FLY CASTING:
The Roll Cast Overview

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FLY CASTING: ROLL CAST OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS A ROLL CAST AND WHY DO YOU NEED IT?

A roll cast is a forward cast without a backcast. If you knew only one cast, it should be the roll cast. You'll use it when you can’t make a backcast because of trees or other obstructions behind you or because you have unwanted slack in the fly line. It's fun to learn and easy to do.

HOW TO ROLL CAST ON WATER

Start with the fly, leader, and a few feet of fly line on the water. Pull approximately two rod-lengths of fly line off the reel. Hold the rod horizontal in front of you, then wiggle it quickly side to side. This will pull the extra line out of the rod tip. The fly line is now in a pile in front of you. With one or two fingers of your rod hand, pin the line against the cork handle, to keep the line from slipping. Now, because the fly line is directly in front of your body, take a step or two to the left if you are right-handed (step to the right if you are left handed), so the line ends up in front of your rod hand, rather than your body.

With the rod canted outward at about 15 degrees, slowly draw the line back to form a half circle (D-loop) behind the shoulder. This D-loop should be aligned 180 degrees opposite the target (the 180 degree principle). When drawing the fly line backward, it shouldn’t leave the water. Now look at your hand, which should be near your ear. The rod angle should be such that the rod tip is pointing to about 1:00 on a clock face with the thumb pointed nearly straight up. Keep the rod canted outward at about 15 degrees so the fly line stays away from your body and out of your way.
Look at your target and make sure the reel is also facing the target. Cast forward and stop the hand just above the horizontal position with the rod angled at about 10:00 o’clock. The loop will travel forward on or above the water’s surface with the line and leader straightening completely. As the line begins to fall to the water, lower the rod tip and follow the line downward.

The roll cast requires the caster to throw harder than a comparable overhead cast. When performing this cast, the fly reel should face the target and the fly rod should track in a straight line. Once the fly line loop is on its way to the target, the fly rod tip can be lowered to the water. The next cast will be easier. With the line straight in front, again slowly draw the line back to form a D-loop and forward cast as described above.

**STEPS TO THE ROLL CAST:**

1. Rod tip low to the water
2. Tilt rod slightly away from body
3. Slowly drag the line back to form a D-loop behind the shoulder
4. Check hand, rod angle position, insure rod is tilted away from body
5. Forward cast stopping just above horizontal
6. Lower the rod tip to the water

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