



# The Tailing Loop

*The Federation of Fly Fishers Newsletter for Casting Instructors*  
*Summer 1995*

## Revised Casting Program Introduced

*by Larry Watson*

Following several months of discussion and consideration, a completely revised Casting Certification Program has been approved by the FFF Officer Team and Executive Committee of the Board of Governors. This new program has several significant changes and improvements. Certification is now being offered for casting only in addition to certification of casting instructors. Also, a Master Casting Instructor Certification is now offered in addition to Basic Instructor Certification.

As an educational organization, the Federation wanted to establish a program to teach those entering the sport or seeking to improve their casting skills. To this end, casting certification is now offered at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. Certification will be given for those who successfully pass a proficiency test. The cost is \$30 and is non-refundable. All participants must also be members of the FFF. Upon successful completion, the participant will receive a certificate suitable for framing. There is no renewal and a person can enter the program at any level.

In response to comments and suggestions received concerning the initial Casting Instructor Certification Program, several significant curriculum and structural changes have been made. The program has been strengthened to insure that instructors receiving certification are capable of teaching proper casting technique and to further insure that these individuals are serious about what they are doing.

Requirements for Basic Casting Instructor Certification are: 1) attending a workshop on teaching casting conducted by at least one member of the Board of Governors or two Certified Master Casting Instructors, 2) passing a teaching and fly casting performance test, 3) passing a written test consisting of true/false, multiple choice and essay questions. The fee for the workshop and testing is \$50 and the fee for certification of passed instructors is an additional \$50.

The test for Master Certification must be conducted by two members of the Board of Governors, and certifica-

tion requires the approval of both. In order to receive Master Certification, participants must: 1) have already passed Basic Instructor Certification, 2) pass a teaching and fly casting performance test, 3) provide an instructional analysis of casting faults (performed by testers), 4) successfully provide teaching methodology, 5) pass a written test consisting of multiple choice, true/false and essay questions, 6) pass an oral examination. The fee for the workshop and testing is \$100 and the fee for certification of passed instructors is an additional \$50.

All participants must be members of the FFF. Annual renewal fees for the basic and master instructor certification is \$25 and will require the completion of a questionnaire.

If you would like more information on the new program, please send your written request to: FFF, Casting Certification Program, P.O. Box 1595, Bozeman, MT 59771.

International Fly Fishing Show & Conclave, Livingston, Montana, August 7-12:

Board of Governors Meeting, August 7, 9am - noon

Masters Certification, August 7, 1:00-5:00

Basic Certification, August 9, 1:00-5:00

The following conclaves may or may not have casting certification:

Northeast Council Conclave; Falmouth, MA; Sept. 21-23

Northern California Council Conclave, Kingsbeach, CA, September 29-October 1

Southern Council Conclave, Mtn. Home, AR, October 6-8

## One Thing at a Time

by Larry Iwafuchi

Sooner or later, it happens to every instructor. You are confronted by students who are having multiple problems with their casting strokes. Their casting motions are ineffective, their timing is off, they are not positioning the line properly, etc. Simply put, correcting their casting strokes is a battle that needs to be fought on several fronts. Being the courageous instructor that you are, you launch into solving these problems. Wishing to prove your mastery of casting and casting instruction, you resolve to correct all of these shortcomings in a single session. Many minutes - or hours later the only result is a frustrated student and instructor glaring at each other over the other's perceived lack of ability.

I know the scenario described above well, having been caught in it myself, both as an instructor and as a student. After one of these sessions, I sat back and thought about what had happened from the student's perspective. It was then that I realized that I was the one who was at fault. I had totally overwhelmed the students with information, commands, and things to think about. Since then I have changed and simplified my approach. Rather than try to solve everything at once, I now narrow my focus to those key areas that will do the most good. Going back to the analogy of a battle with several fronts, the key is to work in one area and conquer it before moving on to the next.

Here is how to use this approach. First, watch the student cast for a few minutes. Next, decide what one or at the most two facets of their casting stroke to focus in on. Pick these areas of focus based on two rules: 1) the area selected should be the one most critical to correct, and 2) the technique selected should be within the student's ability to correct - this helps in building confidence as well as casting ability.

It is important to remember that only a specific portion of the student's cast is being worked on, with a long-term view of making him/her a better caster. The overall cast may appear to temporarily suffer. Be sure to point out the area of improvements and encourage the students to stick with the new technique. This will be reassuring and help prevent them from reverting back to bad habits. Regular practice will help re-enforce and 'lock-in' good habits.

So, when helping out a student, focus your instruction on key areas and avoid instructional overload. Your students will feel better about their casting, and you will too.

## Correction

A correction and apology is in order to Larry Iwafuchi for our mistake on the last Tailing Loop. The article titled "Brush Up on Your Stroke" was submitted by Larry Iwafuchi not Larry Iwata.

Becoming a proficient caster of the two-handed rod, is basically no different than mastering the single-handed rod in which one progressively accelerates the rod to a stop. The two-handed rod differs in that it utilizes the leverage that may be achieved by pitting the upper hand against the lower hand to generate the acceleration and stop.

Casts of the two-handed rod could be simplified to two basic fundamentals, the rhythm and the stop. The rhythm is the accumulation of many movements, line positioning and accelerations. The stop allows the rod to release the energy and cast the line forth.

Rhythm may seem a broad term, but it is the single fiber which connects and binds all of the various movements that make up a cast. In a basic overhead cast, the need for rhythm is quite subtle. In the various roll casts or spey casts, it is imperative. These casts have a multitude of rod positioning just to set the line up for a cast, and it's the continuous fluid movements or rhythm that bonds the cast together. If there is a lack of rhythm, the cast will break up into a series of rod movements, which may result in poor rod performance, poor casts and more effort from the caster.

The stop, as in all types of casting, is essential. Without a stop there is no cast. All of the rod movements - the acceleration, the timing, and the stop - can be learned. However, the strength of the stop must be developed.

A simple exercise to teach and/or strengthen a stop, is called "flip the tip", a term used by a superb casting instructor and angler, Frank Gray. Frank's "flip the tip" can only be done if the caster drives and stops the rod with the lower hand. The upper hand is just a fulcrum point from which the rod pivots. To begin, work only on the forward stop. If the rod is held in the vertical at 12:00, slowly bring the rod back to 12:30. Come forward to 11:30 into a stop. The rod's acceleration and stop comes from a snap of the lower hand. The caster will feel the recoil from the flip of the tip. Remember to use rhythm!

## Should You Always Watch Your Line?

by Allan & Barbara Rohrer

In the course of giving fly casting instructions to beginning and intermediate casters, we have noticed the following events take place. The common starting approach goes something like this.

First, we explain what we are attempting to teach, such as the roll cast, and then demonstrate the cast. If we are lucky and have a perfect day with little wind, minimal outside distractions and some smooth water to use, we proceed feeling confident of immediate success. After some preliminary discussion and demonstrations, we ask the students to demonstrate the cast.

Usually there are some mistakes that appear relatively easy to correct and we feel confident the students will soon be casting in an acceptable manner. In one particular case, a student made two mistakes normal for an inexperienced caster. Applying power too soon and in an incorrect casting plane, resulting in a poor cast. We then explained to the student what went wrong and how to correct it. Sadly the following casts were very close to the first poor cast.

In many cases it is difficult for the casters to realize what they are doing incorrectly. The casters usually focus their attention on the *line* instead of their arm, hand and rod motion. The instructor usually looks at the casting motion first and the resulting line path and loop second. By observing the casters' arm motion and power application, the instructor can determine what went wrong with the cast. The caster in many cases, will continue to focus on the line during their casts and not *see* what is wrong with their casting stroke. It helps in many cases to have the casters wind in their lines onto the reels and "go through the motion" of making the cast without the distraction of *watching* the fly line.

In many cases this enables casters to both hear and *see* what they need to do to correct their casting error. Sometimes you might have to go back to the "dry run" method a couple of times to have casters produce good casts. This provides instructors another "tool" to help in their course of fly casting instructions. At times, we need all the "tools" available to effectively teach a student.

## Reader Request from Houston, Texas

Most of my students are beginners and keeping their interest up after the initial lesson seems to be the most difficult. This is not always the case, but usually is with students that are new to fishing in general. Fishermen (persons) who come wishing to learn more about flyfishing are an easy sell - they already love the sport. The new ones are a bit more difficult - how 'bout some ideas on this bunch.

## FFF Casting Certification Board of Governors

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## It's Time to Contribute

by John Seidel

First of all I would like to give a great big thanks to those who have contributed to the FFF's Tailing Loop. It always seems that ten percent of the people do ninety percent of the work. A special thanks to Evelyn Taylor for all her hard work and dedication to making this newsletter a success. Not all the articles I have received have been put in the Tailing Loop, but this is not to say they are not appreciated and will not appear in future issues. We have received feedback on the newsletter, both good and bad, and this is very helpful in making it a success. What would really help, though, is for all the Certified Casting Instructors to lend a hand and write articles. This newsletter is for you, and the articles are shared knowledge to help us all become better instructors and add to the sport. Your talents are many and your skills are evident by your certification. Please send your articles and anecdotes for the newsletter dealing with fly casting and instructing to:

John Seidel  
325 N. Pine  
Townsend, MT 59644

## Watch Your Lip

by Marty Edgar

One of my favorite methods of fishing is to walk the beach with a fly rod and fish for snook that are feeding in the surf. While this method may appear simple, it does have some problems. When a snook is spotted, you generally have only 6 or 8 seconds to place your fly in front of the fish.

If you have most of the fly line on the reel, this requires stripping line off the reel, false casting and hoping the snook is still in the area so you can put your fly in front of it. What you really need for this kind of fishing is a lot of line beyond the rod tip so that with a minimum of false casting, you are able to present the fly quickly to the fish. But a lot of loose line beyond the rod tip presents a problem, especially when you are walking a couple of miles or more on each fishing trip. What would be best for this problem would be to have three hands. Because then it would be easy to control all the loose line as you walk the beach. I thought I had solved the problem by holding the fly between my lips. While holding the fly between my lips wasn't as good

as having three hands, I went along with what I had. After some practice I really became quite proficient in handling a lot of line by using my two hands and holding the fly between my lips.

I don't do that any more and here is why. I was walking the beach recently just as the sun was coming up and about 30 feet from shore the bait fish were really boiling like crazy. I assumed there must be a large fish of some kind after them.

All of the sudden there it was, as large a snook as I have ever seen. I was excited but managed to make a quick cast.

I want to tell you that was the worst pain I ever felt in my life! The surgeon said "if you are going to continue holding your snook fly between your lips, why don't you use a barbless hook so you can take it out of your lip yourself?!"

**Federation of Fly Fishers**  
*Casting Instructor Certification*  
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