

The Loop

*The Federation of Fly Fishers Journal for Certified Casting Instructors
Summer 2000*

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THE SOUTH FORK TUCK-AND-REACH CAST

By Rick Williams

Over the last few years of fishing from a drift boat on an increasingly busy western Idaho river, I've discovered a cast that is useful for overcoming upstream winds and presenting small flies on light tippets to selective trout. Our mid-summer fishing conditions are typical of many western rivers--substantial angler pressure, large rainbows, and prolific mayfly and caddis hatches that demand 5X and 6X tippets. Fish congregate along near-shore feeding lanes, where the current is slower than the mid-channel currents near the boat. Strong upstream winds are the rule during the mid-day and evening.

I've dubbed the cast the South Fork Tuck-and-Reach because of its two primary elements, the tuck cast followed by a rolling reach mend. It allows the angler to use lighter rods such as five or six-weights, rather than moving up to a seven-weight in order to handle the wind. In addition to its fishing effectiveness, the cast is also a wonderful teaching exercise for intermediate to advanced anglers. It combines a number of casting skills into a single, smoothly executed cast.

The cast has five distinct components. These should be introduced and practiced separately. Advanced anglers will quickly integrate the components.

1) *Casting direction* – The cast works best angled 30 degrees toward shore from the long axis of the boat, assuming the boat is parallel to shore. Most anglers tend to fish too much toward the bank (e.g., 45 – 90 degrees off axis), where the boat can spook fish and the angler's line is susceptible to additional drag from varying currents.

2) *Casting plane* – Tilt the casting plane forward to give a higher back cast and lower forward cast. This straightens the forward cast just above the water, reducing the amount of time the straightened, static line is subject to the force of the wind.

3) *Tuck Cast* - Apply extra power to the final forward power snap, causing the fly to land on the water before the fly line. If the line lands first, the wind will sweep the leader and fly upstream, creating a belly and quickly causing drag.

4) *Reach Mend* - After the power snap, make a strong reach mend toward the bank. Instead of moving the rod directly (horizontally) toward the bank, move the rod tip in a small arc that goes up, then down, like following the shape of a rainbow. The wrist makes a rolling motion up and over, similar to that made during a stack mend.

5) *Shoot line* - During the reach mend, shoot some line. Shooting line allows the reach mend to extend over toward the bank and places the fly line directly in the feeding lane without pulling the fly and leader back upstream (as would happen with the reach mend alone). The upstream wind will catch the line just a little bit, straightening the line clear down to the leader and fly. The resulting cast places the line directly in the feeding lane, with the fly drifting down to the feeding trout well ahead of the fly line.

It works best to practice this cast on the river. Anchor the boat or wade to a position about 10 feet from a near-shore feeding lane so the angler has a specific target. Initially, practice the cast in two separate stages. Stage one involves mastering the casting direction (more downstream), the casting plane (tilted forward), and the tuck cast (adding power to the finish of the forward cast). Once you are comfortable with these, add stage two--the reach mend and shooting line. Despite the power from the tuck cast, the line will land softly on the water because of the reach mend and the billowing effect of the upstream wind.

This cast is fun to learn, fun to teach, and even more fun to fish! For most anglers with intermediate or better casting skills, fifteen minutes of instruction and practice is usually sufficient to master the tuck-and-reach cast. Once mastered, it provides an easy and deadly way to present small flies to selective fish under challenging conditions.

Rick Williams is a Master Casting Instructor and is co-owner of the Idaho Angler in Boise Idaho. In his other life, Rick is a geneticist who works on Pacific salmon recovery and native trout conservation.

CASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETS

by Floyd Franke

Twenty-five of the thirty-five Governors met on Tuesday, August 2, 2000 in Livingston, Montana to conduct their annual business meeting. Top on their list of priorities were ways to improve the Casting Instructor Certification Program, especially the certification process itself. To this end, the Board approved a set of standardized performance criteria to be used by those who administer the Fly Casting Instructor Performance Test. Copies of the performance criteria will be sent to all Masters and Governors in the near future.

In an effort to help candidates better prepare to meet certification requirements, a special committee, to be chaired by Tom Jindra, was formed for the sole purpose of developing study guides for both the Certified Instructor and Certified Master Instructor tests. A second committee, to be chaired by Mel Krieger, was assigned the task of developing a workshop for individuals interested in taking the Casting Instructor Certification test. This workshop should not be confused with the one presently required as part of the certification process. The new workshop will be designed to answer questions about the program and help prospective candidates better prepare to meet certification requirements. This new workshop can be taken months or years before the actual test is taken.

A revised version of the written examination was approved for use. The new test will include ten additional new questions being field tested this year. Although answering these ten questions is required, their results will not be included in the candidates final test score. The new test and test questions were the work of a committee chaired by Bruce Richards with the assistance of John Van Dalen and Floyd Franke.

Leon Chandler, one of the original Casting Advisory Committee members and one of the first Governors, resigned this year to be named Casting Board of Governors Emeritus. Leon's interest and unwavering support over the years have been greatly appreciated. We look forward to his continued participation. Good luck in your travels, Leon.

A copy of the minutes for the 2000 meeting is available upon request. Contact Evelyn Taylor at the National Office in Bozeman, Montana.



UNDERSTANDING SOME CASTING FUNDAMENTALS

By Macanley Lord

As promised in the Spring issue, here are the answers to some thought-provoking questions intended to test your understanding of the cast.

1. After you stop the rod and the loop is on its way, is the rod loaded or unloaded? *Unloaded.*
2. In one sentence, how does the path of the rod tip affect the size of the loop? *The more convex the path of the tip-top, the wider the loop.*

3. One of the following statements is incorrect. Which one?

- "In a simple overhead cast, the rod should move in a straight line."
- "In a simple overhead cast, the rod should move in a single plane."

The first statement is the incorrect one. It would be correct if it said the rod tip should move in a straight line.

4. In one sentence, how should a caster apply power to form a tight loop? *Begin the stroke slowly and apply power so as to accelerate the rod tip, causing it to travel much faster just before the end of the stroke than it did just after the beginning.*

5. Your beginner appears to be doing almost everything right—he is moving the rod through a short arc with clear stops, he is not "wristing"—but he is casting wide loops. How is he doing it? *In the latter part of the stroke, he is either slowing the rod down or moving it at a constant speed, instead of accelerating to a stop.*

6. When practicing a 40-foot cast with a modern 6-weight graphite rod, a floating line, a tapered leader to match, and a yarn fly, should you feel the line tug as it turns over at the end of your backcast? *No, unless perhaps you are using a level line or you casting without a leader.*

7. To cast the line down on the forward cast, you must cast the line *up* on the backcast.

8. A tailing loop always results from the rod tip traveling in a *concave* path.

9. In one sentence, how do most casters of tailing loops make the tip travel in such a path? *They abruptly apply power, typically during the first half of the stroke. or They creep the rod forward, immediately after the backcast stop (while the backcast is still unrolling), robbing the following forward stroke of sufficient length to handle the mass of the line.*

10. Should the length of the stroke vary with the length of the cast? *Yes. (This is why forward creep results in so many bad casts.)*

11. To get the most from double hauling, must the length of the haul vary with the length of the cast? *Yes.*

12. When making a very long cast, should you make a very long haul? *Yes.*

13. When double hauling, should the speed of the haul vary with the length of the cast? *Yes—the longer the cast, the longer and faster the stroke, the longer and faster the haul.*

14. When double hauling, should the speed of the rod vary with the length of the cast? *Yes—the shorter the cast, the shorter and slower the stroke, the shorter and slower the haul.*



THE LOOP LIBRARY

Fly Casting Instructors need a good reference library. This section of *The Loop* features snippets of casting knowledge from books and articles by masters of the art.

The following piece is taken from Joan Wulff's book, *Fly Casting Techniques*.

The Length of The Haul

"How long should a haul be?" gets the same kind of answer as "How long should a stroke be?" There is no answer in inches or feet. The length of the haul, like the length of the casting stroke, is variable according to the length of the line, the length of the rod, and even the length of the caster's arms. A short person has to make a longer stroke and a longer haul with given rod and line lengths than does a tall person with longer arms. Lee used to chide me for making too long a haul compared to his until I pointed out his eight inches of height above me and the disparate length of our arms.

The length of the haul, whether three inches or three feet, must be accomplished within the time limit of the rod hand's power snap. On short casts, both the haul and the power snap will be short; on long casts, both will be longer and done with more speed, but beginning and ending at exactly the same instants.

It is more common, when learning this double haul technique, to make the haul too long rather than too short. If there is any flaw in the rod hand's mechanics, the addition of the haul will usually make you move both hands twice as far as is necessary. Remember that when all of the moves are done right, the haul should reduce, not increase, the length of the stroke.

From Joan Wulff's Fly Casting Techniques, (c) 1987. Reprinted by permission of the the Lyons Press, (800) 836-0510.



COMING EVENTS

Pre-registration is REQUIRED!

Contact Evelyn Taylor at (406) 585-7592

Lake Tahoe, California - Sept 30-Oct 1; Northern California Conclave; certify with Al Kyte, Joe Libeu, Floyd Dean; must preregister by Sept 20

Brunswick, Maine - Oct 1; Workshop with Macauley Lord for those who intend to take the Master test; must preregister by Sept 25; fee \$25

Mountain Home, Arkansas - October 7; Certified Instructor & Masters with Tom Jindra & Bill Gammel; must preregister by Sept 28 - FULL

Cape Cod, Massachusetts - October 28; Certified Instructor with Macauley Lord & Floyd Franke; must preregister by October 19 - FULL

Portland, Oregon - January 5 & 6; International Sportsmen's Expo; Cert. Instructor & Masters; must preregister by Dec 29

College Park, Maryland - January 13 & 14; The Fly Fishing Show; Cert. Instructor & Masters; must preregister by Jan 4

Somerset, New Jersey - January 26 & 27; The Fly Fishing Show; Cert. Instructor & Masters; must preregister by Jan 17

San Mateo, Calif - February 1 & 2; International Sportsmen's Expo; Cert. Instructor & Masters; must preregister by Jan 24

Seattle, Wash - February 8 & 9; International Sportsmen's Expo; Cert. Instructor & Masters; must preregister by Feb 1

Charlotte, North Carolina - February 16 & 17; The Fly Fishing Show; Cert. Inst. & Masters; must preregister by Feb 8

Denver, Colo - February 23 & 24; International Sportsmen's Expo; Cert. Instructor & Masters; must preregister by Feb 15

Salt Lake City, Utah - March 16 & 17; Internat'l Sportsmen's Expo; Cert. Inst. & Masters; must preregister by Mar 8

Phoenix, Arizona - March 23 & 24; International Sportsmen's Expo; Cert. Inst. & Masters; must preregister by March 15

THE LOOP STAFF

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YOU CAN HAVE A LINK from your FFF Website listing to your own Website or E-mail address. Contact Jim Abbs (see above).

We welcome your submissions via E-mail, fax, or disk. Please attach a short instructor bio (1-3 sentences), including your location and Certification level. Please indicate whether or not you are willing to allow for your submission's possible re-publication on the Program's Website. Any illustrations should be in TIFF format. The Loop reserves the right to accept or decline any submission for any reason, and to edit any submission as it sees fit. All submissions should be sent to the National Office:

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STRETCHES TO KEEP YOU FISHING LONGER

By Allen Crise

If age or general creakiness are hampering your fishing, here are a few gentle exercise that will warm and stretch your muscles:

- Bend at the waist and let your arms swing freely. Rotate your arms in small circles and then bigger circles for 15 seconds.
- Standing straight, reach up with both arms as far as you can. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds.
- Drop your left arm behind your head and grab the left elbow with the right hand and pull gently. Repeat with your right arm. Hold for 15 seconds.
- Reach out in front of you with both hands, stretching the back muscles. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds.
- Reach out in front of you and open and close your hands five times.
- Raise your elbows out to the side and rotate them in small circles; then do the same in the other direction in bigger circles.

- Step forward with one leg. Keeping the other foot flat on the floor, stretch the calf and leg muscles. Repeat with the other leg.

Allen Crise is a Certified Fly Casting Instructor, past FFF Southern Council Youth Chairman, and the owner of Hawk Ridge Tackle in Glen Rose, Texas.

NEW MASTER INSTRUCTORS

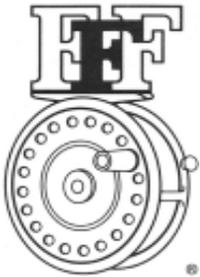
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