

ANCHOR PLACEMENT: From Gary Eaton to Lewis Hinks and Gordy Hill

Lewis and Gordy,

Excellent point from the reader. In the context of what I had written, it originated as a CCI ready-list, so *Static* Roll Casts were the only application - hauled and to target distance AND off-hand as well as rod side.

I would add, from Lewis' question - AND from my exam experience:

The examiners expect good switch cast performance even in the absence of water to generate an anchor. A grass leader helps if the grass is of compatible species and mowed height. These variables create a need to have a few tools for the job. Among those I applied were -

1) practice on a slick surface, like a gym floor, snow, etc.. You will probably decide that a significantly longer anchor segment is required as well as a higher shotgun lift initiation to cause a more vertical splashdown that does not shoot rapidly behind you from initial contact - a non-stick, if you will. I guess we could call this the *Teflon* anchor length.

2) Though specifically not-allowed, dragging the anchor into position is a good way to learn what anchor length works for a given surface. Refining to generate and aerial V-Loop is the logical next step and then work on the timing. I arrived at my Florida test site two days early and practiced in the adjacent park on just this portion of the exam. Florida's grass species are entirely different from the Midwest. This tactic helped me a lot.

3) From AL Buhr and Bob Middo, at an instructor's school, I learned that simulating without a water anchor is nearly impossible to evaluate actual skills. They combined to analyze my detailed knowledge of the application before performance. Important points are :

- anchor falls in the "box"
- rod leg of the V-loop must be above the surface
- the watch-point, is at the anchor and caster reaction must be "touch-and-go"
- know how to change your anchor trajectory if they say -"Show how you would change this cast with a following wind" OR "Where you would place the anchor in a (any direction selected) wind?"

4) Remember that the Spey-type casts will also be examined. The switch-cast is fundamental to final "trigger" and "key position" in all of these. Given the chance to influence test sequence, I would advocate that the Spey casts precede, be coupled with, and perhaps substitute for the critique of the switch cast.

5) Inventing alternative anchors has been a great exercise for me. I have tried, with limited success, a) soaked towel on a piece of plastic, b) plastic anchor pond about 4-ft by six-feet. It takes over a dozen gallons of water to make a minimally, adequate water surface so I ended-up halving that to a 3x4 ft space and using more than six gallons. (Although tough on lines, pure anti-freeze or real sugar, jello-ready liquids work with shallower depths) {Cooking oils work if they are light-weight like olive oil but they change in consistency more with temperature than does water and leave your line a mess for a little while- heavier oils like corn oil, actually reduce the "stick" unless on a hot sunny day and are more difficult to remove from the line}.

6) Slowing cadence to a crawl as the anchor deposits on dry surfaces may generate a wrinkle in the rod leg of the anchor before touch-down that sets the anchor well-enough that the subsequent V-loop dynamics do not pull it free too early. This takes a lot of practice and ruins the water methods timing for me.

7) After my exam, I developed multiple versions of AL Buhr's grass leader. I experimented with longer "tails" on the cross-pieces, more cross-pieces, more cross-pieces near the line-leader junction, longer tails on the cross-pieces near the line-leader junction, "roughing-up" the grass leader nylon with sand paper or X-acto knife cuts, burning the ends of the cross-pieces to form a ball of material, Making double cross-pieces at right-angles that I super glued into position, etc. Net result was the most influential change was that using stiffer and thicker cross-pieces provided more "stick" in longer-cut fescue and bluegrass.

8) I have a large practice lawn next to my house where I practiced every day and frequently teach. I experimented with mowing depths on my push mower. The lawn looked like a giant checkerboard quilt for a while the summer of 2008. I even cultivated two-types of Midwest crabgrass including St. Augustine grass, found in Florida. These experiments allowed me to match grass leaders a little bit better, but I never got comfortable enough to develop a formula to share.

So, Lewis, I hope this stimulates a little experimentation of your own. I encourage you to get your examiners to divulge the exact surface your "water"-anchored casts will be tested upon.

Ultimately, my examiners were not the sticklers on this that THCI's or Steelheaders who use these casts often might have been. Their demands on the SW quick cast and wind adjustments were more than the small stream, Midwest trout angler might have expected, though.

Gary Eaton