

## **Three Points**

by the Board of Governors  
(reprinted from the Loop)

Some months ago I asked my fellow Board of Governors members to list three points that each member personally felt were of top importance for Basics aspiring to take Master's exams. I said it could be anything from a certain casting skill, to the understanding of particular how/why relationships, to knowledge of other instructors' works, or whatever came to mind. To keep it all succinct, I also asked for each point to be restricted to three sentences or less. What follows are the results, listed by the BOG member's name in alphabetical order.

### **Gary Borger:**

1. It is essential that Master's candidates have read at least the current literature on casting and the teaching thereof. No man is an island, and trying to reinvent the wheel is not the best use of one's time. Besides, knowing how others think helps one's own thinking processes.
2. Master's candidates should know more than one way to explain a technique. All explanations should be clear and concise. Explanations that are stumbling, unclear, and/or rambling indicate the candidate has not thought enough about the topic, indicate that the candidate has probably not taught about the subject, and/or indicate that the candidate is trying to bluff his/her way through.
3. The candidate should understand the dynamics of casting and line handling as related to actual fishing experiences; in other words, the candidate should have used the casts and handling tactics. The candidate should be ready and able to give examples of times and places where the tactics were used and how they solved a particular problem or set of problems involving actual fishing situations.

### **Jason Borger:**

1. A Master will be teaching teachers. Do you know enough of other casters' literary work, teaching paradigms, and your own instructional organization to educate another educator?
2. Know the why of casting. Showing a bunch of how actions is great, but why do you do what you do (eg. Why tip your wrist at the end of the stroke?)? Many candidates get stuck here.
3. Be competent in your physical skills. A competent Master should be able to do whatever is asked on command without excessive effort. A Master should also be able to show a full range of skills, including lon-distance ability, specialty casts and mends, and at least the foundation Speys (forward, single, double).

### **Dave Engerbretson:**

A good casting instructor.....

1. ...must have a solid foundation in casting mechanics.
2. ...must be able to accurately analyze casting strokes for all types of casts.

3. ...must have a wide variety of instructional techniques, tips, and tricks available to instruct those who learn in a variety of ways, and who have a wide range of abilities, backgrounds, and experiences.

**Floyd Franke:**

1. Concentrate on learning the casting fundamentals not casting styles.
2. Get at least one year (100 hours) of supervised, on-the-job teaching experience under a Master.
3. When you do take the Master's exam, be prepared to defend or otherwise expand upon your answers.

**Phil Gay:**

1. Extensive teaching experience
2. A working knowledge of the casting/teaching techniques of the published gurus (eg. Gary Borger, Joan Wulff, Lefty Kreh, Mel Krieger, etc.)
3. Be able to detail casting mechanics forwards and backwards, to include the rights and wrongs.
  - A. Solid, casting mechanics. Able to easily complete all aspects of the performance exams.

**Jim Green:**

Knowing how to cast properly is important, but the person taking the Master's exam should prove that they know how to *teach*.

**Mel Krieger:**

1. An extremely well-controlled fly line in casts up to 45 feet.
2. A broad knowledge of the totality of fly fishing – including warm water, salt water, two-handed rods, Spey casting, etc.
3. An intimate knowledge of the current popular styles involved in Fly fishing as well as the substance (the mechanics) of a fly cast.

**Al Kyte:**

I believe that the casting demands of the Master certification have sometimes left an impression that casting skill is all we are concerned with. I have observed a lack of important preparation in three other areas:

1. Casting knowledge lags behind casting skill. With some casters, I have been reminded of a bear that has been trained to ride a motorcycle; it performs impressively but cannot tell me much about what is happening. The Master Instructor's knowledge should include (among other things) an understanding of the distinction between the substance and style of a cast as well as the ability to analyze different styles.
2. teaching approaches are often too narrow. Evaluating 'teaching effectiveness' is subjective at best, because there are different models of good teaching. However, I believe a 'master' teacher should be able to demonstrate several very different teaching

styles and be well versed in the various ‘teaching cues’ of our best-known casting teachers and authors.

3. Fly fishing knowledge and skills are too narrow. Many fly fishers today have caught trout, salmon and steelhead, black bass, bonefish and tarpon as well as other fish, leading to a concept of ‘mastery’ that covers a broad range of fly fishing experience. Where a gap in experience exists, I believe the applicant needs to learn specialty casts and knots and read extensively to understand as much about that type of fly fishing as possible. I believe, for example, he/she should be able to teach an effective tarpon cast without having fished for one.

#### **Macauley Lord:**

1. Attempt to spend an hour or two with a member of the Board of Governors or a Master Instructor before you test. Have them critique your casting and ask them for help with any aspects of the performance test about which you are uncomfortable. If this is not possible, ask the best casting instructor you know for the same kind of help.
2. Since most of the questions in the oral exam require answers of no more than a few words or a couple of sentences, answer each question with as few words as humanly possible.
3. The most common fault I’ve seen in the casting performance test is an inability to make consistent tight-loop backcasts. Be sure that your backcast loops appear identical to your forward cast loops.

#### **Denise Maxwell:**

1. Preparation. Preparation is the key to success! Prepare their own casting for demonstration and instruction. Prepare their lesson plans.
2. Practice, practice, practice.

#### **Steve Rajeff:**

1. Be an expert in explaining the basics, including: Loop formation and common problems, stroke, double haul, roll casting, casting in the wind.
2. Become an expert caster yourself: Have you been casting weekly within the past year? Saltwater guys/gals learn the freshwater casts, mending line, etc. Freshwater guys/gals learn saltwater casts, wind casts, casting big flies, etc.
3. Become familiar with two-handed casting and the three most common casts: Overhead, Single Spey, and Double Spey.

#### **Bruce Richards:**

1. Make sure you can concisely explain the cause and cure of all casting flaws. Using more words than needed is often confusing to students, and won’t impress anyone during the test.
2. Be sure you can perform all the casts easily, the first time.
3. If you are not sure you are fully prepared for all three parts of the test (oral exam, casting performance, instructional ability) arrange to spend some time with either a certified Master or a Board of Governors member to do a ‘pre-test’. It can save you time, money and prevent disappointment.

### **Allan & Barbara Rohrer:**

1. **Masters Oral Test Questions.**
  - a. *The teaching part.* A complete understanding of all nine of the questions, and to be able to explain to the examiner all questions easily and correctly.
  - b. *Casting part.* Be able to explain all the questions pertaining to casting faults portions easily and correctly , as well as other parts the examiner should have asked.
  - c. *Tackle part.* The examiner should ask at least fifty percent of the questions and the person should be able to answer them easily and correctly.
  - d. *Fishing part.* Same as the above.
2. **Performance Test.** The person performing the Master's performance test should be able to do all the testing requirements easily and effortlessly and leave no doubt in the mind of the examiner that they are fully capable of meeting all the requirements listed.
3. **Teaching Ability.** The applicant should be able to leave no doubt in the mind of the examiner they are able to easily explain their teaching and instructing methods of fly casting. Also, they must have a good understanding of the various casts, (Roll cast, False cast, Single & Double haul, loop control, and mending line) and how to teach them.

### **Lou Tabory:**

1. Teach!
2. Communicate better!
3. Continue to learn more!

### **John Van Dalen:**

1. Concise, correct, and easily understood answers to oral questions.
2. Concise, correct, and logical teaching explanations.
3. Excellent loop control in casting.

**Tom White:** These are the three most problematic skills of both (levels of) candidates:

1. **Short Loading.** For example, 15 feet of six-weight fly line out the tip of a six-weight rod loads like 30 feet of a three-weight line. Use only the first half of the rod to make the cast.
2. **Trajectory.** Again with 15 feet of line out. The trajectory of the line plane is about 45 degrees, and the stroke is shortened considerably.
3. **Tip Casting Plane.** The tip must track an imaginary straight line from front to back, on both casts. "Doming" is the result of allowing the tip to go "over" the casting plane, resulting in scattering the fly line and not forming a loop!

*Well there it all is, the words from the horses' ouths. If you're Basic certified and looking to move up, you should now have a better idea of what testers feel are the most important aspects of a Master – Ed(Jason Borger, Winter 2000).*