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Letter From The Editor

Generally speaking, my daughter Sandra is generally speaking. I think you know the type: she has a comment in a gathering, she has an opinion she volunteers freely, she offers her thoughts on a current topic. . . . In the first five years of elementary school, four of her home teachers cited her a “chatterbox.” Once she stopped her teacher from saying “Birds of a feather flock together.” She corrected the teacher: “It should be ‘feathers of a bird flock together’.”

The Loop is meant for you if you are like Sandra and have something to say regarding fly casting. If you have considered thoughts on casting technique, on casting mechanics, on fishing, on equipment, on angling ethics, or on teaching methodology, this journal is where you can expound your point of view. What if you are controversial with your opinion? You may get opposing comments following your article. But then you may also get affirmative confirmations of your observations. In either case, right or wrong, you have made a contribution. Thinking out of the box provides alternative and fresh ways of understanding a subject. Herd mentality is often correct, but not always so.

The focus of *The Loop* is to help us, the instructors, to expand our teaching material—to develop our teaching method. We have had tutelage from those who came before us. Currently there are interesting video studies from investigators in the field. At the same time our physicist colleagues are pondering over the science of the cast. It is an exciting time to be a casting instructor. The trick is to figure out what to weed out from this hodgepodge of information when we are teaching in order not to confuse our students.

The Loop is the place where you can interest us with your day participating in a casting tournament; your week hobnobbing with

underhand spey casters in Europe; your month as an instructor/guide-on-call for your local fly shop; your year as staff in an established fly casting school. Perhaps you wonder about casting a French leader; how training/casting practice may reap trust/confidence in fishing; if “rod round robin” is a program to crow about; what the “short stop drill” does for fishing as well as for baseball; how an instructor’s style and presentation are continuous works in progress; or why “stop” is not the same as “halt.” *The Loop* is here as a forum for you to share your thoughts; it is here as a resource to settle your doubts.

This interim Editorial Board is still experimenting with editorial policy and publication content. We solicit articles which offer unique observations, or furnish new information, or simply make for interesting reading. You may find some editing of your article. This may be done to limit the content to 1800 words (three pages excluding graphics), or so that it will fit snugly in the one page. If the editing is more extensive we will seek your agreement before publication. Where our editing is minor you may not be informed: we hope you will forgive us our impunity in thinking that the edited version is for the better. In this matter of editing, my collaborators are the other members of the Editorial Board, viz. John Bilotta, David Lambert and Carl McNeil. They check my warped sense of humor, and keep me from slipping from merely being the opinionated to becoming the dogmatic.

If you are still undecided over putting your thoughts on paper, Sandra has another observation for you: “Silence cannot speak louder than words.”

Soon S. Lee.

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All correspondence, preferably by e-mail, to be addressed to theloop@fedflyfishers.org.

All submitted material should be legible when viewed or printed at standard 8.5 x 11 in.

Submit article in unformatted *Word* or *Pages* file. Have your article on one page (about 600 words) or two pages (1200 words), not more than three pages (1800 words excluding graphics).

Supply the following information at head of your article:

Title of article

Author's name, CI/MCI/THCI/CBOG or other

Author's above-shoulder photo

Author's country of residence

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For supporting images, supply captions

A short bio is optional.

Letters To The Editor

Bob Eck, IFFF Life Member:

Thank you for sending me a copy of *The Loop*, which I always enjoyed reading when available. Hopefully, the board will reopen *The Loop* again to its membership. It is an excellent work, which I had enjoyed reading for many years. I recognize that it is geared toward and intended for casting instructors. To be sure, I am not a certified casting instructor, and do not give casting lessons (other than to my grandchildren), but anyone who reads *The Loop* articles gains a much better understanding of the casting technique, which is beneficial to the sport overall, with FFF leading the way.

Editor: Bob is one of several IFFF members who request access to The Loop. While distribution of The Loop at this time is limited to certified instructors, there is nothing to stop an instructor from sharing his copy of The Loop with others.

Carl Zarelli, MCI, THCI, APGAI:

My hat is off to you and your group of editors. The Loop has taken a huge leap forward in content and character and is a finely tuned piece of professional work. All I can say is it just keeps getting better and better. Keep up the great work.



WE WANT YOUR LETTERS

Casting and Using the French Leader Technique

Frank Williams, MCI, GAIA, APGAI

As fly casting instructors, we're called upon to keep current with new casting and fly fishing trends. One very successful newer form of fly fishing uses the *French Leader* technique. So, what is a French Leader and how do you fish it? More importantly to casting instructors, how do you teach this technique?

The French Leader is simply a very long leader developed by the French International Fly Fishing team to increase their catch-rate on the heavily fished waters used in world championships.

Often these leaders are around 35-45 ft. in length (12-15 meters) and are cast without the use of fly line. In fact it is usual for the leader to run right down through the rod guides and back onto the reel. In some circumstances not all of the leader is cast—but more about fishing techniques later.

Many accomplished anglers—even some casting instructors—find using such long leaders frustrating, and many switch back to angling techniques with which they are more comfortable.

The main problem with casting French Leaders is the lack of casting weight. To put this lack of mass into perspective, the French Leader I use on my 2-weight rod weighs around 1.5 grams (approx. 1/20 ounce or 23 grains) compared with 5 grams (1/6 ounce or 80 grains) in a standard fly fishing line.

A consequence of this lack of line weight is that there is hardly any rod bend at all during the casting stroke. This leads to a short stroke and narrow casting arc, which restricts the buildup of line speed (velocity) necessary to turn over the leader. A fast-action or tip-action rod can help counteract this and give us a longer stroke and wider arc than either softer-action or full-action rods.

Also, since a French Leader never achieves the same line speed as a fly line, the caster needs to increase the pause, both to allow the leader more time to straighten out and to avoid creeping.

Techniques for Fishing French Leaders

Some casters prefer an oval/constant tension cast when fishing French Leaders. They feel it is more efficient and helps keep slack to a minimum. Other casts or alterations to casts using French Leaders depend on the fishing situation.

Directly Upstream — Cast flies directly up into the flow and allow them to sink down through the water column. Let the flies stay at the target depth for a few seconds then, with the flies still at depth, begin the back cast. This serves two purposes: 1) it causes the flies to rise quickly back up through the water column, which can often induce a take; and 2) it increases the bend in the rod and develops greater line speed by loading against the tension of the water (thus enabling a longer cast, too). This water loading can also be incorporated into the oval cast mentioned above.

Up and Across —After allowing your flies to drift to about 45 degrees downstream, drag the flies across and around so the rod, leader and flies are downstream and behind the angler, directly opposite (180 degrees) from the target. Then make a water-tension cast toward the spot you would like the flies to land.

How to Cast and When to Use

When teaching someone to cast French Leaders I use a standard (commercially available) tapered leader and begin by teaching the student to 'tip cast,' that is, to turn the leader over without any fly line outside the rod tip. I then have the student build up to using an 18-ft. leader. When the student can cast this leader comfortably we

move on to a 40-ft. leader, starting with 20 feet of leader outside the rod tip, then build up until the student confidently casts the whole leader. *This whole process is much easier to accomplish if done on water.*

Now we come to the larger question of teaching "when" to use French Leaders. This is a subject that could be book length, but I'll keep this as brief as possible.

As mentioned above, the French Leader technique was developed to present flies as delicately as possible on heavily pressured water, or in water where the fish are wary and easily spooked. It is a subtle presentation that is also great for fishing the fast flowing, 'skinny' riffles when a good presentation is difficult to achieve using conventional nymphing techniques.

When teaching nymphing methods I use the following *Aide d' Memoire* for my students:

The deeper the water, the shorter the leader.

In water that is ankle to knee deep I use as much of the leader as I am able to cast. As the water deepens from knee to hip I shorten the leader to about half its length. As the water gets toward my hip, I shorten the leader again using only one to two rod lengths (including tippet) of the leader.

You may have noticed that I avoid using the term "French Nymphing." Although the

technique developed as a tactic most suited to nymph fishing, an adept caster can use these leaders to cast a dry fly by using the leader at its full length. On slow, shallow water where the fish have a wide view of everything above the surface, the ability to land a fly very delicately and without the splash associated with fly line can make a big difference to the success of the day

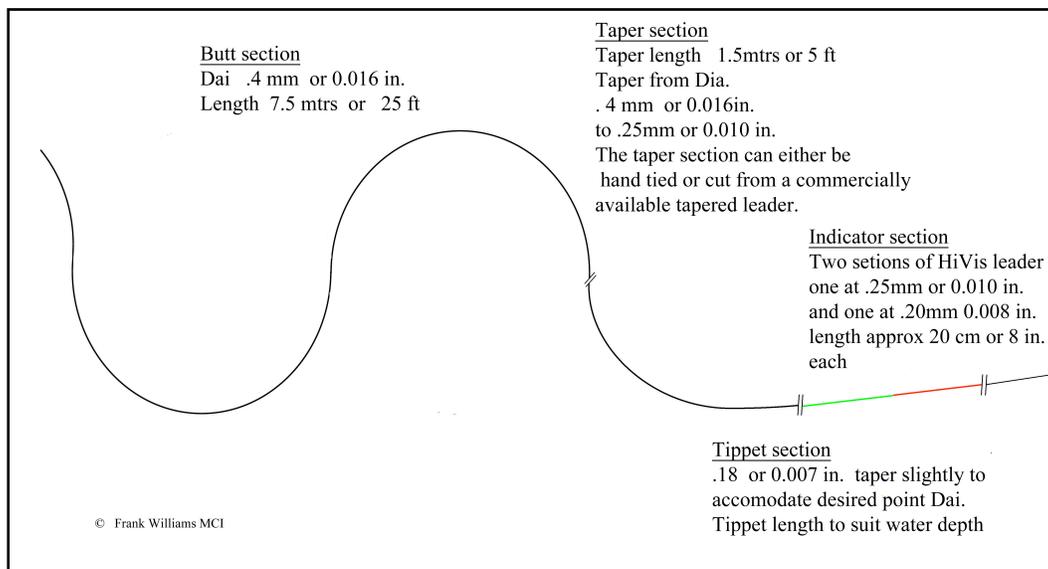
As instructors, we should keep up-to-date with the most contemporary methods and trends in fly fishing. We should add every possible tool to our box, and we should be able to offer coaching in the most current skills. Being able to teach the French Leader technique is a perfect example.

Additionally, fishing this method is FUN. Everyone who practices it has their own take on it.

Key points

- Choose a fast/tip action rod
- Cast with the narrowest of arcs to keep the loop tight
- Slow down the tempo and timing of the cast
- When teaching this casting method start the student with a short section of leader, say 9 feet. Lengthen it as casting skill develops

Have fun and catch fish.





Fishing with French leader; *photo credit Lewis Hendrie*



If you wish to be happy for an hour, get intoxicated.
If you wish to be happy for three days, get married.
If you wish to be happy for eight days, kill your pig and eat it.
If you wish to be happy forever, learn to fish.

Chinese proverb

It is not a fish until it is on the bank

Irish proverb

The gods do not deduct from man's allotted span the hours spent in fishing.

Babylonian proverb

Train it and Trust it

Peter Hayes, CBOG



As they say, practice makes perfect—and the subject of practice is dear to my heart. If you wish to catch more fish then one of the most obvious and beneficial ways to do this is to practice as much as you can. Not all of us can find the time and place to practice regularly in a real life fishing situation, but the local park is a great substitute.

I have practiced my accuracy and distance fly casts for more than 30 years so that I could be the best in the world at it. Constant and intensive practice has stood me in good stead whenever the opportunity to fish has arisen.

Just yesterday I waded a medium-sized local freestone river with Montana fishing guide, Chuck Ravetta. We sometimes took turns fishing, each watching the other. Other times we waded side by side, fishing ahead as we went. We prospected likely bubble lines, current seams and sneaky bank side lies.

On a day like this, on this stretch of the river, the average client could expect to catch a dozen or so fish of up to a pound and a half. On this occasion Chuck and I managed somewhere between 50 and 60. The largest was three pounds.

What is the difference between guide and client?

I am a constant and passionate analyzer of fishing situations. This comes partly from my engineering background and partly from my competitive nature. As a guide, it is my job to work out ways for clients to catch more fish. Whilst fishing with Chuck I found myself constantly studying his slightly different style. Then, at the end of the day I compared our wonderful day with the day previously where I guided two clients on the same water. There were two major stand-out differences:

1. Presentation

In a four-hour fishing session with Chuck I rarely saw an inaccurate cast. Instead there were pinpoint accurate casts to the middle of bubble lines, perfect shots just inches from banks and long shoots into the shadows feet under overhanging tea-tree.

When it was necessary to draw a fish out from cover, the hopper went down with a firm 'PLOP,' but without a hint of leader crash. Sometimes the very next cast would be to a sipping fish in the middle of a glassy calm pool and this delivery would land like thistle down just three feet to the side.

Several fish came from way under overhanging scrub and on these occasions a tighter loop, faster line speed cast was required to ping the fly deep under the cover. There were a dozen or so fish that came to backhand side casts and to bow and arrow casts that we could both manage effortlessly. Many clients just couldn't possibly expect to catch these fish.

We could both recognize the need for different shots and we could make them – first time. It was all done with ease and whilst I rarely fish with anglers of Chuck's ability I could recognize the beauty in the situation. It was a very pleasant and satisfying day.

2. Mending

Mending for drag-free drifts was the second glaringly obvious difference between the guides and the clients. Very often an aerial mend was enough but if it wasn't then constant attention was given to water mending. There were dozens of fish that would not have been caught without good mending technique. Chuck is the best I have ever seen at this. He works with drift boats on huge and fast rivers with complex current

situations. I am sure this tiny river was a soda for him. Chuck mends ten times better than I do. It is because he is practiced at it.

Now Train It – Casting Practice

First, find a clear area in the park. Use an orange practice line and preferably a double taper. Try to practice on a sunny day with good visibility.

Study your loops both front and back. Learn to watch every back cast loop. Study the loop shape, speed and trajectory. Learn to throw tight loops, open loops and avoid tailing loops with super-smooth rod loading. Spend time on understanding the mechanics of the cast. Get a good handle on smooth rod loading and tight loop forming.

Learn and understand good haul technique. Do all this false casting practice-side-onto-the-wind so that the back and forward cast are affected equally by the side wind. Once you have good control of the rod tip movements and great loop control it is time for fishing practice.

Fishing Practice

If you want to get better at fishing you must spend some quality time practicing fishing drills. If you are a trout fisherman don't just go down to the local park and stand in the middle of the oval and throw 60 feet directly downwind. For some reason this is what most people practice. In a year of fishing I might just once get a long downwind cast to a fish without obstructions around.

Instead, you need to find an area with lots of trees and other obstacles like park benches, fences etc. Put some bright yarn on your leader then walk through the trees casting to imaginary fish. Kneel and cast, sit and cast, cast backhand cast left hand, pull your rod in half and cast just your top joint.

Learn curve casts, learn tight loops and long shooting deliveries. Learn good full-leader extension then learn the pile cast. Cast into

the wind and across the wind with the wind on your casting side. Learn what I call spatial awareness and avoid treeing your fly on the back cast.

Delivery practice

Your final practice session ideally should be on water, where you can assess your delivery technique. Learn to forcefully plop the fly down first with the leader landing gently afterward (almost a Tuck Cast), learn to fully extend the leader with high line speed and a tight loop just 2 feet above the water. This will cause some rebounded slack and land the flies like thistledown from what I call a 'gravity fall.'

The delivery that will cost you lots of fish is the 'crash landed fly and crumpled leader' that pile drives hard onto the water surface. Typically the fly lands on the water just half a leader ahead of the nail knot. The fly, leader and often the final few feet of fly line are driven down forcefully onto the surface of the water. This is a 'scare the clappers out of them' approach on a calm pool.

Now Trust It

Once you have worked on your park cast you must learn to trust it in a fishing situation. When fishing you must learn to believe in your ability, trust that your hand-eye coordination will kick in when it is required. It is OK to first study the lie, assess the current flow get spatially aware, etc., but then you must focus all your energy on the target and start swinging the rod. This is no time to think of the technical or mechanical aspects of the cast. Believe in yourself, believe you can make the shot, believe you have done it successfully one hundred times before. You can do it and you will. We are hunters by nature and this is how we hunt. You must learn to be instinctive. Never look up at your rod tip and never watch your back cast when you are looking for an accurate delivery to a fish. Simply look at the target and believe in yourself. Don't over think it under any circumstances.



Peter Hayes conducting casting workshop



We ask a simple question
And that is all we wish:
Are fishermen all liars?
Or do only liars fish?

William Sherwood Fox, *Silken Lines and Silver Hooks*

Nothing makes a fish bigger than almost being caught.

Anonymous

Fishermen are born honest, but they get over it.

Ed Zern, *Field And Stream* writer

Rod Round Robin

Craig Buckbee, MCI

err.. what? I checked the Audubon Guide - nuthin'! It's a drill: an exercise for a casting class.

Rod Round Robin, Version 1.0:

Students take their own gear out onto a large mowed field and do their best Stonehenge reenactment, better yet, they form a theatrical large clock. With a class of 12, each person is positioned at an hour on the clock, facing inward with the center target approximately 40 feet away. In this radial set-up they cast for a specific time or number of basic casts like PULDs and false casts. Two minutes or 40 casts work well. Whichever measure you choose, a cue is given and a last forward cast is presented. Casters then lay down their rods and move one station to their left, pick up that rod and resume casting. Rinse and repeat until everyone is back where they started.

My first contact with the Rod Round Robin was while attending an L.L.Bean instructor school led by Macauley Lord; more recently while teaching at the Wulff School where it goes by the title "Rod Testing." The Wulff School has a selection of rods, a collector-sized quiver of varying 5- and 6-wt rods, and a few interlopers. The rods are laid in a long line with casters working their way through the selection, similar to a volley ball team's serving rotation. Thoughtfully, it's run on the last day of school so the students with their newly collected skills get to apply and hone them. For me it's one of the high points of the weekend, witnessing student reaction(s) to the differing outfits. There are strong opinions stated, giggles heard, rods declared "*Mine!*" as well as rods put down quickly as if they were poison.

One of the cool things about doing the drill in

the round is the ability to watch the other casters. It's especially useful for eyeing the "tracking" of those directly across—which leads me to the next point about the drill: words.

Before the casting starts I give a brief how-to which includes offering a list of adjectives and terms to consider as the students make their rounds. I ask them to channel their "inner Goldilocks" (not too fast, not too slow, one that's juuust right ...) when sampling the rod and line choices of their peers—to feel the variations and note if their stroke is affected. By pairing the feel of the rod(s) to words, the casters expand their knowledge. When I tell students that a particular rod has a "strong tip," most accept it as true, better yet to have them find it so by an actual casting comparison. That term now describes something they know. It deepens their understanding and the experience is a confidence builder.

The exercise ends with a group discussion, students describe what they felt and saw. The conversation broadens their casting vocabulary, along with it their confidence to trust their observations and share them with like-minded casting enthusiasts. This may be unknown waters for some students: Many are not comfortable chatting about what they do or don't know, so here is where your having cast with the group will come in handy—you can get the conversation started by commenting on a specific outfit.

Another inroad is to ask for "favorites" or "surprises" and why. One detail that I make clear (most often with humor) is that they are about to critique their fellow students gear so keep negative comments on a leash.

Rod Round Robin, Version 2.0:

For when you want to change things up at your local club or chapter. Groups often have a number of similar, if not identical outfits. Here's how to take advantage of that situation, given that many students haven't had the opportunity to try other gear. I take a few of the rods and string them with a variety of lines, correct lines given the rod rating, but in varying designs and manufacturers, e.g., weight forwards, Triangle Tapers, double tapers, and sinking lines (such as intermediates) which cast and fish great but remain unknown to many casters.

By inverting the above, the club variation (where the rod is constant, the line is the variable) you have what my friend Larry Allen (MCI, Arizona), terms "Qualifying the Rod." On a recent trip to Arizona, Larry and I did just that. Casting at predetermined distances (starting short and then stepping back), we compared a couple of 6 weights: (1) a tip-actioned rod hot off the marketing table with (2) a blast from the past, a more full-figured rod. Each was strung with a double-taper 6-wt. floater. Handing the rods back and forth, we took turns casting at the stations. Once acclimated to the DT-6s we switched them out for DT-7s, thus bracketing the rod's reaction(s) and taking note of ours.

Rod Round Robin, Version 3.0:

The version I have come to enjoy the most—fun times with advanced casters and fellow

instructors. As with Version 1.0 Rod Round Robin, casters start with their own kits. In between, mismatched outfits (sleepers) are planted, some with major discrepancy, some minor. Will students be able to make friends with a 4-wt. line on a rod rated for a seven? ...*does the line starve the rod or the rod starve the line?* Have them cast a fast sink 7-wt. line on the omni-present 5-wt. rod ...*what kind of marriage is this?!* The standard weight-forward spooled backward (surprisingly common and brilliant for testing an aspiring instructor) and the devious level line are both challenging combinations. (A dirty level line is pure evil.) Let them experience "kick" by truncating a leader on an otherwise well matched outfit. Are you sensing a theme here?

I didn't make up many of these "marriages made in hell," my students arrived with them. Gear is acquired by all sorts of means, gifted, donated, willed or bartered away from a garage sale. It's been repaired, reconfigured, collaged—some with patina well-preserved. Learning to identify and fix offending elements will help move your students forward, enabled rather than hindered by their gear.

These drills can be quite challenging and entertaining—chicanery for the sake of progress. The Rod Round Robin is casting with other casters and other gear....cross pollination.



There is no substitute for fishing sense, and if a man does not have it, verily he may cast like an angel and still use his creel largely to transport sandwiches and beer.

Robert Traver, (nom de plume of **John Voelker**), from *Trout Madness*

The Short Stop Drill

Larry Allen, MCI

I've used the Short Stop Drill successfully in casting lessons for many years. I use it the most for the advanced casters who has a "hump" in the lower leg of their longer back casts. This would be the kind of problem that results from stopping below 180 degrees from the target line. I also use it as a fix for "lazy stops" that make a larger loop than desired.

When we are beginners, the stop move takes many inches to execute. As casting skills progress, the stop distance (like braking distance on a sports car versus an old beater) starts to become smaller and smaller. The quicker and shorter the stop, the faster the line speed and more loop control. This is a drill to get the stop move to be compact and at a controlled 180 degrees from the target line.

How It Works

Start with the line out on the ground (not water) in front of you at 40-45 feet. Raise the rod to about 10 o'clock and then with a dead line, snap your best back cast high on a 180-degree path from where you started. After this becomes routine, then try for 10:30 and then 11 o'clock.—Again a dead stick to a sudden tip-snap back cast. Try to see how vertical you can have the rod and still get a

back cast off that is nice and on a 180-degree path behind you. With practice, the snap can be as little as a few inches.

You can let out more and more line and repeat the drill on both front and back casts.

The follow-up for this is to get out as much line as you can carry and then make single back casts from a dead stick—but with a haul. (Rod tip touching the ground for starting the back cast). Then for the forward cast, lay the line out straight behind you, then turn to face the target. Get the elbow in and pointed at the target line so that you will use your triceps and shoulder muscles. Now gradually accelerate to a very hard and short stop and then shoot line. For this to work, the stop will need to be at the very end of the stroke. If it is not, then the line will shoot high. This means keeping the wrist "cocked" until the end and then a distinct wrist snap for the long distances.

After these drills go back to your normal cast and try to feel for the short stop. Make the power application close to the 11 o'clock position like you did during the drill. I hope that this will be a useful drill for your bag of tricks.



Often I have been exhausted on trout streams, uncomfortable, wet, cold, briar scarred, sunburned, mosquito bitten, but never with a fly rod in my hand have I been less than in a place that was less than beautiful.

Charles Kuralt, newsman, fisherman

Continuous Education: Presentation and Style

Brian McGlashan, MCI, APGAI



It is coming to the end of winter as I write this article and I am looking forward to the new season and new challenges. It also got me thinking of the first CE (continuing education) Day in mid-February. The event had been organised as a joint venture with IFFF Members and other instructors from GAIA, which I am also a member of. There were instructors from all over Scotland and even a couple from England attending. The Event was on the banks of the River Forth with the backdrop of Stirling Castle, but my thought was not on Scottish history, it was purely on making the day a success.

Presentation

As instructors we know how important it is to keep up to speed on our casting and teaching skills, but what is equally important is how we present ourselves. After all, we are generally the first thing that our clients see, long before we explain the mechanics of an overhead cast or demonstrate a roll cast.

So I decided to include in the CE Day a section during the day where each attendee would present a short 10 minute demonstration on a given subject.

The newcomers looked a little nervous so I tried to put them at ease as I did the first demo that came out of the hat—spey casting with a single-handed rod.

I presented the demo and thought I had explained it well enough. Then the next person did his piece. By the time all had done their presentations the banter was flowing and there was a relaxed ambiance about the place.

It had worked as I'd hoped it would and I aim to use the same format in future gatherings.

Style

A short while later the only lady in the group approached me as I was setting up another rod and asked if she could ask a question. She said that she didn't want to ask in front of the group as she thought it a stupid question. I told her no questions were stupid. She asked, "What is your teaching style?"

The question threw me as I had never been asked nor had I really thought about it.

But now it had got me thinking.

My style started years ago. I had arrived a day early for my forthcoming assessment to become an instructor and I decided, as my mends were a bit ropey, I would work on them.

As I worked away I noticed a guy standing watching. After a short time he approached and we started chatting. I told him why I was there and that I was struggling with this particular task, so he offered to help.

He explained how to do it in a nice, easy, clear manner but I was still a bit tense. Although he had explained it about five times, I was still struggling. We stopped and he asked if he could ask me a question and I said go ahead.

"Have you got cloth lugs, (meaning are you deaf)?" I burst out laughing. The tenseness left and I completed the task. "I like your style," I said. "That's how I'm going to teach." Thanks, Philip Maher.

So that is where I started to develop a teaching style.

It has evolved since then by the many instructors I have come in contact with. Guys like Leslie Holmes who I spent many hours learning assessor skills. William Holmes, for

his easy manner. Guys like Pete Greenan and Dusty Sprague for saying “Great cast, Brian” when I had just got hung up on another mangrove. And the books I have read. Lefty Kreh, Joan Wulff, Charles Ritz and a wee peach that I use it all the time from Macaulay Lord (“casting is like snowdrops, no two are the same.”); Gordy Hill and all the members of his study group. There are so many others I can mention.

I conduct and attend as many continuing education events as I possibly can as to me they are important elements to keeping

myself current. OK, they cost money but I do not look on that as money spent, to me it is money invested. I have never come away from an event thinking I did not learn anything. I know I never will.

I think style is developed on our continuing journey of fly casting/fishing and is one of the elements that keep us going back for more. I look forward to it.

So, when that woman asked me what is my style, I answered her: “It is a work in progress.”



Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.

Henry David Thoreau,

American author, naturalist, transcendentalist, tax register

What Is Stop?

Soon S. Lee, CBOG, THCI



In the first of this series on loop dynamics the author expressed his personal understanding of true loop, wide loop, open loop and non-loop (“A Maze of Loops,” *The Loop*, December 2012). In the second of the series, the author submitted that casting stroke governs the profile of the upper leg (“What Is Casting Stroke?” *The Loop*, March 2013). This third of the series is the author’s thoughts on “stop.”

What is “stop the rod?”

In fly casting, “stop the rod” means more than *make the rod come to a halt*. “Stop the rod” is the traditional exhortation to *let the line go*. “Stop” launches fly line.

In a casting stroke with rod tip traveling a straight line path (SLP), the rod tip is bent (flexed) by the weight of the fly line in tow. When we stop the rod butt/hand, the rod tip unbends (counter-flexes). As the rod tip deviates from its SLP the trailing line overtakes the rod tip and launches as an energized straight upper leg. The unbending rod tip travels a convex tip-path until it comes to a halt at maximum counter-flex. At the same time, because the proximal end of the fly line is “tethered” to the rod tip, a line loop forms. The width of this loop is potentially determined by the extent of rod tip travel after the line launches.

Line launch

Fly line is launched when the line separates from the course traveled by the rod tip during casting stroke. In non-loop, the fly line departs from the rod tip path in a cartwheel fashion. Only in casting stroke with SLP does an energized straight fly line overtake the rod tip in the direction of rod tip travel.

In Gowan’s adaptation of Løvoll’s graphics, video resolution is unable to separate rod tip path from fly line profile as the rod tip rotates from the point of line launch to RSP-1. Whether or not this

“Stop”

When we stop the rod, rod tip deviates from its SLP.

How Line Launches

- With rod tip counterflex, rod tip effectively decelerates in the direction of SLP.
- Line overtakes rod tip and launches as straight upper leg.

Gowan’s Adaptation of Løvoll’s Graphics

Superposition of graphics from 500fps video by Grunde Lovoll
For more information see <http://theflycastersociety.com/casting-essentials/stop-straight-line-path-of-the-rod-tip/>
<http://reelvers.com/Video/238295/paradigm-1/>

means that the rod tip is still leading the fly line is debatable. Yet this has contributed to the notion that rotation in casting stroke is absolutely necessary to launch a true loop, and, as a corollary, that translation by itself cannot.

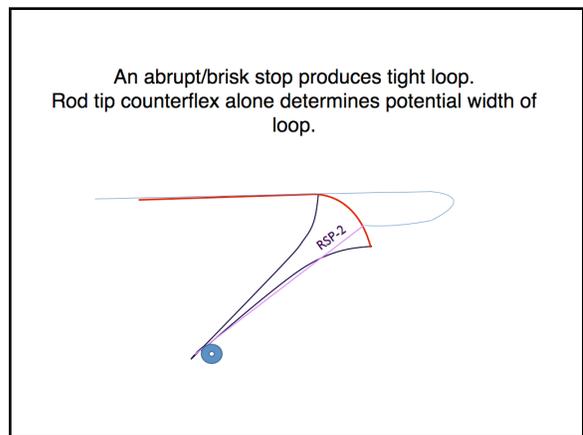
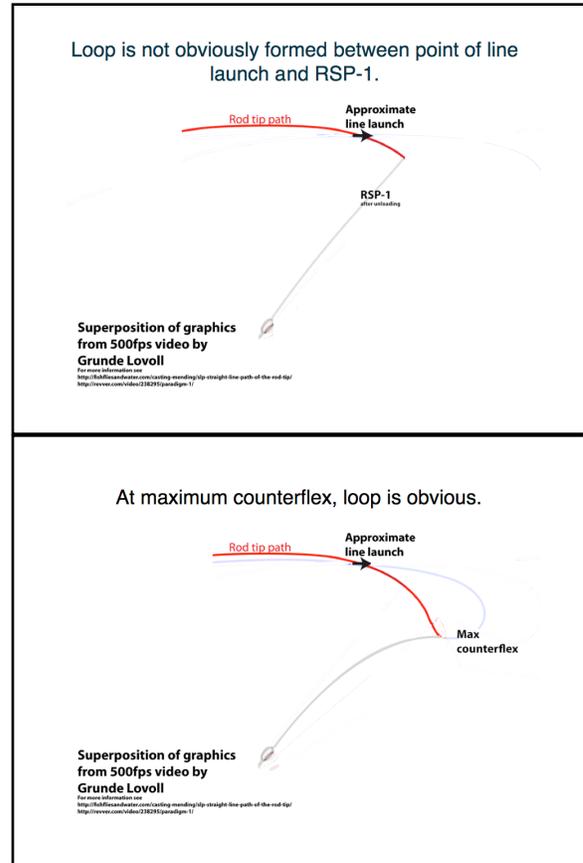
A purely translational casting stroke can throw a true loop. With a rod held steady at any angle and carrying a short line, say, five feet, develop rod tip SLP with a translational casting stroke. Then slightly but precipitously drop the rod tip (by dropping the rod hand vertically, still keeping the rod at the same canted angle). Deviation of the rod tip from its SLP launches a straight upper leg and a true loop.

For a long line carry we do need rotational rod movement, but that is only because we need to power the smooth acceleration necessary to keep the rod tip traveling in SLP. In fly casting, rotation of the rod tip at “stop” is merely the way rod tip deviates from SLP. It may be more properly said that it is the translational acceleration of the rod tip that is absolutely necessary to throw a true loop. Rotation in casting stroke is only the means to this end.

“Stop” and loop size/shape

The appreciation of loop size is subjective. We do not measure loop width at a stipulated location on a loop. To the author, loop size is best expressed as its overall width in the front half of the unrolling loop.

- Tight loop is the narrowest true loop normally produced by a given rod and a set line carry. SLP ends with a brisk “stop.” A brisk “stop” results when we tighten our grip on the rod butt —the hand “freezes to stone”—to bring the rod butt to a dead halt. Rod tip counter-flex alone causes deviation of rod tip from SLP, and maximum counter-flex alone determines the potential width of the loop. The result is an energized straight upper leg that is parallel and close to a lower leg.
- A more relaxed, gradual “stop” produces a wider loop. At the end of SLP we make a



deliberate rod angular rotation at the rod butt to deviate the rod tip from SLP before freezing the hand to a halt. Here rod angular rotation plus rod tip counter-flex determine the potential width of the loop. The straight upper leg is now farther apart from its parallel lower leg: tight loop has now merged into wide loop.

- There is a limit to how much rod angular rotation we may apply. So to widen the loop further we raise the trajectory of the SLP. This allows an even more extended “stop” to bring the rod to a halt. The profile of the upper leg is now dome-shaped. The rod tip is said to have traveled a convex tip path. Thus wide loop merges into open loop.
- As the trajectory of the SLP is raised higher and higher, SLP eventually becomes insignificant—when open loop merges into non-loop. Because the flexible fly rod loads (bends) when picking up slack, unadulterated non-loop with no trace of SLP is rare in practice.

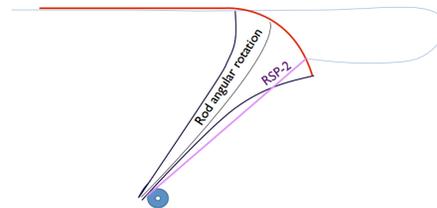
In essence there are two ways to widen a loop. One way is to have a casting stroke with SLP and a gradual “stop” to produce wide loop. The other is to have casting stroke with convex tip path to produce open loop.

Upper leg and loop size

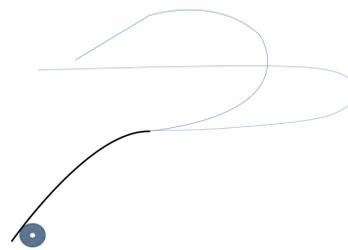
While loop size is governed by “stop,” a secondary role is played by the kinetic energy invested in the upper leg. In a 170° casting stroke for distance, there is an exaggerated rod angular rotation before the rod butt is brought to a halt. The loop begins widely as the line is launched, but the energy invested in the upper leg draws the lower leg close as the loop unrolls toward its target. The bulbous nascent loop morphs into a narrow front end.

A 170° cast is also said to be an example of a “stopless” cast because the fly line launches at a place and time quite remote from the moment when the rod butt freezes to a halt. Such a label

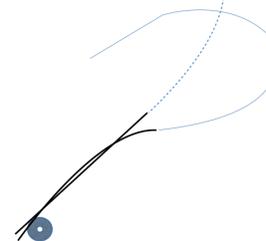
Deliberate rod angular rotation before bringing rod to a halt produces wide loop.
Rod angular rotation plus rod tip counterflex determine potential width of loop.



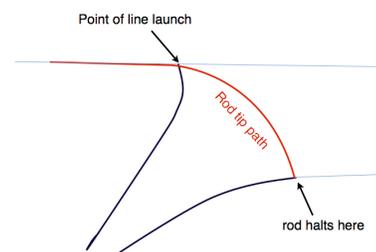
An open loop is a large loop with a dome-shaped upper leg profile
A wide loop has straight upper leg



In open loop the dome-shaped upper leg includes a short length of straight leg.
Non-loop does not have SLP: line cartwheels off rod tip.



In a very wide loop, rod may come to a halt quite a while away from moment of line launch.



is misleading because “stop” is a process to launch line, not merely the cessation of rod motion. The instant line launches, the process of “stop” has begun. For a true loop there is no such thing as a stopless cast.

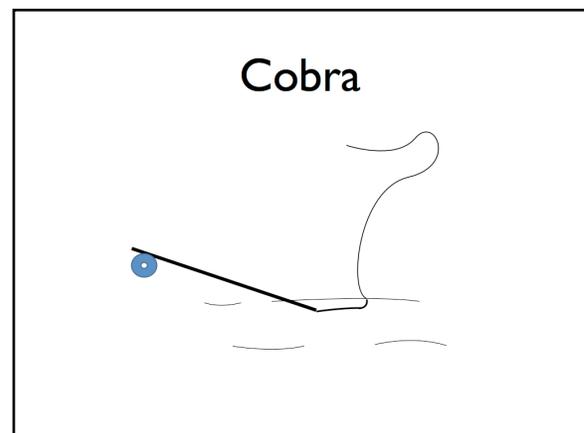
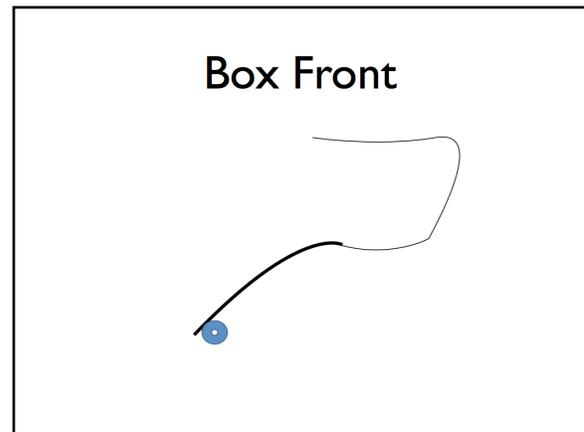
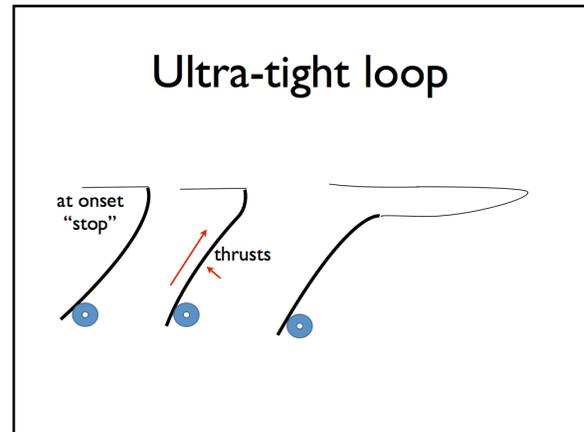
Loop shape: manipulating “stop”

We can influence how the rod tip travels to end at maximum counter-flex during “stop.”

- Ultra-tight loop: The loop may be made narrower than tight. Rod tip counter-flex may be calculatedly restricted by stiffening the rod shaft during “stop” so that rod bend is limited to the very distal end of the rod. This is accomplished by a thrusting (often assisted by a lift) of the rod shaft along its axis at the end of casting stroke as the caster “runs out of arm.” It helps to have a highly energized upper leg to draw the lower leg close. Also, stopping the rod tip high minimizes the vertical distance between point of line launch and maximum counter-flex.

- “Box front”: At the end of a casting stroke with SLP, immediately drop the rod hand (and therefore the rod tip) vertically and briefly so that rod tip counter-flex ends at a sizable vertical distance away from SLP. The usual rounded front end of the loop becomes “boxy.” This cast supports the observation that rod tip rotation is not necessary to throw a straight upper leg.

- “Cobra”: Tailing loop is the result of a casting stroke with dipping rod tip path (instead of SLP). Such a casting stroke normally finishes with a brisk “stop.” However, an extended “stop” with added rod angular rotation can be contrived (as described above for wide loop). As a result it widens up the loop and ameliorates the tailing (this is a useful manipulation to counteract the tendency to tail in a steeple cast). When this “stop” is greatly enlarged however so that rod tip descends all the way to the water, a “cobra” is thrown. The line lands in a pile at the distal end.



Summary

Definition: The “stop” process begins when rod tip deviates from SLP and ends when rod tip halts at maximum counter-flex. “Stop” launches fly line. “Stop” governs loop size and shape.

“Stop” Governs Loop Size And Shape

Video Presentation

Soon S. Lee, CBOG, THCI



This video presentation is an attempt by the author to show that during “stop”, rod hand movement influences rod tip motion which in turn governs the size and shape of the loop that is produced. The author apologizes for the poor visibility of the fly line (from inferior camera and poor photographic technique), but humbly pleads that in many instances, it is the rod hand and the fly rod flex that attention should be paid to.

The video clips below are in a youtube presentation: click [here](#).



From Gordy Hill's Master Study Group A Conversation on Fly Casting Mechanics

Lefty Kreh: I've been reading on [Gordy Hill's Masters Study Group] about loop formation and often resulting line shock-waves. I think you'll agree you make a cast the same way you throw a spear or a Frisbee®. There is a slow acceleration of the hand, then gradual acceleration, and in the final moment you accelerate a little faster to a stop. The more you dip the fly rod or follow through after the stop, the larger the loop. If you want to throw a gentle slack-line cast you accelerate slower through the stroke and stop. If you want to throw a longer cast, all acceleration is increased from beginning to the stop. For me, the actual stop is the same for a 20-foot cast as it is for casting the line many times farther.

Gordy Hill: Agree in that the stop should be the same for short and long casts. In each case, the more rapidly you come to a stop, and the more complete the stop, the more efficient the cast. The physicists (including Noel Perkins of the University of Michigan) and Bruce Richards with the Casting Analyzer (which accurately measures angular acceleration of the rod butt, and therefore the hand) have shown that the amount of acceleration, while important, is not as important to the efficiency of the cast as the fact that it must be SMOOTH or (almost) CONSTANT acceleration. No sudden additional burst of energy at the end of the cast.

Lefty Kreh: If I lay the line on the ground behind me and my hand starts moving slowly but smoothly (of course I agree and should have written smoothly), then I go a little faster and near the very end if I again smoothly make a more rapid acceleration of the hand then stop—to this untutored caster I have used three different acceleration rates. With many short casts when freshwater trout fishing I start very slowly and only during the final monument smoothly make a speed up and stop—two very different rates of acceleration. Seems to me I am not making a "smooth and constant" rate of hand speed. Maybe I am not understanding the technical description of constant—I think of constant as the same, the dictionary says it is "continuous."

Gordy Hill: Lefty, by "constant" we mean a continuous increase in speed. Since the speed is in one direction, we call it "velocity." You may be getting closer to "constant," smooth acceleration than you think. By the term, "CONSTANT ACCELERATION" the scientists mean a steady rate of increase in velocity without interruption.

Bruce Richards and physicist Noel Perkins came up with the Casting Analyzer, which attaches to the butt of a fly rod and yields a computer readout as it measures rotational acceleration of the rod butt during the cast. By "constant" they really mean "almost constant," since there is never an absolutely constant acceleration curve with human beings moving the rod.

I like to look at the size of the loop as being partly determined by where the rod unloads at the end of the cast. If it unloads close to the oncoming line as the line overtakes the rod tip, you get a small loop. If it unloads way below (or beyond) the rod tip, you get a big loop.

Lefty Kreh: I think what you are scientifically saying is maybe what I've been saying unscientifically. I never talk about unloading a rod. I will say that the rod bends to store energy that can be delivered on the cast.

Something that has really helped my students the past few years to throw tighter loops and longer casts with less effort is to ask them to look at either the hand or the rod tip (whichever seems to work best for them) and try to make the hand or tip travel in a straight line during false casting—especially during the forward cast. Of course the rod tip travels in a slight curve when the hand travels in a straight path, but if the hand/ tip is traveling in a straight path during the stop, the line seems to throw a light loop. If there is any follow-through after the stop, the rod tip drags the loop open, and the more the tip drops from the straight path on the stop, the larger the loop— regardless of the DIRECTION of the stop.

Gordy Hill: Yes. Another way to look at it is that this (almost) straight-line path of the rod tip yields a straight rod leg (upper leg) of the loop. This goes a long way toward forming a tight loop. Of course, if you don't dip the rod tip a tiny bit away from the oncoming line, you will get a collision between the line and the rod tip. Dip that tip way down away from the line, and it opens up the loop. To make an (almost) straight-line path of the tip of a flexible fly rod, the bend of the rod must match the casting arc, which I see as: "The Angular change in rod position during the casting stroke."

Lefty Kreh: Decades ago I stopped using the term "power or power stroke." I believe fly-casting is not using power, but it is the use of acceleration to a stop. This past weekend at L.L. Bean I was casting a full length of a 5-wt fly line—at 88 I have no power—but I am still able to accelerate and stop. When years ago I used the power stroke expression, students tended applying muscular "force," and I know "force" may not be the scientific name but that is what causes so many casting mistakes.

Gordy Hill: Yes. Unfortunate that the physicists teach that "force" is the correct term. I agree that what we need to do is to ACCELERATE TO A STOP for best results. For students it may be better to avoid terms like "force" and "power," whether correct or not.

Lefty Kreh: I'm glad you agree. . . . At L.L. Bean, more than a dozen people came out and obviously were using a power stroke to end the cast. Within minutes I had them accelerating (just like throwing a Frisbee), then faster and stop —and their lines smoothed out and their loops tightened. There were no line shock waves when they simply stopped.

Gordy Hill: This makes good sense to me. If you accelerate at one rate, then change it to a greater acceleration at the end of the cast as a sudden burst of power (power stroke) and then stop, vibrations occur. If you go ever faster as the result of smooth acceleration to a stop, fewer unwanted vibrations occur.

Lefty Kreh: See above comment about constant acceleration. I certainly agree that the smoother the stroke the better the cast. That is why I emphasize that are no separate "parts" to a cast.

For some time I have put more emphasis on what the hand is doing than what the rod tip does. Your cast starts and ends with your hand. The rod is simply a servant to what the hand tells it to do. If the hand, at the end of the cast, simply accelerates to a stop—without violence or a power stroke, the cast immediately improves at least for my students.

Gordy Hill: Yes. Does for my students, too. Keep it SMOOTH.

This also fits with our latest considered definition of COMPLETE STROKE LENGTH: "The distance moved by the rod hand during the fly cast."

Lefty Kreh: I find [that by] getting students to concentrate on what the hand is doing, they are better able to understand [rather] than thinking about a tip's action nine feet away.

Sometime what scientists say to me seems to express something else. When you mentioned "without interruption," that helps me understand that constant is constant, but I think the rod hand does change acceleration rate (although smoothly) throughout the cast.

Gordy Hill: Lefty, I'm a surgeon. . .not a physical scientist. But I wanted to learn. For a long time, I, too, thought that for the most efficient casts, we had different rates of acceleration. The scientific guys taught me I was wrong on that point. I even coined the term "accelerated acceleration" to (wrongly) describe what I thought was happening with fly casts.

THEN. . .The scientists who were using instruments and calculations to actually measure these things taught me that even though it seemed as though the best casters were using more than one mode of acceleration as they cast, the instruments showed that the most efficient casts were made with as smooth and unchanging progression of velocity as possible and that this could be seen as a steady rate of change or (almost) "constant" acceleration to a stop sequence. That stop sequence being the most rapid deceleration (slow down) that the caster is capable of making, to a complete stop in the shortest time possible.

This fits best with what you said, above: "[Lefty] See above comment about constant acceleration. I certainly agree that the smoother the stroke the better the cast. That is why I emphasize that are no separate "parts" to a cast."

I learned that scientifically speaking, acceleration IS a rate and that it isn't proper to discuss a "rate of a rate."

I wondered about a rocket which does seem to have a changing acceleration curve. One of the scientists informed me that this could be described as something called "third order progression." Different than the acceleration of a fly rod. My head was spinning! Now I know I'll never be a rocket scientist.

Lefty Kreh: Thanks Gordy— I'm sometimes glad I don't have a college education for I think it causes me to think in more simple terms—other times I wish I better understood the more technical stuff. I've enjoyed our back and forth and learned as usual.

Gordy Hill: Lefty, over the years, I've learned a lot more from you than you could ever learn from me. This is why I spent whole days having you teach me your ways of getting great results as you teach students to cast.

I'll never forget the time we were on a flats skiff in the Bahamas, many years ago. I was using poor application of force at the end of my cast and my layout was not good. You said, "Gordy, don't use any more power on your cast than you did on your last false cast. Just haul faster. Let your haul be your accelerator."

No science, just plain words. Worked like a charm. So many ways of teaching. The best thing is that we who love fly casting teach one another!!!

Casting Instructor Certification Program: Activities

Somerset Fly Show CICP Program - 2013

Gary Kell, MCI

On January 26th in Somerset NJ, during the annual Somerset Fly Fishing Show, over two dozen IFFF professional instructors met. Most were seeking to renew friendships, spin tall tales, share trade secrets, and learn all they could from each other to become the best teachers and casters that they can be!

The Casting Instructor's Workshop featured presentations by MCI's Rod McGarry, Gary Kell, Bill Whitebread, Dan Davala, and John Bilotta. CBOG Jim Valle, originator of the Somerset CICP program, also participated as advisor and presenter, bringing us up to date on issues being dealt with at the Board level.

Rod McGarry led a high energy interactive discussion on how to become a more effective instructor in such a way that each participant was able to not only share their own ideas but take away new tools, tactics and techniques for their own use back home. Of course the "candy bar" incentives given to the most appropriate and active participants were quite popular!!

Using concepts and information from Soon Lee's articles on loops, Gary Kell and Bill Whitebread led an intense but revealing segment on understanding, analyzing, defining, and describing different loop shapes. The participants were divided into groups with each group receiving a graphic depiction of a "loop" shape. Each group was asked to name the loop, describe its characteristics and how it was formed, define

its purpose in fishing, and then identify corrections, as necessary, to change it into an efficient narrow loop. As you would expect, pandemonium erupted as everyone struggled with the details! Each group presented its findings and in the end each participant came away with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the definitions and concepts brought out by Soon Lee and others.

The workshop finished with a discussion led by Dan Davala and John Bilotta on organizing and teaching large groups. Dan and John shared their experience working with their local casting club, the Orvis 101 sessions, and the VA Fly Fishing Festival.

Also during the Somerset Fly Show MCI Bill Whitebread coordinated the testing of seven candidates for certification—two for MCI and five for CI. Congratulations to Kevney Moses, Brett Miles, and Peter Kutzer on passing their CI exam.

In addition, three 45 minute presentations on How To Become an IFFF Certified Instructor were given by MCI Gary Kell, as part of the Somerset Fly Show program schedule. Around 10 people attended these presentations.

Everyone in attendance is looking forward to next year. Thanks to all the instructors for their presence, their participation, and their leadership in making this a fun and rewarding event.



Rod McGarry conducting his workshop

Somerset Continuing Education
Workshop
January 2013

The Candy Bar (Snickers) Incentive



Bulletin

As reported by
[Jaymi Heimbuch](#)
Treehugger.com
October 10, 2011

Golf course in Brisbane, video link:
<http://youtu.be/njmmjVTwFz>

I thought it was only in cartoons that a place would have a shark-infested lake in a random place like a golf course, but apparently it is reality in Australia. After a flood several years ago, a handful of bull sharks found themselves stranded in a lake on a golf course (video link above).



Bull sharks are able to survive in fresh water and rather than this lake posing an issue for survival, the six sharks have thrived -- and even started breeding. Bull sharks are able to survive in brackish and fresh water, and have been known to swim far up rivers and hang out for months and even years at a time. However, living in lakes is something quite rare.



Check out vintage fly fishing short featuring Lee Wulff on the Miramichi in New Brunswick.
Link: <http://youtu.be/-Q6-6A3vCpo>

NEW IFFF CERTIFIED CASTING INSTRUCTORS

January 2013 through April 2013

First Name	Last Name	Country	Test
Ethan	Emery	United States	CI
Michael	Houx	United States	CI
Joe	Chiu	United States	CI
Jean-Phillip	Tessier	Canada	CI
Peter	Kutzer	United States	CI
Jose Isaias	Rodriguez	Belize	CI
Alex	Gomez	Belize	CI
Luis	Paz	Belize	CI
Lori Ann	Murphy	United States	CI
Benjamin	Somsen	United States	CI
Margaret	LeBien	United States	CI
John and Gini	McCain	United States	CI
Lars	Broberg	Denmark	CI
Lone	Vang	Denmark	CI
Patrick	Blessing	Germany	CI
Andy	Meadows	United States	CI
Scott	Flear	Canada	CI
Leon	Kowalski	Australia	CI
Patrick	Brennan	Australia	CI
Shane	Broadby	Australia	CI
Judith	Oliver	Australia	CI
Gunawan	Tjandra	Indonesia	CI
Heriady	Gunawan Tjhin	Indonesia	CI
Ian	Sambell	Australia	CI
Brett	Fazackerley	Australia	CI
Jonathan	Lancaster	United States	CI
Brian	Slusser	United States	CI
Bill	Mai	United States	CI
Dok	Arvanites	United States	MCI
Thorsten	Struben	Germany	MCI
Whitney	Gould	United States	THCI