various grip types is to look at the index finger, whether it is folded or fully extended. The folded versions include thumb-on-top grip and its variations (including V-grip and palm-out grip); the extended versions include index finger grip (Figure 2). They each have their own merits and demerits, and as instructors it will help if we understand them fully so the learners can intelligently choose the right one for the purpose.

Thumb-on-top style is a very straightforward and easy-to-learn grip which is superior in power. As the casting stroke lengthens it wants to rotate in backcasts, causing poor tracking and resulting in poor loop shapes that are not energy-efficient. However, by advising your students to turn his/her hand slightly inside on the handle, maybe 15-30 degrees off center from a normal thumb-on-top position to make a semi V-grip (for the right-handed caster, right half of the thumb surface pushing the grip on top), often the backcast tracking dramatically improves and casting distance increases instantly (Figure 1). I call it a semi-V because the shape made by thumb and the forefinger is not exactly a 'V.' To make it a real V, you would need further rotation.



Figure 1 - Semi-V grip

*- Slightly rotate hand on the grip for better tracking in a longer stroke*

*(Continued on page2)*

Grip Types (Continued from page 1)



Figure 2  
Lightly touch the rod  
- Press cork with  
fingertips

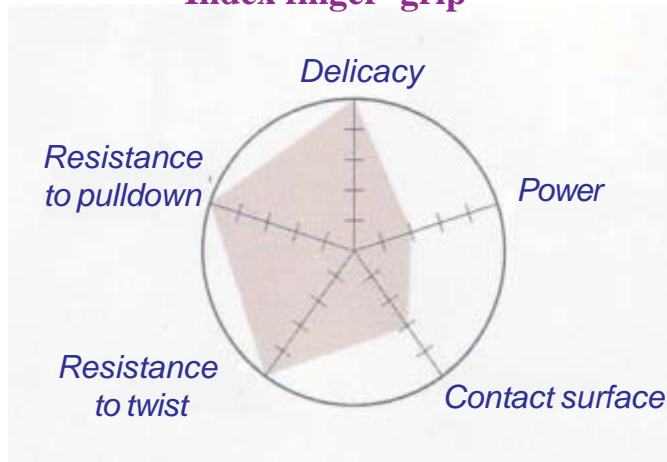
Index-finger grip  
- Lay index finger along  
the shaft

As I see, this semi-V is a nice compromise of power and tracking, so I introduce this style to all novices. Some instructors advise using the thumb-on-top grip because it is easier for beginners to learn at first, but it will generate difficulties as the casting distance increases (Figure 3). You leave the choice up to the casters to choose, but you have to give them choices first. The often-mentioned virtue of index finger grip is the delicate touch, but we shouldn't forget that it helps the caster to stop the rod in a higher position, so it will have less chance of pulling down the loop. However, its smaller contact surface to the grip means lack of power for distance casting. We have to instruct students to be flexible and use the best one for the situation.



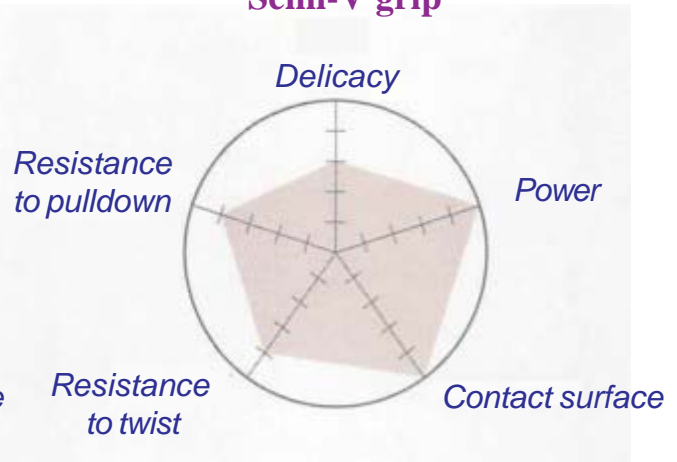
Figure 3  
Pinch with thumb and forefinger  
- Wrap fingers for stability

Index finger grip



Because of the lack of the contact surface, it lacks the holding power required for longer cast, but the power application point higher in the shaft results in finesse and sensitivity.

Semi-V grip



Very stable, straight-tracking grip especially when you extend the casting stroke. Very powerful and enough precision.

# The Power Zone in Casting

by Tomonori (Bill) Hiigashi



Figure 1 Powerful zone, side view



Figure 2 Powerful zone, front view

A friend of mine, who is a martial arts instructor in Japan, gave this concept to me some time ago. Since fly casting is no different from karate or judo in their strife to make use of the physical strengths most efficiently. Maybe fly casting demands even higher endurance power because judo matches last only for several minutes, while a day of fly fishing typically lasts hours. We must teach how to use energy so they can last full day without much fatigue.

Fit your palms together, and move them around your body. The area these palms move comfortably without separation is the most powerful zone for your hand movement, thus most energy-efficient (Figure 2). At shoulder height the “power zone” is widest, and the size of

the zone decreases as you raise or lower the hands (Figure1). After you know the boundary of the power zone by this practice, imagine you are actually fishing, and mimic casting with your dominant hand only. Check your position of casting hand --whether your can fit two palms together there-- to see you are in the power zone ( Figure 3).

You may also notice by this practice that if you extend your hands back too much, you cannot fit your palms together without opening up your stance. If you cannot fit your palms comfortably, you are in a “deceleration zone.” The best use of this zone is for drifting to remove slack at the initial phase of cast prior to loading (Figure4).

*(continued on page 4)*

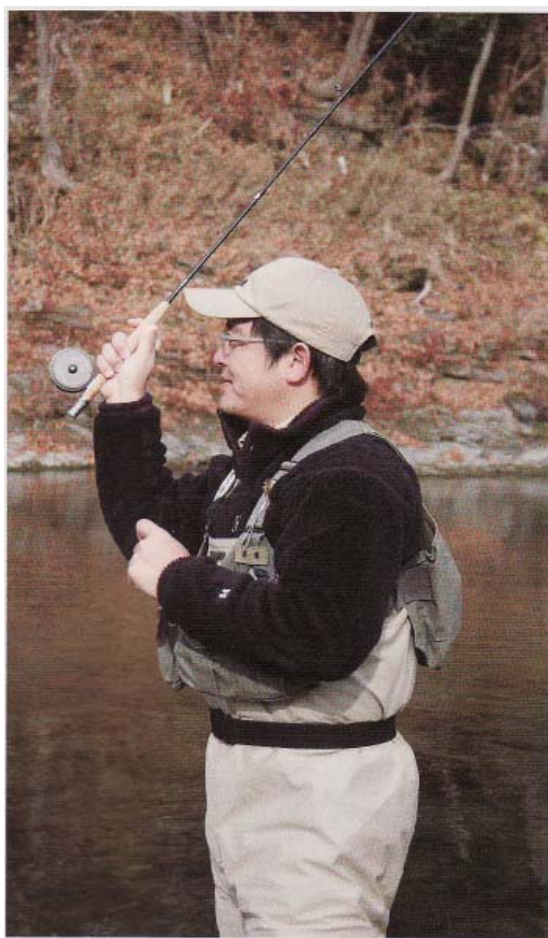


Figure 3

*Easy position*

*- Swing the rod in the powerful zone for comfort and endurance.*

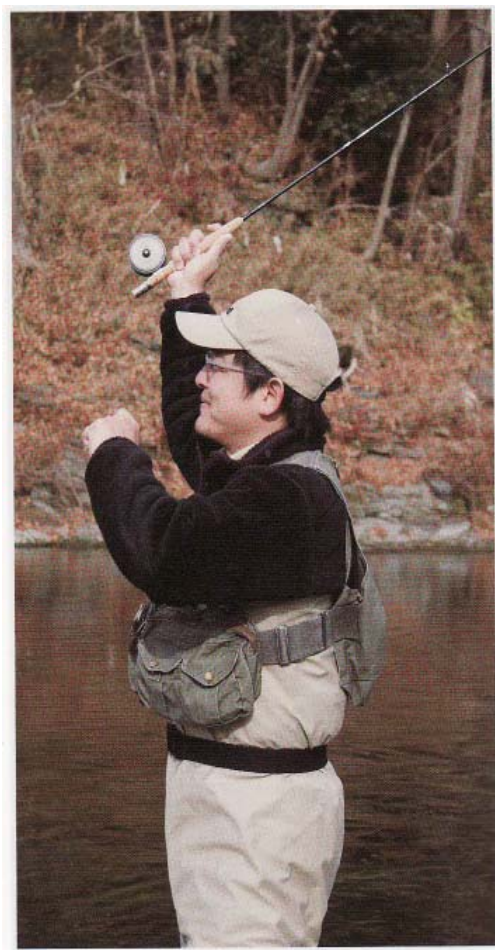


Figure 4

*Tiring position*

*- Unless absolutely necessary, avoid going out from the Zone.*

---

We would like to thank Bill Higashi and the editors of the magazine, The Fly Fisher from Japan, for permission to use these articles. The articles are part one and two of a nine part article that ran in the March 2008 issue of the magazine.

Also we would like to thank the illustrator of the cartoon on pages 22 & 23, Yoshaki Kohyama, and the editors of the Fly Fisher magazine for permission to use it. A light hearted look at our favorite sport. Don't forget to go from #1 thru #6.

This magazine is a beautiful four color glossy production that has a big focus on teaching flycasting, as well as flytying and fishing. This issue also featured an article on "How to Design Fly Lines" by Al Buhr (in Japanese, of course).

Again a big thanks to them - we hope they continue to produce such a quality magazine.

# *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE*

*by Louis Bruno*

---

I want to believe that there is something magical about fly fishing. That perhaps the fly rod is really a magic wand that possesses a power capable of working wonders.

One such wonder includes the time my boy and I ventured off to our local river bank. He graduated from learning to fly fish the local blue gill pond. Now we were ready to try real fly fishing. Little did I realize that this time would lead me, a casual participant in the sport of fishing, to become entrapped by the magical powers of the “*cast*.”

My son and I, with our beginner’s fly rod and reel combo, were ready to go. We live in a community called Waterford and, as the name would have you believe, there’s a lot of water around. Waterford is located where the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers meet. It is most known because of its location at the beginning of the Erie Canal system.

I want to think that a time comes in every father’s life when he and his boy spend a few lazy mornings fishing. My fishing experience was limited to what I learned while growing up. That wasn’t much beyond the basic hook, worm and bobber. Being a father, I was the authority, the voice of reason and knowledge to a young impressionable boy. That was a time to cherish.....

We stood along the banks of the Mohawk River well before the dawn. Why so early? Out of ignorance I guess. I just thought fishermen had to get there early. And, on a Saturday it was way too early.

We made a habit of venturing down to the river bank, usually after dinner. I had never noticed the display of nature, beauty and splendor right in my area. Perhaps life was too busy for me to take the time to realize it. Such an array of colors displayed in the sky, mirrored and transfixed by the water, the silence broken only by the rush of the water. It was this time, this portrait beyond description that would come to possess me and forever lure me to the water’s edge.

It was then that I discovered the added benefit to fishing.....this side of paradise!

As spring led to summer, we shared many mornings and evenings fishing from the Mohawk River. The time we spent there helped us obtain enough experience to perhaps be called “*fishermen*.” We developed the basic skills to untie tangles and knots. This was a right of passage! We learned what bait to use and even what species of fish were there.

It was on one of these trips that I met Bill. He was in his early 70s. He was tall with a slender build. His mind was quick and his memory vivid. I remember Bill because he had a major impact on my outlook towards fly fishing. It was one of those early summer mornings where the sun was just starting to rise and the mist was beginning to melt away. I didn’t expect to see anyone else on the river so early. The reason for me to be there was simple: the migrating stripers were holding in a giant pool and I wanted first dibs at them. I also discovered that the fish enjoyed going after the bait fish just before daylight. Bill wanted those stripers, too.

*(Continued on page 6)*

I started my day trying to catch some of those magnificent fish with my lure. After a while, I noticed Bill was casting in such a strange way that I had to stop and watch. There was something different about what he was doing; it looked artistic. The silhouette of Bill standing there casting is forever etched in my memory. His actions were reminiscent of a musical conductor. His rhythm was interrupted by the boiling water of a nice striper attacking that thing he had on the end of his line. And what kind of line was that?

My curiosity got the better of me. I had to find out what in this world Bill was doing. So I approached him...but first I was attacked! Yes, the thing on the end of Bill's line came after me. It came close, too close, to finding a home in the middle of my head!

At that moment, Bill saw me and stopped doing what he was doing. I introduced myself and Bill did the same. We spent quite some time talking. I asked a lot of questions. Bill took the time to answer every one.

After this initial meeting, Bill and I got to know each other. He gave away his secrets willingly. Bill convinced me to try using his fly rod. My curiosity was leading me there. One morning, I stopped at a local fly fishing store, a store that sadly no longer exists. Later I discovered that the owner was a long-time friend of Bill's and that they shared many fishing trips together. Looking back it was meant to be, fate was leading me to go there and to get started in fly fishing.

Another benefit of this magic wand I discovered was, what you do while waiting for those fish. The answer is simple — you talk. After all, this was the training ground for all fishermen to hone their imaginative skills. My son and I quickly learned to put this well-earned time into practice. I was often amazed how big our fish became each time we told a *fish story*! Beyond our *fish stories* we did share many conversations; my son learning things about me, and me learning things about him. It was like opening a treasure chest. This magic wand had more to give beyond the beauty of the moment. It gave a treasure that would last a lifetime.

Some of the days seemed so endless, but they did end. On the way home, my son and I would stop at a local ice cream store and get our favorite ice cream. As time went on, it became our ritual. After every trip fishing, we had to stop and get ice cream ... perhaps more than once. We realized, at times, the ride home was long and there just so happened to be ice cream stores on the way. We soon planned our fishing trips according to how many ice cream stores we had to stop at on the way home. And, there came a time, when my son would invite some of his buddies along. Soon my truck was packed with buddies. I think they came mainly to share in the ice cream.

My early attempts at 'conducting' were quite sad, really awful actually. I would go out and try my art at fly casting on those early summer days. Bill was soon there to come to my rescue. He was very unselfish. He took time to explain the basic cast. How to adjust for the wind. It seemed whatever knowledge Bill had retained over the years, he was willing to share.

Bill's mind was remarkable. He could remember precise details about past fishing trips. I would love to listen to him tell me a story of one of his trips. My mind did not have trouble transferring the words from Bill into a beautiful image. Over the years, Bill would tell me his best fishing spots. He would explain in great fly-fisherman language how to present the fly and what pattern to use. I would listen and put into practice the valuable advice my friend Bill would tell me when I ventured forth.

The one amazing thing though with Bill, was when I'd meet up with him, I would ask "How are you?;" and from the first time I had asked that question, Bill would actually tell me how he was feeling. I would walk away amazed that Bill was capable of making it through the day. Bill would give me every minute detail about his illnesses; after all, if Bill took the time to explain every minute detail about fly fishing, then the same would apply to his description of his illnesses.

I would see this man who was gravely ill climb up and down banks, jump down and climb up walls, cast for hours with precision, and walk up and down stream banks without a complaint. There were even times when I was out for my walk that I would see Bill walking his two dogs. He was full of energy and demonstrated a fine picture of health.

This was the scene for many years, Bill and I spending many hours fishing and talking. I would never think about Bill actually being really sick. But as the years went by, there came a time when there was a dramatic change with Bill. This friend that I knew for so long was beginning to show me that he was indeed vulnerable. This picture of health became sick, really sick.

Now my attention to his details over his sickness became more intent, they were more meaningful for Bill. . . . I was concerned. His walk was more insecure, he couldn't jump up and down the walls, and his once quick mind was having a difficult time trying to express the words that at one time seemed so simple. Yes my friend was sick.

Bill's presence at the river bank became less and less. I had a very difficult time adapting to this change.

Nothing seemed comfortable. . . .

I would allow my mind to travel back to the shared times with my friend Bill. Often, I would want to ask his advice on how to land a fish, what pattern to use, what the upcoming spring fishing season might be like. The reality and silhouette of Bill standing there casting was missing, the memory was not.

I wasn't ready for the inevitable. . . . who is?

Bill is now gone. And my boy has grown into a man. On the occasion I go to fish the river bank or one of the other fishing streams, I still stop to enjoy an ice cream on the way home. After all, a tradition must be maintained. I like to eat my ice cream and reminisce and long for the time that was shared with my son. I also think about Bill and the stories of his fishing trips. I think about the beautiful sun rises and the tranquil sunsets we all shared, the image of the maestro conducting all of them presented to me a very beautiful image of this side of paradise.

---

*Louis Bruno is a CI from Waterford, NY*

---

# The “Masters Odyssey” Revisited

## by Ed Chamberlain

---

This article is for all aspiring Master Candidates diligently pursuing their dream and desire for excellence. Jim Valle, MCI, wrote the original *Preparing for the “Masters Odyssey”* article in the fall 2006 edition of *The Loop*, and I recommend the article to you. It is a wealth of valuable information, background and techniques. Use the information in Jim’s article and the other articles written about the Master’s exam to prepare for your test. I will attempt to help you determine when you are ready to test and what to expect when you take your exam.

Jim advises in his article, “Do not take the test when you think you are ready, take it when you know you are ready.” Briefs well, but how do you translate that into practical application? That question was probably my single biggest concern. Here are some of the key components to help you make that call. You need a mentor and someone who will work with you regularly. Peter Lami and Dusty Sprague were my primary “Go to” guys, along with Capt Scott Swartz, who never missed an opportunity to coach me while I was on his boat, and Bill Kessler, casting partner / coach and study buddy, but like all other Masters, many instructors, friends and experiences make up my base.

Your mentor is the second set of eyes to see what your casts truly look like and who should understand the tasks of the MCCI exam. He, or she, asks the probing questions and drills you relentlessly to ensure you understand the concept behind a cast, the teaching principle, and proper execution of the task.

If I were to select three primary elements to prepare for the Master’s test they would be *to have a Mentor*; *belong to a study group*, hopefully a *real* group of like-minded others working toward the same goal, and a virtual one, such as Gordy Hill’s email study group, and *take a pre-test*, or multiple ones, *with a Master and preferably a Casting Board of Governor (CBOG)*.

This assumes you have the requisite teaching experience and presentation skills to get you to this level. You must sell yourself and exude confidence as

part of both your teaching and CCI / MCCI testing. This still does not answer the bottom line, “How do I know if I am ready?” It is hard to *know* you are ready when you have no previous experience with the test. The test is not easy; it is demanding and lengthy (four hours was probably average for the Lakeland tests) and rightfully so; however, it is fair and consistent though highly subjective. That statement may seem contradictory, but is perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the FFF certification program.

Six of us tested for our Master at the Lakeland, FL, Fly Fishing Expo. I had the opportunity to discuss the testing with several other candidates and observed the MCCI testing of a candidate during my *validation* session. Though the tests all were approached slightly differently by the various CBOG and Masters, the questions focused on sound principles. Testers are not looking for canned answers and you can, and should, present an explanation colored with your experience. You must be able to explain the answer and supporting principles. That is a key element of the test. *Ensure you understand the question; provide the answer; stop talking and listen*. The examiners will ask you to expand and elaborate if they want more.

The normal exam format will have an indoor oral session followed by a casting session, or the reverse based upon conditions and availability of a casting location and the preference of the examiners. The test may be formatted with the orals incorporated into the performance portion and all done at the casting venue. Be flexible and adaptive and don’t have preconceived notions of the *how* and *what* of questioning. This is free-form session, very similar to having students asking anything that pops into their mind, so you may get the occasional *left field* question asked just to gauge your reaction and how you handle the offbeat. Let me emphasize again though, the substantive questions are based upon sound principles, concepts, and techniques which should be familiar to you.

*(Continued on page9)*



## Helpful Hints.

1. The Federation has a culture that includes expected standards of teaching, appearance, and conduct. Check David Diaz's article (*Loop*, Fall 2006 *Roadmap for Certain Success*). Set the standard whenever you represent the Federation, and especially when taking your Masters exam.
2. There is no substitute for knowing the performance tasks and the expected standards. You have to attend a workshop or work with a Master to know this.
3. Use an orange or highly visible line. Several line manufacturers offer discounts for certified instructors. Use a new line to test; you will be amazed at how a new line shoots and performs.
4. Tie your own leader. You should have the expertise and they cast better. Jon Cave's Saltwater formula is a good one though there are many.
5. Teach students striving to become instructors. This changes the level of questions, your techniques, and tasks in which you must be proficient.
6. Practice often, preferably several times a week (every day the month or so before the test is good) for short periods. Structure your practice; select several tasks and work them. I always finished with a few distance casts.
7. Test practice the performance test in front of other instructors, multiple times.

The Master Certification is not a zero defects exam, but you need to clearly demonstrate a mastery of all aspects of our sport. The casting standards are written and understandable, but you need a Master / mentor to explain nuances. The Master standards are being rewritten by a committee under the leadership of Dusty Sprague. The new test final draft, or near final, is being reviewed by the committee, but anticipate it will still be months before implementation. The intent is to increase standardization of performance aspects of the test and to make it as relevant as possible to Master level skills. Cast until you are able to accomplish all tasks smoothly and easily. Your mentor plays a key role here. You do not have a good feel for how your cast looks nor how you appear when casting, and your

mentor provides that outside mirror (video taping is also great). It goes without saying you have to be able to answer all the questions in the FFF study guide. Your study group and mentor are invaluable here also. Questioning back and forth allows you to formulate and refine answers and prepares you to make oral responses; a critical aspect of Master testing. One final comment: prepare and rehearse an introduction for each of the "explain and demonstrate" tasks on the test. This will give you an entry to the new task, which allows a smooth transition and places you on comfortable, familiar ground during a stressful situation.

Many have successfully tested and you can too. Be comfortable, study hard, and don't try to do it alone. Establish a time line with specific progression goals and use that to guide and judge your progress. This should be a joint venture that will result in your gaining new skills, knowledge, confidence, and an improved teaching style and efficiency. You and your students will be better for you having undertaken the journey.

Back to the original question, "How do I know when I'm ready?" One underlying thought should be that this is not that hard, but underscore that thought with the philosophy, "Anything worth doing is worth overdoing" and you will be successful. Unfortunately there is no epiphany when you are ready to test, but when you have taken a workshop, participated with a study group and Mentor and have their concurrence, and are comfortable teaching and talking in front of an audience, and can perform the tasks you will be ready and should approach the test with confidence. Above all, enjoy the journey; all the Federation Masters enthusiastically wait to welcome you to the ranks.

---

*Ed Chamberlain, MCCI, who lives in Hampton, GA., is a retired Army Infantryman and a long time member of the Atlanta Fly Fishing Club.*

*Ed has been an instructor in a variety of sports in addition to fly casting, including parachuting, water safety, mountaineering, and has been a university professor and instructor at the US Army Infantry School.*

---

# GOING FOR DISTANCE

*Biomechanics help to explain it*

by Al Kyte and Gary Moran

---

## *Why some casters can get that extra distance*

Why do some flycasters cast so far, and with so little effort? As flycasting instructors we wanted to answer those questions. You see, teachers like to have answers, and flycasting teachers are no exception. Unfortunately the ‘answers’ we have, even the techniques that have worked before, are sometimes too narrow and dogmatic to help the next student. Professional teachers and athletic coaches try to improve their teaching by using anatomical and mechanical principles, called sport biomechanics, as the basis for what they teach.

Researchers in biomechanics have filmed or videotaped groups of skilled performers in a variety of sports, but we found little research on flycasting, so we decided to conduct our own study and combine the perspective of a flycasting teacher with that of a biomechanics researcher. Here’s what we discovered.

### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

Analyzing the videotaped performances of a group of casters, rather than a single caster, helped us identify acceptable variations in casting form as well as to verify which mechanical components are most important. For such comparisons to mean anything, each caster has to perform the identical casting task with the same rod and fly line.

We decided to concentrate on casting for distance to analyze the mechanics of maximal force application. We wanted to identify what some of the most successful distance casters in this sport do differently from other skilled casters. Our sample group of casters included tournament flycasters as well as highly regarded trout and steelhead anglers from northern California.

We conducted the casting indoors to eliminate any disruption from wind or other elements and kept the casts within the space limitations by specific selection

of the fly rod and line and by standardizing the length of line being false-cast prior to the final forward cast.

We sought a ‘progressive, medium-action’ fly rod and full-length fly line, representative of those commonly used by anglers. We also needed a white fly rod for maximum contrast against a black background. Mel Krieger donated one he had used in his excellent video, ‘The Essence of Fly Casting’. This 9-foot graphite fly rod, designed for Fenwick by Jim Green, was matched with a Scientific Anglers/3M Ultra2, weight-forward 7-weight floating fly line.

Preliminary testing and videotaping revealed the need for markers on the casters’ joints (wrist, elbow, shoulder, hip, knee, and ankle), a black backdrop curtain, horizontal and vertical reference lines to facilitate angle measurement, and a system for identifying subject and trial numbers within the filming area. We also developed a procedure for evaluating casting loop size and other fly-line characteristics that occurred beyond the filming area.

Though lacking sophisticated, high-speed biomechanics equipments, we recorded the casts using two video camcorders and analyzed the data using a multifunction stop-action, frame-by-frame, and slow-motion playback-capable VHS videocassette recorder.

We gave each caster a 15-minute practice period with the task and equipment. After this practice period, each person made 14 casts, attempting to cast the fly as far as possible. We recorded the distance the fly landed from the caster for each trial. We gave a distance score to each caster, the average of that person’s successful casts.

Nine of the 20 casters who cast the fly the greatest distance became the ‘elite’ group. This group included world-class tournament casters Rene Gillibert and Tim Rajeff as well as renowned teacher/anglers Mel Krieger and Andre Puyans.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Going for Distance ( Continued from page 10)

The nine casters who achieved the shortest distance scores were designated as the 'good' group. This group also included expert anglers, tournament casters, and flycasting teachers. Two casters, whose scores fell midway between these two groups, were removed from the analysis to ensure that the two comparison groups were distinctly different

### FINDINGS

The elite group cast the fly an average distance of 80 feet compared to 70.7 feet for the good group. The skills of these casters and the limitations placed on distance by the task and equipment notwithstanding, ten feet of distance in this study represents a substantial difference.

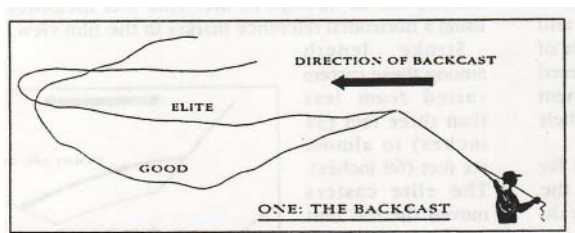
In the following discussion we have grouped the findings into three sequential stages of the cast - the backcast, the loading of the forward cast, and the unloading or stop of the forward cast.

### The Backcast

The casters in the study had to pick up and control approximately 50 feet of fly line in the air, make two false casts, and release line on the third forward cast. Every caster used line-hauling techniques.

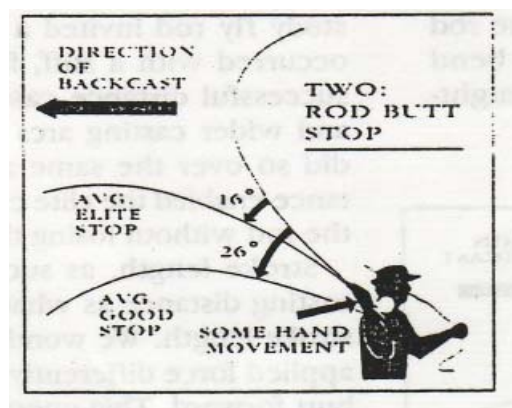
Although the backcast occurs prior to any power application of the forward cast, and may not contribute directly to distance, it does serve to straighten the line behind the rod tip. Any slack that remains in the line when the forward cast begins can interfere with the distance of that cast.

**Movement of the fly line.** The elite casters straightened the backcast line more completely than the good casters and did so with noticeably smaller loops (Figure 1). The variable that most affected this line flow was the way the casters stopped the rod at the end of the backcast. This is when the rod loses its bend and transfers energy to the line.



**The backcast stop.** The elite group stopped the rod more abruptly, moving the butt an average of 16 degrees as compared to 26 degrees for the good group. This 'stop' is measured from the point of the rod's maximum bend in the backcast to the point at which the rod first deflected downward (Figure 2). Some of the 'good' casters also moved the casting hand and rod butt lower during the stop. This extra movement combined with the greater angle change of the rod butt allowed the rod tip to drop lower in back than was typical of the elite group. Dropping the rod tip low during the backcast put sag in the backcast line and decreased the likelihood of achieving small, efficient loops.

Although we are familiar with this tendency among beginning casters, we found that it reappears in some experienced casters when they attempt long backcasts.



### Forward Cast - Loading Phase

When you apply force to drive the line forward, energy is being stored in the increasing bend of the fly rod. This is commonly referred to as 'loading' the rod. We found a number of variables that contribute to force application in this loading phase.

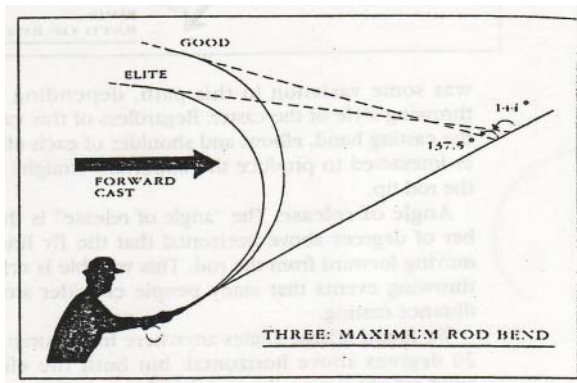
**Maximum rod bend.** We expected our more successful distance casters to store more energy by forcing more bend into the rod. To examine this factor, we measured the extent to which each caster bent the rod tip back from the rod butt. Where we found the rod tip bent back from the butt the greatest amount, we applied the term 'maximum rod bend'.

We found that the caster who cast the fly the farthest also bent the tip back the farthest, 152 degrees. The

(continued on page 12)

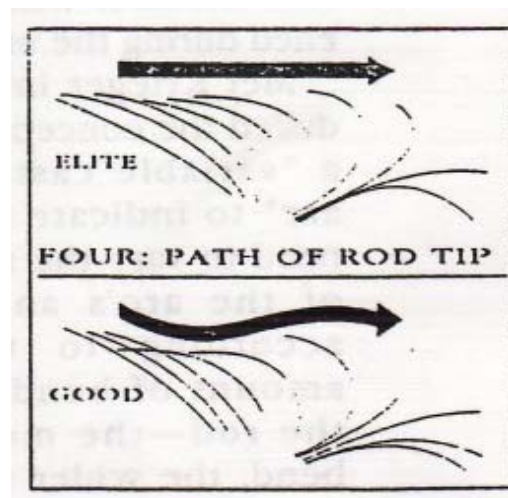
*Going for Distance (Continued from page 11)*

caster with the second best distance had the second greatest rod bend of 149 degrees. The elite group averaged 144 degrees of maximum rod bend compared to 135.7 degrees for the good group (Figure 3).



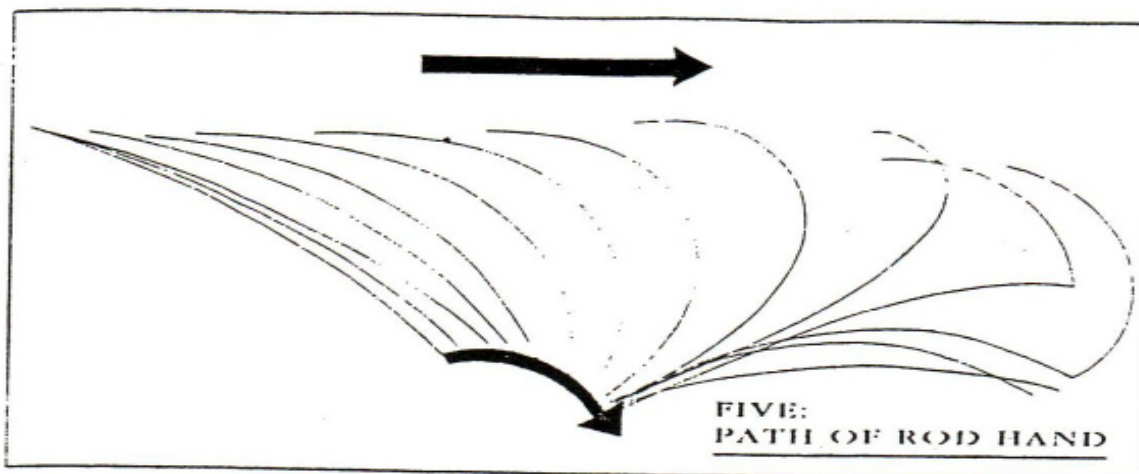
Only one caster in the good group bent the rod back more than 140 degrees, but he had an obvious backcast problem that accounted for his lower distance score. We believe this to be among the most important variables in casting for distance, although it hasn't been emphasized thus far in the casting literature.

**Path of the rod tip.** Casting instructors commonly teach that the rod tip should move along a straight path throughout the loading phase. This phenomenon is similar to 'flattening the arc of the swing' in other stroking movements, such as the tennis forehand.



In this study all nine elite casters did move the rod tip in a straight path, achieving maximum rod bend just before the stop. Yet only two of nine good casters achieved the timing necessary to maintain this straight path. The common error among these casters was to apply their maximum force too early in the stroke. (Figure 4).

Casting instructors sometimes teach that the casting hand should also move in a straight line during this loading phase. Yet from the side view we found that rather than in a straight line, the hand typically moved forward in a slightly downward curving path (Figure 5). There was some variation in this path, depending on the throwing style of the caster. Regardless of this variation, the casting hand, elbow and shoulder of each elite caster interacted to produce the important straight path of the rod tip.



*Going for Distance ( Continued from page 12)*

**Angle of release.** The ‘angle of release’ is the number of degrees above horizontal that the fly line starts moving forward from the rod. This variable is critical in throwing events that many people consider similar to distance casting.

We found release angles anywhere from horizontal to 20 degrees above horizontal, but both the elite and good groups averaged a surprisingly low release angle of 6 degrees above horizontal. Several casters volunteered the information that the indoor conditions caused them to use lower release angles than normal to achieve their longest casts.

**Casting arc.** The most important findings thus far were that the elite casters imparted more bend into the rod and did so with better timing. Yet, what did they do differently to achieve this additional bend? This question led us to examine other mechanics of the rod, such as the casting arc and stroke length.

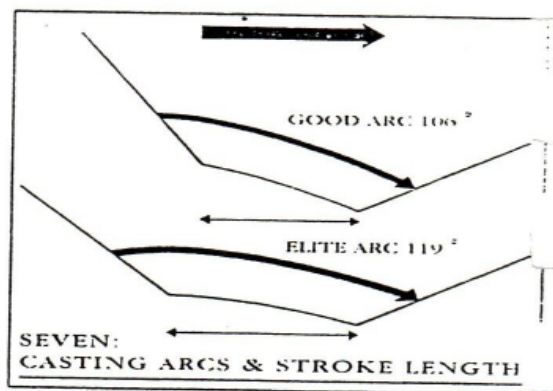
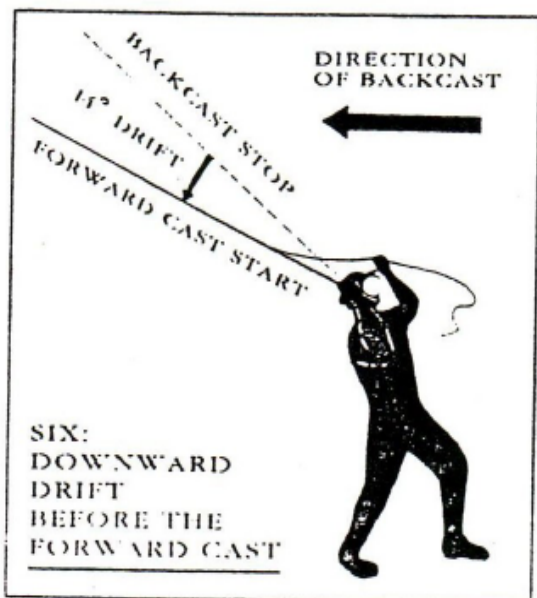
The ‘casting arc’ refers to the angle through which the rod butt rotates during the casting stroke. Teachers often express it in terms of positions on a clock face, such as an arc from 10 o’clock to 2 o’clock. For this study we started the forward casting arc where the rod first showed a slight but measurable amount of bend and ended it where the rod first completely straightened during the unloading phase.

Mel Krieger introduced the concept of a ‘variable casting arc’ to indicate the need to vary the size of the

arc’s angle according to the amount of bend in the rod - the more bend, the wider the arc. The amount of bend depends on the stiffness of the fly rod, the amount of line being cast, and the amount of force being applied to the rod. The first two of these factors were made uniform in this study, requiring casters to use additional force to achieve the additional bend for a long cast. Thus we expected the elite group’s additional bend to be accompanied by wider casting arcs than used by the good group.

We found that the elite casters did indeed move the rod through a wider range of motion than the good casters, averaging an arc of 119 degrees (4 clock positions) as against 106 degrees (3.5 clock positions) for the good casters. Several of the best distance casters opened the casting arc even farther to between 125 and 132 degrees. They accomplished this by letting the rod ‘drift’ down in back an additional 10 to 15 degrees after the stop of the backcast (Figure 6). This is similar to baseball batters who are moving the bat back even as they start shifting weight forward into the stride toward the pitcher. Some casting teachers emphasize an upward movement of the rod after the backcast but miss out on the additional range of motion available to a rod that is allowed to ‘drift’ down a few degrees in back.

**Stroke length.** The stroke length is the distance the caster’s hand moves the rod butt toward the target as the rod moves through its arc. This was measured by using a horizontal reference marker in the film view. Stroke length among these casters varied from less than three feet (31 inches) to almost six feet (68 inches). The elite casters moved the rod butt forward an average of 57.3 inches during the cast as compared to 51.5 inches by the good casters. (Figure 7).



*(Continued on page 14)*

### Going for Distance (Continued from page 13)

The somewhat slow action (lack of stiffness) of the study fly rod invited a longer stroke than would have occurred with a stiff, fast rod. Nevertheless, the more successful distance casters used longer casting strokes and wider casting arcs than did the other casters, and did so over the same amount of time. This extra distance enabled the elite casters to apply additional force to the rod without losing the straight path of the rod tip.

Stroke length, as such, may not be as important to casting distance as what the caster does to achieve that stroke length. We wondered if our best distance casters applied force differently than the others to drive the rod butt forward. This question led us to shift our attention from the mechanics of the rod and line to the mechanics of the caster. Although teachers advocate various styles of casting with different stances and arm movements, there is a lack of systematic investigation on the body's role in applying force to a long cast.

**Force from the body.** In other distance throwing sports, the athlete generally starts with the throwing side of the body turned away from the target and then brings that side forward vigorously when applying force. The whole body becomes involved in the force application. In this study, 16 of the 20 casters used such a 'distance stance' by placing the casting side back. This open or dropped-back stance allows greater weight shift and body lean, more shoulder rotation, and a longer stroke than either the squared or closed stance.

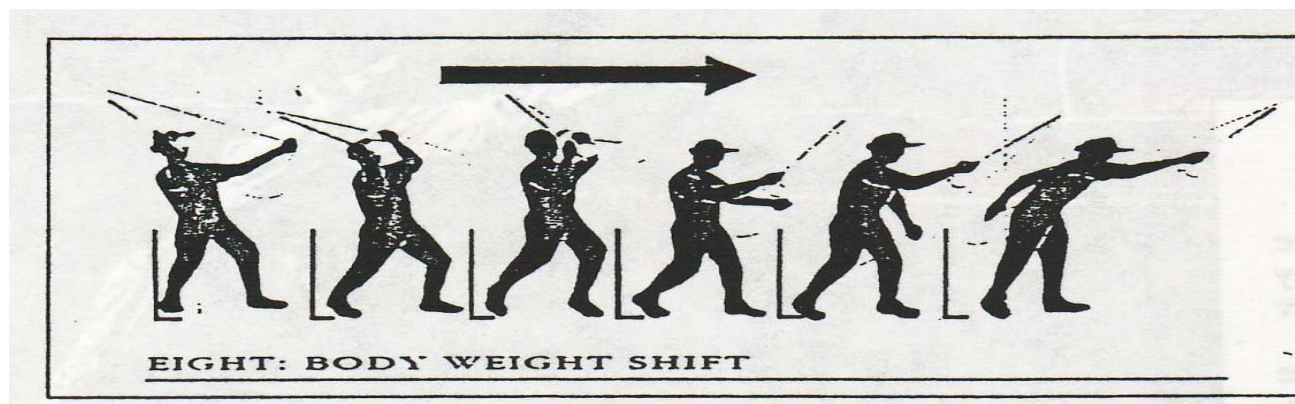
Our elite casters made greater use of their body mass and musculature to load the rod than did our good casters. Six of nine elite casters used a pronounced weight shift from the back foot to the front foot during

the forward cast. Only one of the nine good casters used such movement. In addition, the elite group averaged 40 degrees of back-to-front body lean as compared to 30 degrees for the good group. Eight of the nine elite casters rotated the casting shoulder forward in applying force as compared to only four of nine good casters. In combination, these factors can contribute an impressive amount of bend to the rod (Figure 8).

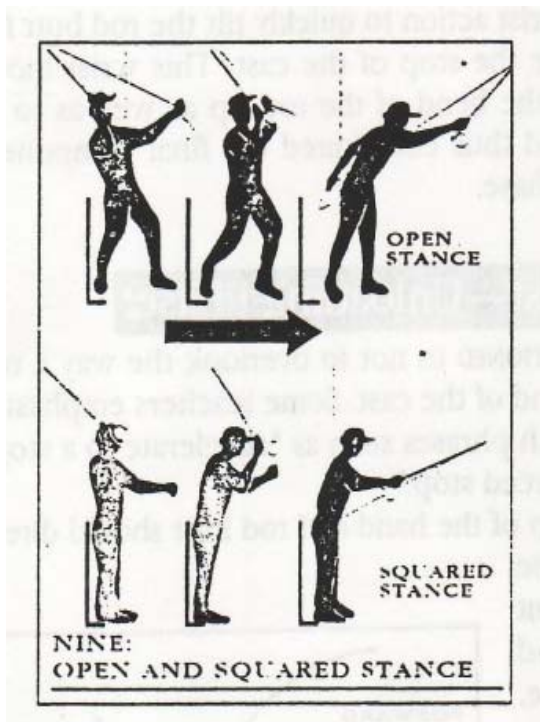
Two of our elite casters used a squared stance, with the feet positioned side by side. Although this style offers little potential for trunk rotation and lower-body weight shift, these casters leaned their upper bodies back and then bent forward explosively on the forward cast. They possessed the upper body and arm strength as well as the precise timing to make this style effective. As teachers, we sometimes need to remind ourselves that one set of mechanics doesn't always work best for everyone (Figure 9)

**Hauling with the line hand.** The noncasting hand and arm also contribute to rod bend when casters 'haul' or pull on the line during the loading of the forward cast. This is the second of two hauls in the double-haul technique used by most distance casters. In this study eight of the nine elite casters had highly effective hauls during the forward cast as compared to only three of nine good casters.

The most effective haulers pulled the line back a greater distance than the other casters primarily during the final, accelerated stages of loading. Thus they stopped the haul and released the line farther back as well (Figure 10). Short hauls, which are better suited to the action of stiff, quick-recovering rods, were less effective here.



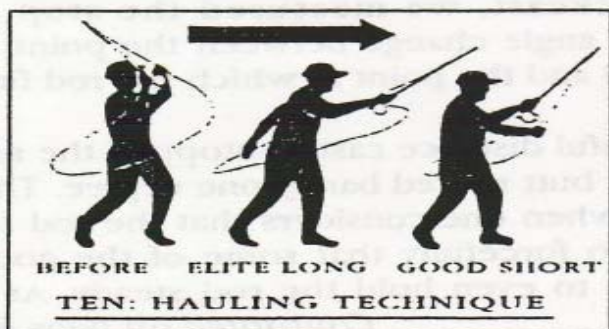
(Continued on page 13)



Sometimes instructors neglect to teach students to vary the length of the haul to coincide with the timing demands of the fly rod being used.

**The casting arm.** For years fly-fishing authors have compared the arm motion of a distance fly cast to that of a ball throw, even though a long implement has been placed in the hand. In ball throws we typically use the muscles of the throwing arm and hand to accelerate and finish off the force application that started in the larger, more massive muscles of the legs and trunk.

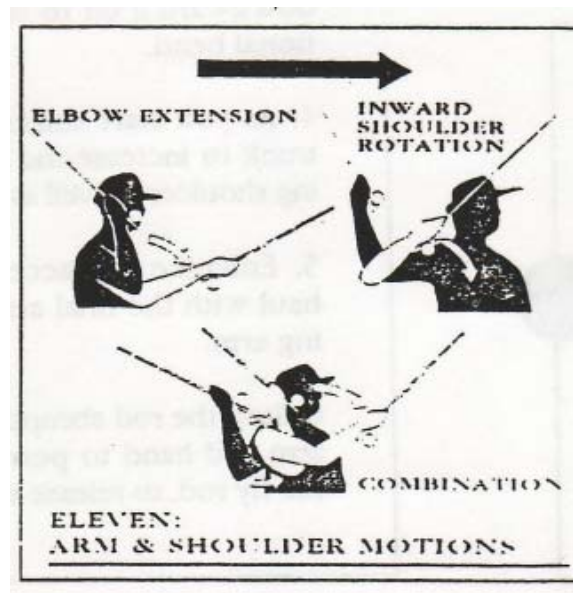
One component of a throw that many casting instructors emphasize is the positioning of the elbow forward of the shoulder and hand. This positioning offers the potential for strong elbow extension. Most of the casters in this study did position the elbow



forward in this manner. Both the elite and good casters averaged 67 degrees of elbow extension during the loading of the forward cast.

We observed several variations in 'throwing style', but the most common was one in which the elbow was brought out to the side of the body and remained there throughout the forward casting stroke. Sometimes teachers are critical of this arm style because of its weaker elbow action. Yet this style uses a different component of throwing mechanics, a forceful inward rotation of the arm at the shoulder joint. This style frequently evolves in anglers who habitually wade deep or fish from float tubes and need to keep the elbow up out of the water.

Some of the most impressive casters in this study, those who seemed to achieve the greatest line speed, combined the components of both of these styles. They moved the elbow out to the side of the body during the backcast, which opened the way for inward rotation at the shoulder. Then they moved the elbow ahead of the shoulder during the forward cast, which enabled them to use a strong elbow extension as well (Figure 11).

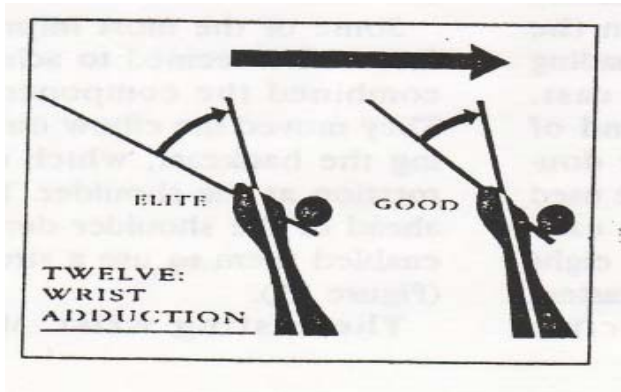


**The casting wrist.** Many beginning casters are trained to keep the wrist firm when learning to load a fly rod, and we observe that a wrist-dominated stroke limits the casting potential of many successful anglers. Yet the experienced distance casters in this study did use an 'educated' wrist action during the final acceleration of the rod tip.

(Continued on page 16)

## DON'T OVERLOOK THE WAY A ROD UNLOADS AT THE END OF THE CAST

The anatomical term for the wrist action we use in the forward cast is adduction. This occurs when the little finger side of the hand moves closer to the forearm as the thumb side moves farther away from it. The elite group averaged 45 degrees of wrist adduction during the forward cast as compared to 35 degrees for the good group (Figure 12).



Some of this difference occurred as the elite casters opened up the wrist angle to let the rod drift downward in back after the stop of the backcast. This movement not only widened the available casting arc but also placed the wrist in a position to contribute more movement and force to the cast.

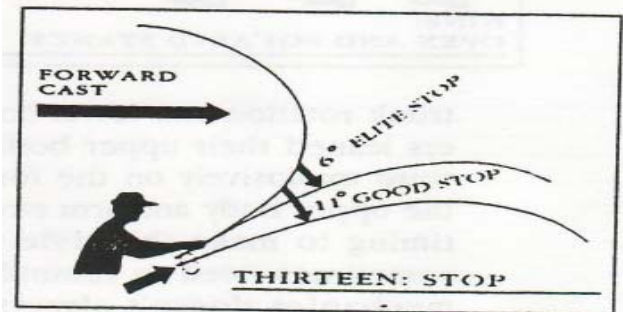
Most of the casters in both groups saved the last 20 to 30 degrees of wrist action to quickly tilt the rod butt forward just before the stop of the cast. This wrist movement added to the bend of the rod tip as well as to its acceleration, and this constituted the final component of the loading phase.

### Forward Cast - Unloading Phase

Mel Krieger cautioned us not to overlook the way a rod unloads at the end of the cast. Some teachers emphasize this moment with phrases such as 'accelerate to a stop' or 'come to a forced stop'. An abrupt stop of the hand and rod butt should direct the release of the stored energy out through the rod tip to the fly line. Theoretically any hand movement or change in the rod-butt angle during this stop phase represents a softening that allows some energy to escape down through the hand. This would result in less efficient use of the energy stored in the bent rod.

As with the backcast, we measured the stop in degrees of rod-butt angle change between the point of maximum rod bend and the point at which the rod first bent downward.

The most successful distance casters stopped the rod so abruptly that the butt moved barely one degree. This is very impressive when one considers that the rod tip was turning over so forcefully that some of the good group were unable to even hold the rod steady. As a group, the elite casters restricted rod-butt angle change to less than six degrees during the stop. It took the good group more than 11 degrees, or roughly twice the butt angle change, to stop the rod (Figure 13).



### Summary and Cautions

Sometimes we teach casting based on what we think is happening to the rod, line, or caster. The value of analyzing a group of skilled casters in a study such as this is that we can see what actually happens. This is particularly important when one is casting for distance, because the mechanics of a 75-foot cast require more force and complexity than those of a 25-foot cast.

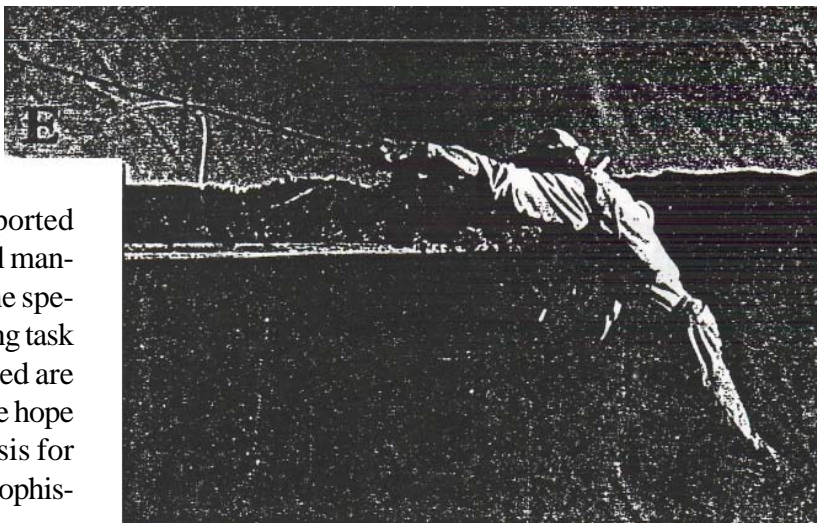
The elite casters in this study were able to store more energy in the bent rod than the good casters and were able to release that energy more efficiently to the fly line. The top distance caster bent the rod the most, stopped it the quickest, used the most body lean, had among the best-rated backcasts, had among the widest casting arcs, hauled line effectively, kept the rod tip straight during acceleration, used weight shift and shoulder rotation to his advantage, and benefited from a late forceful use of elbow and wrist action. Of the many dimensions analyzed, he had no discernible flaw.



*The value of analyzing a group of skilled casters in a study such as this is that we can see what actually happens.*

By contrast, we could see several ways in which each of the skilled casters in our good group could benefit from improved mechanics.

The precise angles and lengths reported here should not be applied in a general manner, because they are dependent on the specific fly rod and line used and the casting task of this study. The differences observed are the important findings of the study. We hope that these findings will serve as a basis for more discrete evaluation, using more sophisticated biomechanics equipment.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Experiment with your own casting style. If you feel the need to cast effectively at a longer distance, you may want to practice some of the techniques listed below that were used by the elite casters in this study.

As you experiment with these various ideas, we hope one or more of them will make a difference in adding distance to your casting as well as pleasure to your fishing.

1. As you prepare to cast, try dropping your casting side back to facilitate the weight shift and body rotation that can add to rod bend.
2. As you load the backcast, bring your elbow back to the side of your body to position your arm for inward rotation at the shoulder. Look back at the unrolling line if it helps, and stop the rod abruptly.
3. After the backcast stop, try letting the rod drift downward a bit to open up the casting arc for additional bend.
4. As you start shifting weight forward, rotate your trunk to increase the forward movement of your casting shoulder as well as to reposition the elbow in front.
5. Enhance the acceleration by coordinating your haul with the final arm and wrist action of your casting arm.
6. Stop the rod abruptly with the muscles of your forearm and hand to permit the last lever in the system, the fly rod, to release the stored energy efficiently.

(Continued on page 18)

*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.*

*Reprinted with permission from Fly Fisherman and is also included in the printed Master Study Guide.*

---

---

## **ETHICS COMMITTEE**

---

Did you know that we have an ethics committee? The Ethics Committee has been in existence for several years. The operating guidelines and present committee structure were established in July 2006. Its practices are governed by guidelines approved by the CBOG. The main purpose of the committee is to help the CICP maintain its high level of standards in terms of testing procedures, to keep them above reproach or suspicion. The ethics committee is concerned with maintaining a climate of objectivity and unbiased testing, as well as ensuring the Casting Instructors code of conduct is not violated.

There is a formal procedure for how complaints can be filed and guidelines have been developed for how claims are investigated.

The committee is concerned with protecting the anonymity and reputation of those involved in any claim.

The committee provides guidance to CCI's, MCI's and the CBOG as requested by offering advice on matters involving ethics and policy development which supports objectivity in testing, and instructors exhibiting a high level of professionalism.

The committee also makes recommendations for changes to the code of ethics as needed. The Code of Conduct and the Ethics Committee Guidelines are posted on the FFF website.

Be sure to check them out so you are aware of the expectations.

---

Sheila M Hassan, MCI  
Member EthicC

## From The Editors

It's our Anniversary! This issue marks five years of Liz and Denise editing *The Loop*.

*The Loop* started out as a leaflet (in 1994) that was mailed out to members. To look at the early issues, go to the web site and see for yourself. It was pretty small!

For the most part, the position of editor was handed back and forth between Jason Borger and Mac Lord for several years. When Mac went looking for a new editor, he found not one, but two willing people.

It wasn't easy to become the editor of *The Loop*. Mac put us through an interview process that included providing some of our writings as well as checking out our grammar and spelling skills. Luckily we passed.

As he breathed a big sigh of relief, Denise and Liz took up the challenge. Not only did we have to learn a new software program (lots of pulling of hair and colorful language when we couldn't make it do what we wanted), but we had to ask, beg, whine and blackmail members to provide us with articles.

Over the five years, it has improved. We have a steady flow of articles and our editing skills have improved as well.

We are very proud of *The Loop*. We hope the mix of different articles and different perspectives of our contributing members, whether it is a different philosophy of casting, or teaching method or regional difference, has helped to improve all of us and broaden our thinking and skills.

It should be spring although it doesn't feel like it. It is definitely a month late on the west coast. Some of you as well are still shaking off winter and some of you are tangled up in tarpon (lucky guys!).

Wherever you are we hope you will find time to enjoy *The Loop*, Spring 2008. *Going for the Distance* by Al Kyte and Gary Moran is a great piece that deserves more than one read.

And while we are 'going for the distance' check out Bruce Richard's article on teaching *Double Hauling*.

Bill Hiigashi, a very talented MCI from Japan, presents some thoughts on grips and finding your power zone. Watch for more from Bill in future issues.

It is time to make plans to attend the 2008 Conclave in Whitefish, Montana. We hope that you are able to attend. As you make your plans, please remember to include time to attend the Casting Board of Governors meeting on Tues, July 22nd. We'd love to see you there and make some new friends.

You can get involved and volunteer to serve on a committee. Master Instructors should make sure they are available to help with certification testing and broaden their testing experience by testing with a different CBOG.

Hope to see you in Whitefish!

**Talk to you soon.**  
**Denise & Liz**

---

### THE LOOP STAFF

**Editors: Denise Maxwell & Liz Watson**

*goldnwst@telus.net, 604-945-9002*

*lizz58@aol.com, 305-849-1672*

**Program Coordinator:**

*fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org, 406-585-7592*

**Chair, Board of Governors: Bruce Richards**

*bwrichards@mmm.com 989-496-1113*

**Fly Illustrations: Jason Borger**

**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 FFF 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:

**FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program**

215 E Lewis

Livingston, MT 59047

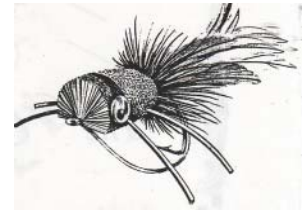
Fax: (406)-585-7596

E-mail: [fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org](mailto:fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org)

*The Loop* is a quarterly publication of the FFF Board of Governors for the Casting Instructor Certification Program.

# Double Hauling

by Bruce Richards



It has been my experience that most casters trying to learn or perfect the doublehaul have some misconceptions that prevent them from progressing as fast as the could.

First of all, most casters I have worked with consider an increase in line speed (in-and-of-itself) to be the only purpose of the double haul. While double hauling DOES increase line speed, a student viewing that as the sole goal of the technique will probably experience some initial disappointment.

If the student does not have the ability to carry a reasonable length of line (say 40 feet) and form good loops (front and back), the double haul becomes very difficult to teach. A certain minimum skill level is required. A short line and/or a bad loop does not have the power to 'pull' slack line created by a haul out through the guides of the rod. As an initial step to counteract basic skill deficiencies, the double haul can be taught with shooting heads or short-headed weight-forward lines. The problem with such equipment is that the skills developed on it don't always carry over to longer-headed weight-forward lines (the caster may not be able to hold enough line in the air to reach the rear taper/running line).

Most of the students that I have worked with who have the skills necessary to start learning the double haul immediately have one common fault: They simply throw the line too hard. They all want to get extra distance and they think the only way to do that is to throw the line hard and fast. As soon as they begin double hauling, their casting strokes change dramatically, with the usual result being open and/or tailing loops (neither of which are much good for distance).

I've found that if I encourage my students not to change what they do with their rod hand the end results are much better. Maintaining loop shape is critical and most casters at this stage can't do it when they overpower the rod.

As a caster progresses and becomes better at double hauling, I continue to encourage him/her to become more efficient in his/her casting strokes-less wasted motion (in arm and rod) and cleaner, more abrupt stops. This results in tighter loops that travel a greater distance with less energy input (which makes a long day of long casting much less tiring).

The length of a double haul is an oft-discussed topic, and there are definitely different schools of thought on what works best. My casting 'style' revolves around a very long, smooth stroke to apply power to the line as gently as possible. Bending (or flexing) a rod less means it has to 'un-bend' less, which results in better loop (and lessens the risk of tailing loops). Watch any good caster attempting maximum distance and you'll see the rod tip traveling a very long pathway. When a short, sharp haul is made in the middle of this long stroke, tailing loops are the result. It only makes sense that a poorly-timed, sharp haul will cause the rod tip to collapse into a concave pathway, thus making the line 'tail'. I prefer to teach a long, smoothly accelerating haul that mirrors the acceleration of the rod tip. The longer the cast, the longer the casting stroke, and thus the longer the haul. This approach works very well because it's easy to teach (the timing is not as critical as with short casting strokes), and the student gets the idea that the double haul doesn't have to be done in an ultra-fast manner.

I often use golf analogies in my teaching because many of my students golf (and so do I, sort of). The best golfers use a long, smooth stroke to strike the ball. They don't appear to be working very hard for the results they get -just like a good caster. A long, smooth casting stroke and haul get the best results.

As a caster's skill and experience with double hauling advance, he or she can start adding more speed to the casting stroke and haul to increase ultimate distance.

---

*This article is reprinted from the printed Master Study guide. Bruce Richards is the Chair of the Casting Board of Governors.*

# *A Big Testing Event*

## *Lakeland, Florida*

---

By some measures it could be considered a small event; however, The National Fly Fishing Expo in Lakeland, Florida on March 28-30 should not be underestimated--- it was a big FFF instructor certification event.

A total of 19 Certified Casting Instructor and Master Instructor candidates were tested over the three days of the show. That is quite a showing of candidates for any fly fishing show.

The certification testing was successfully organized by Dusty Sprague, BOG. Dusty and eight additional examiners put the candidates to their task, casting on the grounds of The Lakeland Center.

All performance testing took place outdoors. Groups of examiners and candidates gathered on the grassy patches surrounding The Lakeland Center parking lot or beneath and between some beautiful oak trees.

The warm ~80 degree temperature with a light breeze was comfortable for those of southern climes and probably a bit steamy for those of more northern climes. Regardless, the weather did not hamper the outdoor setting of the testing.

Much of the success of this certification testing event must go to the co-ordinator of the testing events, Dusty Sprague, Casting Board of Governor.

Testing assignments and elimination of testing conflicts were worked out well in advance of the event. Finding eight additional willing examiners to test for all three days of the event is a measure of Dusty's organizational skills and arm twisting ability.

Floyd Franke (CBOG), Gordie Hill (CBOG), Peter Lami (MI), David Olson (MI), Jim Penrod (MI), Dusty Sprague(CBOG), Scott Swartz (MI), Jim Valle(MI), and Liz Watson (CBOG) examined candidates over the three days of the event. They all deserve kudos for their hard work and dedication to the certification program.

Pete Greenan, the Expo Manager and all organizers of the Expo are also credited with their support of

the certification events and successful advertising campaign to get candidates and examiners to this event.

The candidates themselves deserve much credit for their hard preparatory work and willingness to attend and test to become Certified Casting Instructors or Master Instructors.

In addition to the hard work of many in the FFF, other factors must have contributed to the number of candidates who tested at this event. There must be a large demand for certification testing in the southeast. Dusty Sprague surmises that the large number of candidates may be due to a 'pent-up' demand and low supply of testing opportunities in this area. Dusty also believes we may have experienced some 'spill-over' from other northeast shows where testing was not available.

The high number of examiners available to test at this event allowed all nineteen candidates to be tested. Often many examiners have other commitments at shows. In this case the nine examiners were able to donate their time to testing.

In summary, there is a demand for certification testing in the southeast. Meeting the need for certification testing requires a broad-based advertising program and the support of the certification process by the event organizers, an effective testing event co-ordinator with plans well in advance of the event, and an adequate number of willing examiners without other show conflicts.

The dates April 3-5 have been set for the 2009 Expo and central Florida has again been chosen as the Expo site. Hopefully, The 2009 National Fly Fishing Expo in central Florida will be another big FFF instructor certification event.

---

*Liz Watson is a member of the Casting Board of Governors.*

# FLYCASTING SIMPLIFIED

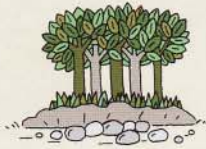
FORWARD CAST

Six



DON'T AIM TOO HIGH...

Seven

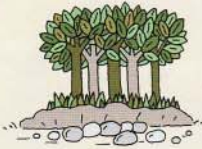


DON'T FORGET THE "STOP"

Eight



Nine



FORWARD CAST LOOP

Ten



LIFE IS GOOD!



PRESENTATION

START CASTING!



One

BACK CAST



Two

KNOW WHEN TO STOP...



Three

← BACK CAST LOOP



Four

WAIT FOR THE TIMING...

Five



Illustration by Yoshiaki Kotyama

flyfisher 016

# Spey Casting

by John Lynde

## The Spey Cast

The Spey cast is a derivative of the roll cast. Although the roll cast is complete in itself, it does not readily allow a change of direction, whereas the Spey cast is a true change-direction cast. Moreover the Spey cast is more clean cut, more decisive, and more sophisticated. Originally evolved for salmon fly fishing on the River Spey in Scotland, its primary purpose is to pick up a fly from downstream and cast it across; but it may also be used in fishing from a boat or in any circumstances where the roll cast might be useful. It is particularly easy to perform when the wind is from behind. Since in Spey casting the fly never goes behind the angler, it is the most practical way to fish a stream when wading in front of a heavily bushed bank.

For learning and practicing both the Spey and double Spey casts, use your double-tapered sinking line and a general purpose tapered leader. If possible, choose a stream where you can wade in shallow water and have the current flowing from right to left. Stand so that you are facing across the stream.

Lay out about thirty feet of line with a roll cast or overhead cast and allow the stream to drift your line around to the left. If you have to practice on still water, cast about forty-five degrees left from the direction in which you intend to Spey cast

The first phase of the Spey cast is the same as that of the roll; raise your rod to an angle of sixty degrees (eleven o'clock). In the second phase, swing your body to the right, but roll your wrist a little to the right (don't flick), so that the point of the rod dips slightly as you swing, causing the line and fly to leave the water momentarily and to swing outwards by centrifugal force until the leader and fly come to rest on the water in front of you (Figs. 24 and 27).

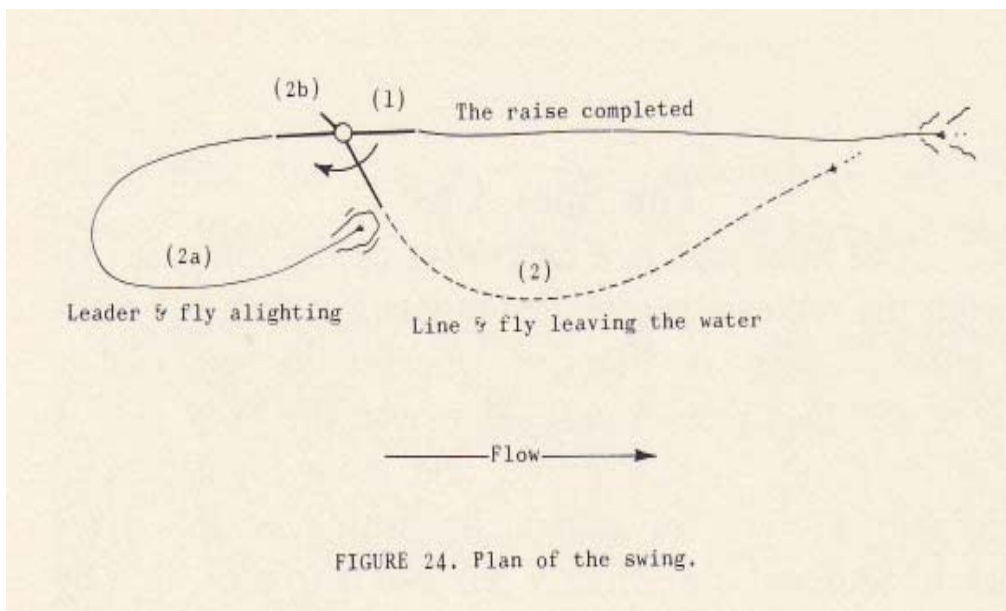
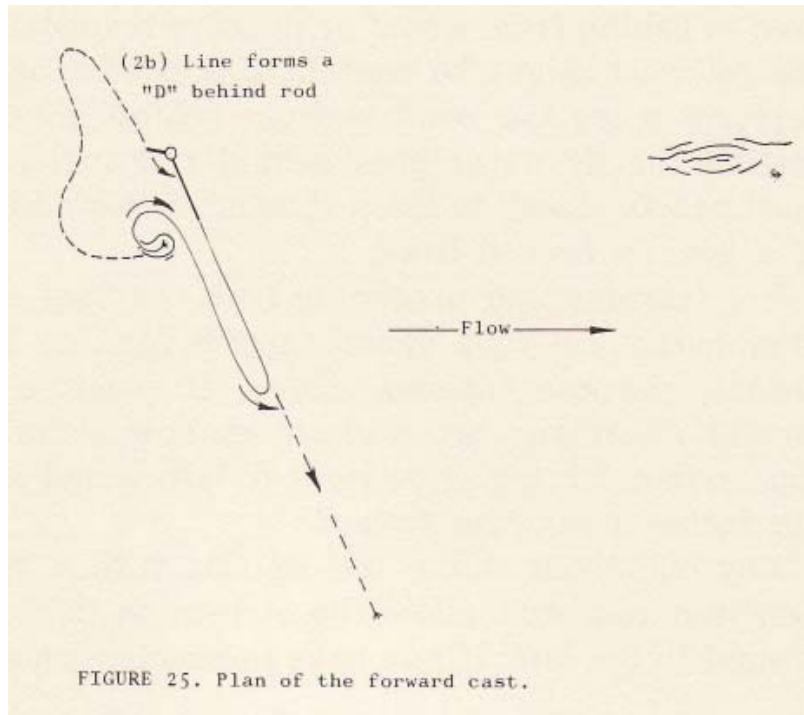
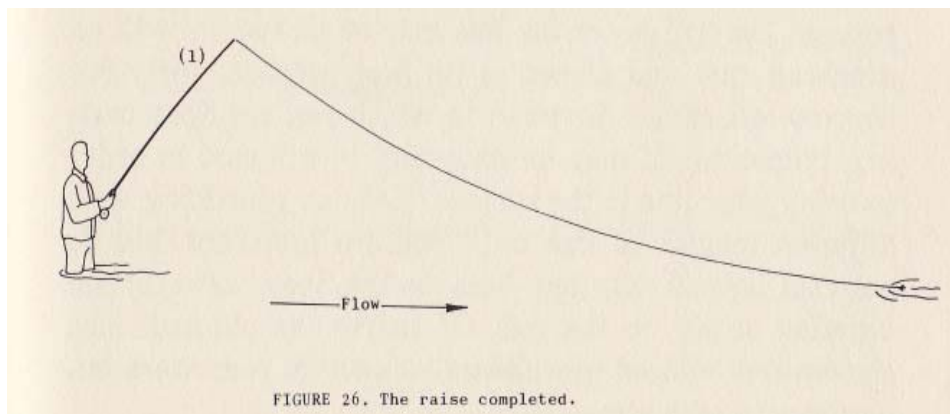


FIGURE 24. Plan of the swing.



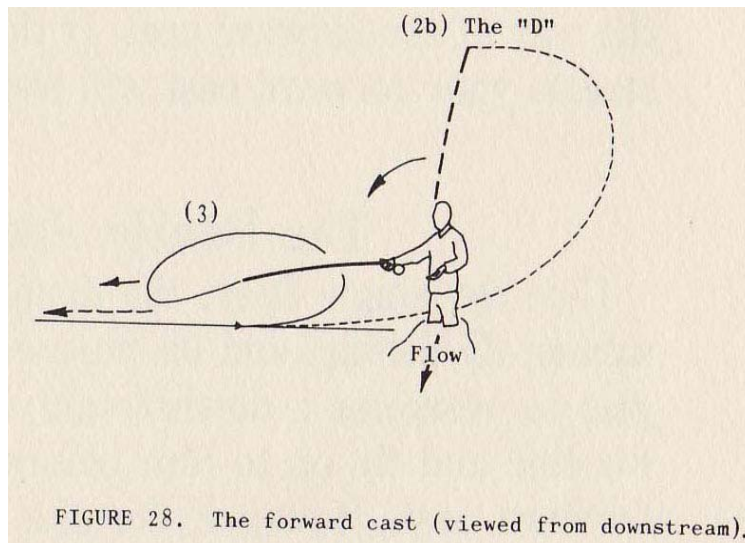
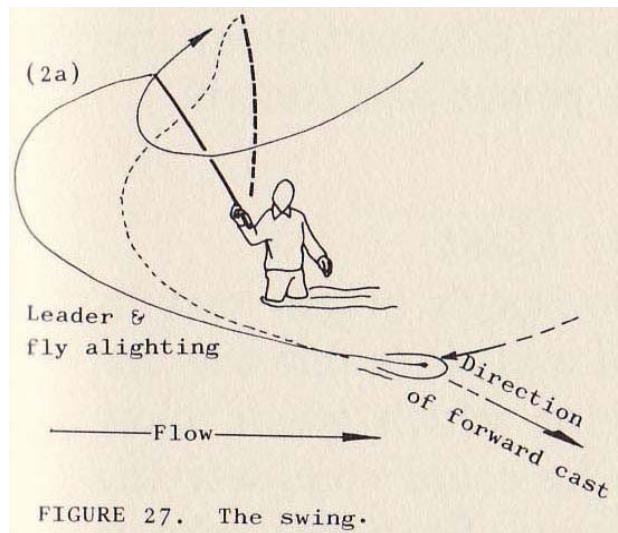


Most of the line should now form a "D" in the air behind your rod, with the leader and fly anchored to the water, as in the roll cast explained in an earlier section. Continue with the rod swing, raising your forearm until your right hand is close to your shoulder with the rod pointing upwards and slightly back. In the third phase, swing your body to the front as you throw your arm and rod into a pointing position at the spot where you wish to cast your fly (Figs. 25 and 28), then lower your arm and rod in the follow through. You will find out in practice that the forward cast should be begun just after the leader and fly touch the water, not after they have come to rest.



*(continued on page 26)*

(2b) Ready for the forward cast



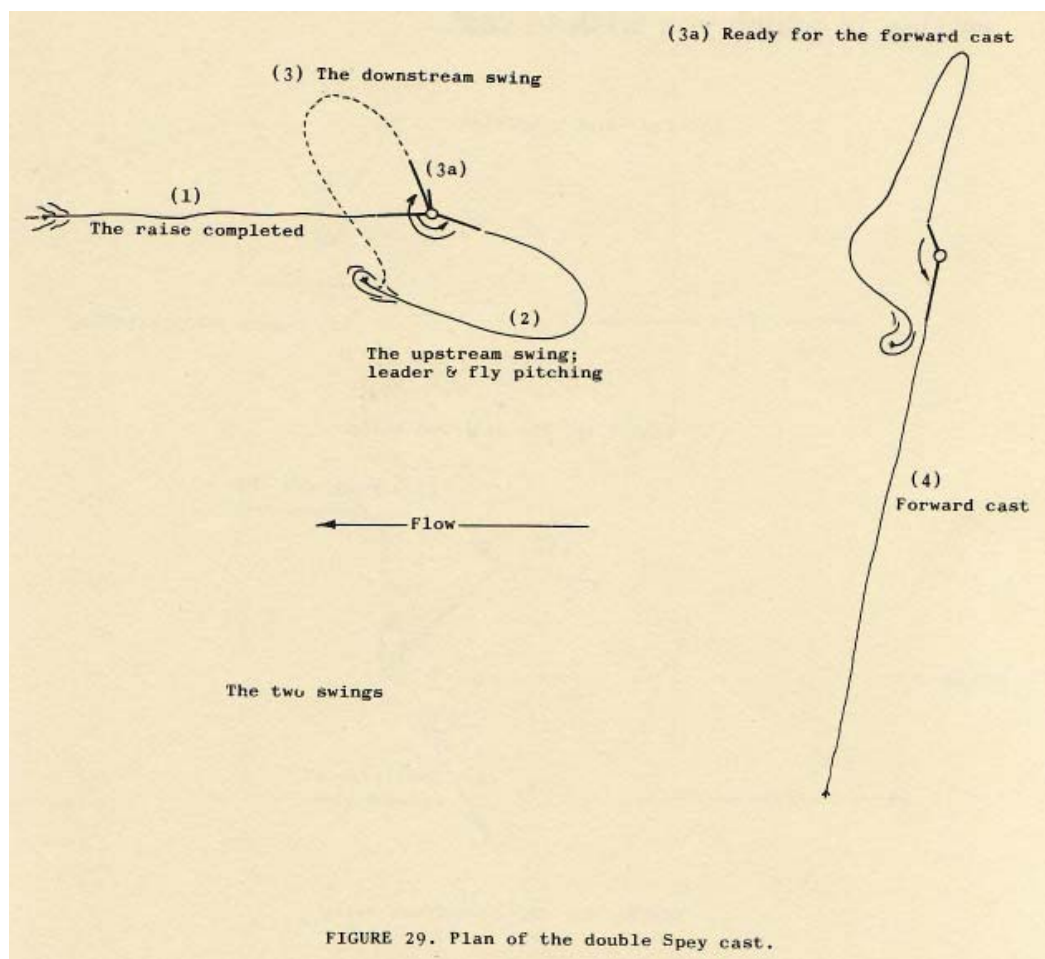
Timing of the three phases of the Spey cast is similar to that of the roll: “One-hundred-thousand, two-hundred-thousand, three-hundred-thousand.” It is to be assumed that since you have fully mastered both the roll cast and the overhead cast, you will experience no difficulties in controlling and shooting the line with your left hand, the shoot taking place a little before the rod finishes its forward arc. Whereas in the original Spey the forward cast was a “thrash down,” it is just as easy to make your forward cast in the air by the method just described, and the result is a much cleaner cast.

Having completed your first Spey cast, allow the line and fly to swing around in the stream, or to save time cast downstream with an overhead cast, then repeat the process. On still water the line may be picked up with an overhead cast and placed in its first position, forty-five degrees left of the direction in which you are Spey casting. Sometimes it may be necessary to roll cast in order to bring your line to the surface. Keep on practicing with different lengths of line until you are proficient, but do not cast beyond fifty feet because the Spey cast exerts a twisting strain on the rod. Of course the old-fashioned sixteen-foot spliced greenheart salmon fly rods were impervious to such stresses!

By adjusting your arc of swing and the dip of the rod tip in the second phase you will be able to place your leader and fly on the water where required, just out of the way of the forward cast. If the fly pitches too far upstream your forward cast will lose power and control.

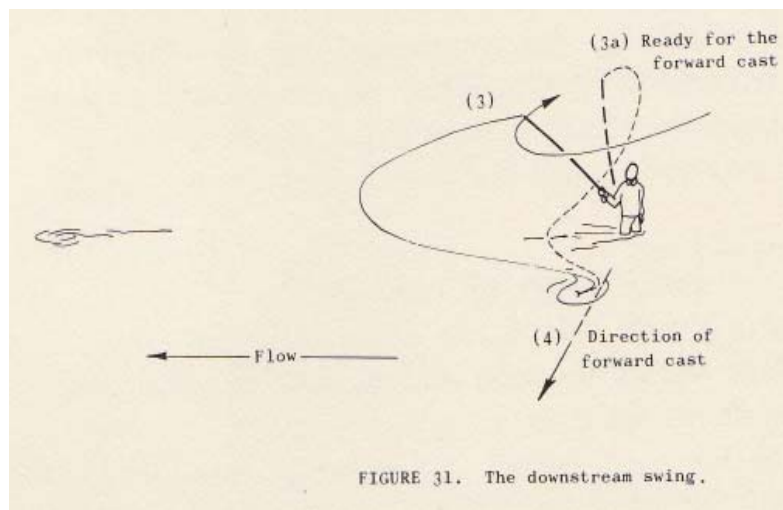
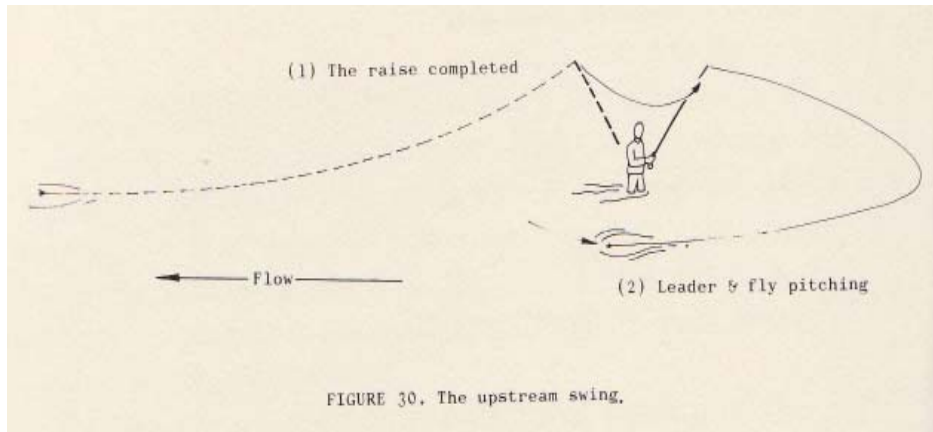
## The Double Spey Cast

Like the single Spey, the double Spey's origin was in salmon fly fishing, and its purpose was to enable the angler to overcome a downstream wind which would blow his line and fly on to him before he could complete the forward cast. However for the trout fly fisher who is right-handed rather than truly ambidextrous the single Spey cast is used for changing direction towards the right and the double Spey cast for changing direction towards to the left. To explain this in a different way, the single Spey is used to fish a nymph or wet fly in a stream flowing from right to left and the double Spey suits a stream flowing from left to right. Of course the opposite would apply to a left-handed caster.



A double Spey is merely a single Spey cast with an additional movement incorporated between the raise and swing to the right, so there is nothing to be alarmed about once you have overcome the single Spey. In the first phase, raise your rod to eleven o'clock to free the line from the grip of the water. Carry on into the second phase by swinging your shoulders, arms and rod to the left (a backhand swing), pitching the fly just to the right of where you want to cast, but without raising the rod to the near-vertical position. In the third phase swing to the right, continuing the motion of your right hand and rod into the position for beginning the forward cast, taking care however not to move the fly from where it pitched; the belly of the line should now form a "D"

behind the rod (Figs. 29, 30 and 31). In the fourth phase, make your forward cast as in the single Spey, shooting line and following through. The timing is an even “one-hundred-thousand, two-hundred-thousand, three-hundred-thousand, frou-hundred-thousand.” As in the single Spey the arcs of your swings will be governed to suit the direction in which you wish to cast.



After a little practice with the double Spey you will discover how easily the line swings around from upstream to downstream, and, still in motion, sails out lightly in the forward cast. Although the single Spey and double Spey casts are primarily suited to stream fishing, they can be used equally well for fishing still water where a change of direction is desired. On the other hand the single Spey with a reduced arc of swing may also be used to make a new cast in the same direction as the previous one.

---

*This excerpt was taken from the book “34 Ways to Cast a Fly” by John G. Lynde. It was published in 1969. Born in 1913, John Lynde took up flyfishing as a career in 1934 and was a charter member of the Federation of Fly Fishers.*

## Give Each Student a Tangible Gift

Dan Lagace, an instructor who has given many casting seminars at Federation Conclaves, always has some innovative ideas. Several of us were casting together and after helping me with my distance casting, he took a 3x5 index card out of his pocket and put my first name on the top. He then listed a couple recommendations we discussed and signed his name, handing me the card as a gift. He said he recently started doing this and found it to be very beneficial.

I started doing the same thing when working with students but decided to carry it a step further. When we are getting ready for a casting clinic, as students sign up, I give them an index card and ask them to put their name at the top. Below their name, I ask them to list the primary reason they are taking the clinic. They keep the card, and during the course of the program, while at their side, I ask to see the card. I don't have a problem as I usually do with names because it is written on the card. Who doesn't like to hear their name spoken? Next I write a few words to remind them of something we identified, along with our recommendation to correct it. When we get to their reason for being there, I make sure it is addressed

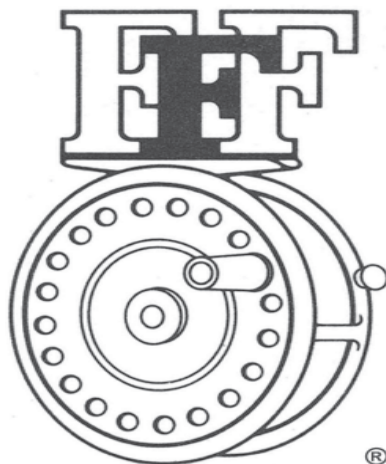
along with how it can be improved. An example would be, "I want greater accuracy." After showing them how to control line with their line hand by letting it slip through their fingers until the thumb and index finger tighten as the target is acquired, I will make a few short suggestions on the card. Using a brightly colored card will assure it doesn't get misplaced.

One of my recent students, a physician, sent me an email the day after our clinic stating how helpful the card was as a teaching aide. When he emptied his pockets at home, the card with our recommendations was identified immediately. Looking at my notes, he recalled our discussion. He placed it in an area where it can be used as a reference when he practices at home.

I would recommend using this simple technique with your next class. This has given me great results and only involves a few minutes of time.

---

Pat Damico, CCI  
St. Pete Beach, FL



### FYI

The Master's Study Guide is available on the FFF web site but a recent addition are the magazine articles that were only available in the print edition. These articles were published in various magazines in past years and are a valuable source of information.

The articles are now available for download. You can download individual articles or download the total package.

Enjoy and spread the word!

## *Upcoming Events for 2008*

---

<b>Whitefish, MT</b> <b>Rick Williams</b>	<b>2008 FFF Conclave / Show</b> <b>CI, MCI</b> <b>Two-Handed</b>	<b>July 22-26, 2008</b>  <b>July 23, 2008</b>
<b>Mountain Home, AR</b> <b>Chuck Easterling</b>	<b>SO Council Conclave</b> <b>Instructor, Master</b>	<b>Oct 2-4, 2008</b>
<b>Redding, CA</b> <b>Instructor Prep Class/Workshop</b> <b>Guy Manning</b>		<b>Oct 4-5, 2008</b>
<b>Richland Center, WI</b> <b>Jacquish Hollow Angler</b> <b>Dave Barron, John Breslin</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Oct 18-19, 2008</b>
<b>Richland Center, WI</b> <b>Dave Barron</b> <b>Master Instructor Prep Class/Workshop</b>		<b>Oct 25, 2008</b>
<b>MEXICO</b> <b>Dusty Sprague, Joe Libeu</b>	<b>Instructor, Master</b>	<b>Nov 17-19, 2008</b>
<b>Marlboro, MA</b> <b>Rod McGarry</b>	<b>Instructor, Master</b>	<b>Jan 16- 18, 2008</b>

---

*Please see the FFF web site for registration deadlines,  
testing class limits and contact information.*

# CONGRATULATIONS

## *New Casting Instructors*

Anti Guttorm - Finland  
James Allen - Placida, FL  
Justin Duggan - Australia  
Taylor Quallen - Wentzville, MO  
Sam Yee - Wilton, CA  
John R Till - Walnut Creek, CA  
Jim Blauch - Ely, MN  
Brandon Bertagnole - Park City, UT  
Jeffrey Trigg - New Bloomfield, MO  
Lorenzo Nogara - Italy  
Francesco Vinci - Italy  
Giovanni Gatti - Italy  
Chris Kincaid - Lake Wales, FL  
William Whitebread - Berwick, PA  
Vince Williams - Tomonium, MD  
Chris Dakin - Valrico, FL  
Chris Myers - Longwood, FL  
Keith Kalbfleisch - Winter Park, FL  
John Bilotta - Washington, DC  
Matthew Calderaro - Orland, FL  
Rich Santos - Jacksonville, FL  
Massimiliano Perletti - Italy  
Takumi Chiba - Japan  
Sam Doyle - Larkspur, CO  
Hiroshi Kuwajima - Japan  
Hisashi Suzuki - Japan  
Georg Haitzmann - Austria  
Satoshi Endo - Japan  
Ryoji Terashima - Japan  
Nori Tashiro - Japan  
Helmut Leitenstorfer - Germany  
Ralph Warnke - Germany  
Juergen Friesenhahn - Germany  
Kenji Sugisaka - Japan  
Billy Ryan - Australia  
Atsushi Nakamura - Japan  
Junya Kitahara - Japan  
Nobuo Nodera - Japan  
Bruce R Miller - England, UK  
Vic Sorensen - Carnation, WA

## *New Master Instructors*

Anti Guttorm - Finland  
Stener Skogmo - Norway  
Eric Cook - Marietta, GA  
Ed Chamberlain - Hampton, GA  
William Keister Jr - Marlborough, CT  
Mack Martin - Cumming, GA  
Hisashi Suzuki - Japan  
Christopher Rownes - Switzerland  
Uwe Kaptein - Germany

## *New THCI Instructors*

Anti Guttorm - Finland  
Thomas Berggren - Sweden  
Junya Kitahara - Japan

## 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?***