

ORVIS
MASTER
YOUR
FLY CASTING

FROM NOVICE TO MASTERS
*A unique ten-level progressive approach
to mastering the art of fly casting*

(and have fun doing it!).

By Jim C. Chapralis

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WHY PRACTICE?

Suppose you're on a Montana blue-ribbon trout stream and your guide points out a big brown. Even the guide is excited as he whispers his strategy: *"Ya gotta put that fly about five feet above him, in his feeding lane. Don't cast over him 'cuz he'll spook. And don't slap the fly down hard."*

Geez! So there you are. Waist deep in the river. The big trout is sipping flies methodically. *Slurp. Pause. Slurp. Pause. Pause. Slurp!*

You paid more than \$500 for that graphite rod, the one that's shaking in your trembling hand, two hundred bucks for the fly reel, and hundreds of dollars for lines, flies, waders and other incidentals. And, of course, there are lodge expenses, the airline tickets, and the guide. A small fortune.

Your guide is watching you closely as you lengthen your cast. The moment of truth.

You.

The fish.

The quivering rod.

The trout.

The big trout. Perhaps a "lifetime trout."

Can you make that cast? Will your cast land too short? Will you dump that leader like a batch of cooked spaghetti on the trout's head? Or will you make a perfect presentation that will trigger a "Wow!" from your guide and a take from the trout.

This booklet will help you attain fly-casting excellence. Guaranteed!

All you need to do is add practice.

BEFORE WE BEGIN...

This booklet is designed to improve your fly-casting skills through a unique Level by Level Progressive Method. It will not only make you a highly-skilled caster and therefore a better angler, but you'll have fun practicing and learning the different games or disciplines. Your friends, family or fishing club can also participate in this wholesome, challenging activity.

This booklet presumes that you've had some fly casting experience. It is not a step-by-step, how-to-fly-cast instruction, although there are casting tips offered. Perhaps you've attended an Orvis Fly Fishing School. Maybe a friend taught you the basics of fly casting, or possibly you just taught yourself by studying a fly-casting book or viewing a casting video.

Its purpose is to take you from one classification to another (from Merit to Expert to Masters) in a series of 10 Progressive Levels.

There is a tendency among most of us to see how fast we can progress through lessons or disciplines in order to attain the highest level as quickly as possible. It is important to master

each casting level on a **consistent** basis before advancing to the next, since each lesson builds a foundation for the next.

Although we may meet or even surpass the qualifying scores, it is just as important that any missed casts are within a couple of feet of the targets before we progress to the next level. There are no short cuts. Lessons learned in the Merit Levels are crucial to the more advanced disciplines offered in the Expert or Masters classification.

MEASURING AND PRESENTATION CASTS: You will notice that “measuring casts” and “presentation casts” are terms used in these lessons. A *measuring cast* is an easy way for you to extend your line, leader and fly on the ground or water to the first target at the start of an event or round. It doesn’t count for your qualifying score. A *presentation cast* is a scored cast and counts toward your qualifying score. You will notice that after the MERIT levels there are no “measuring casts” as the angler is expected to reach the target by false casting.

DISTANCE EVENT (Lesson Ten): In the distance event you can make any number of “measuring casts” on the ground to get your shooting head out. This event is designed for distance but doesn’t ignore the importance of accuracy, as scored casts must land within the 20-foot boundary. It’s based on using a 9- or 10-wt. fly rod, shooting head and mono running line for ultimate distances. If you are using a lighter fly outfit, casting distances and goals should be proportionately less.

TARGETS: You can use Hula Hoops or you can make your own targets from garden hoses by cutting them and taping the ends together in a 30-inch diameter. If you obtain Hula Hoops for targets, buy them in various colors so that it’s easier to distinguish them on the casting course.

PRACTICE LEADERS AND FLIES: ***Absolutely do not practice*** fly casting without first attaching a leader and practice fly to your fly line. Use a 7-1/2 ft. leader tapered to 2X to start, but later you may want to lengthen your leader and use a lighter tippet. Tie on a small piece of colored yarn for a practice fly (about the size of a No. 12 dry fly), or if you prefer to use an actual fishing fly cut off the point and barb at the bend for safety reasons.

EYE GLASSES: Even though you will be practicing without a hook, be sure to wear sunglasses or prescription or plain eyeglasses **whenever you are fly casting** to protect your eyes from errant casts.

GROUND OR WATER? Casting on water closely simulates actual fishing conditions particularly on the pick up (water provides more resistance or pull on the line). However you will need to

add floatation and small anchoring devices to the targets and changing their locations for the various courses is a problem. The advantage of casting on ground is that you can place the targets very quickly without these worries. For Level Ten (distance casting) it is best to cast on land for a number of reasons including ease in measuring casts and easier pickup of a fast sinking line.

KEEP SCORE: Would golf, bowling or other sports be popular if scores weren't kept? Of course not. It's important to keep casting scores so that you can accurately gauge your progress through practice. Higher scores will serve as an incentive to practice more.

GET OTHERS INVOLVED: You can practice these games on your own, but you might find it even more interesting if you involve your fishing friends, family or club members. If there are several fishing clubs around, you can easily hold tournaments at the various levels.

COMPETITION: While these games are designed to improve one's casting while enjoying a wholesome activity, eventually you might want to compete in local, regional, national and even international casting tournaments. The rules are different but lessons learned here will pay huge dividends in competitive casting. The *American Casting Association* regulates and sponsors tournaments in the U.S. and Canada. The *International Casting Sport Federation* holds tournaments worldwide. Casting events are also conducted in the World Games. Every four years, the World Games, recognized by the International Olympic Committee, include competitive casting events. The previous World Games were held August 16-26, 2001 in Akita, Japan. The 2005 World Games will take place in Duisburg, Germany.

AND FINALLY: Most of us would like to fish more than we do, but these casting games and events serve as a wonderful fill-in between trips because they can be practiced anywhere, anytime (even in gyms in the northern climes during winter). Fly casting is a beautiful, graceful activity in itself, plus you'll catch more fish as you improve!

Guaranteed!

MERIT Classification

Level One

TARGETS: Place targets (A, B, C, D and E) approximately 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 feet from the casting box.

FIRST ROUND: Lengthen your cast until you hit Target A (this is a measuring cast and isn't scored). Now lift up and **WITHOUT** making any false casts make a presentation cast to Target A (20 ft.) which counts as a scored cast. Strip about five feet of line from your reel (per target), lift the fly, and make your presentation casts to Targets B, C, D and E *without any false casts* in between. Keep practicing until you are able to hit three out of the five targets and come within a couple feet on the missed targets on a consistent basis.

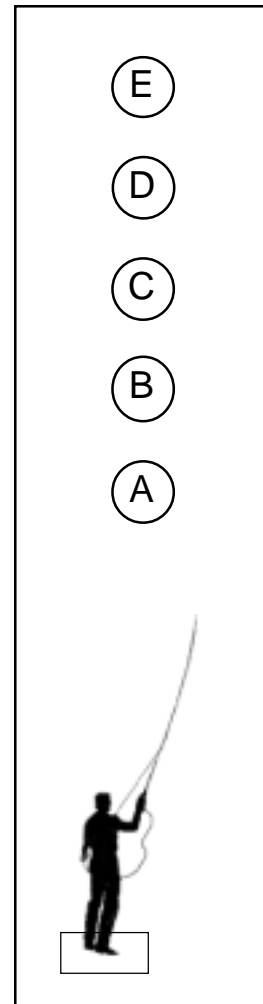
YOU WILL LEARN: (1) A simple rhythmic cast (be sure to accelerate before coming to a complete stop on both the back and the forward casts); (2) That the line follows the arc of a rod tip; (3) That a fairly straight back and forward cast will deliver the fly in a reasonably straight path to the target; (4) That the longer the cast, the longer you must wait for the back cast to straighten out before you begin your forward cast; (5) To strip about five feet of line from your reel and shoot it through the guides on the forward cast.

SECOND ROUND: Lengthen your measuring cast until you hit Target A (this cast isn't scored). Lift up and make two false casts and make your presentation (scoring) cast to Target A (20 ft.). Strip about five feet of line from your reel. Lift the fly, make two false casts and then make your presentation cast to Target B (25 ft.). Do the same thing (strip, lift, two false casts, and make the presentation casts) to Targets C, D and E. Practice this until you are able to hit at least three targets most of the time and any misses are within a couple of feet from the target. Avoid hitting the ground/water during false casting (this is known as a "tick").

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) To improve your false casting; (2) To develop and deliver a more accurate cast; (3) To avoid "ticking" the water/ground in front of you during false casting which could scare off some fish or hamper your casting.

TARGET CASTING ORDER: A, B, C, D, E (both rounds)

YOU'LL IMPROVE FASTER IF YOU: Learn to throw a narrow loop on your back and forward casts. Narrow-loop casting is the most important component of accurate and distance casting. This is best accomplished by accelerating your rod stroke before you come to an abrupt stop on the back and forward casts. If you are hitting the water/



ground in front of you during false casting aim your false casts higher or begin the start of your back cast slightly faster. If the fly lands fairly close (within a few feet) to missed targets, you're on the right track. Just practice, practice and practice.

SCORING: Ten points for every target you hit in each of the two rounds. Remember, if your fly ticks or slaps the ground or water in front of you it will count as a cast (zero score). Perfect Score: 100 points.

■ **QUALIFICATION FOR MERIT LEVEL 1:** 60 points.

MERIT Classification

Level Two

TARGETS: Place targets (A, B, C, D and E) approximately 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 feet from the casting box.

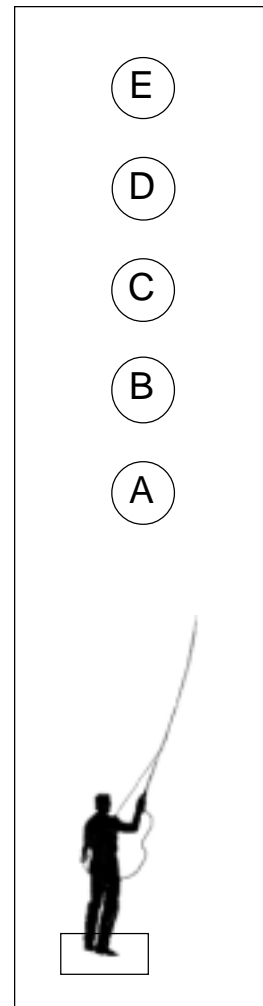
FIRST ROUND: Lengthen your cast until you hit the Target A (25 ft.) in a measuring, nonscoring cast. Lift up make two false casts, and make your scored presentation cast to the same Target A. Strip about ten feet of line from your reel. Lift the fly, make two false casts (letting out a little line on each forward cast) and then cast to the Target C (35 ft.). Strip about ten feet of line from your reel, lift up, make two false casts and deliver the fly to Target E (45 ft.). Now strip in line from Target E until it's about the middle of Target B. Lift up, make two false casts and make your presentation cast to Target B (30 ft.). Lift up, make two false casts and then deliver your presentation cast to Target D (40 ft.).

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) To control the amount of line you shoot through the guides with your left hand; (2) How to shoot 10 feet of line, by letting out a few feet on each of your two false casts and final presentation cast; (3) That shooting line on the longer targets (e.g., from Target C to E) may be easier than on the shorter targets (Target A to C) because the rod loads faster with the longer line.

SECOND ROUND: Exactly the same as Round One, but with only one false cast between targets instead of two.

TARGET CASTING ORDER: A, C, E. Then B, and D. (Both rounds.)

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) That going from Target A (25 ft.) to C (35 ft.) isn't easy, because there isn't enough line to load the rod quickly. Try this: Allow about two to three feet of



line to shoot through the guides on your *first back cast*, then a couple of feet of line on your forward false cast. Shoot the remainder on your final presentation cast. Don't get discouraged; it takes a little practice.

YOU'LL IMPROVE FASTER IF: You learn to use what's known as a single haul. It's easy. When lifting line from the ground or water for your back cast, grasp the line with your left hand near the first rod guide (stripper guide). As you begin the rod motion for your back cast, simultaneously pull the line with your left hand, which will increase line speed. After you develop a strong back cast, you will find it easier to shoot a few feet of line on the back cast when needed.

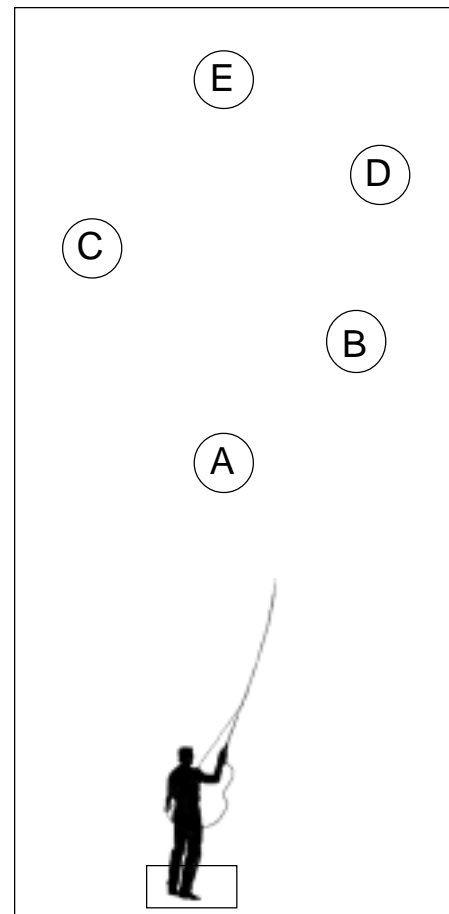
SCORING: 10 points per target. Perfect Score: 100 points.

■ **QUALIFICATION FOR MERIT LEVEL 2:** 60 points. (Fly should land within a couple of feet on missed targets).

MERIT Classification Level Three

TARGETS: Place targets approximately 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 feet away from the casting box. The closest (Target A) at 25 feet and the farthest (Target E) at 45 feet directly in front of the box, the other three (B, C and D) are scattered as indicated in the diagram.

PROCEDURE: You will make three presentation casts with a decreasing number of false casts to each target. Lengthen your cast until you hit the Target A (25 ft.) in a measuring, nonscoring cast. Lift up, make no more than three false casts and make a (scoring) presentation cast to Target A. Lift up, make no more than two false casts and aim for the same target. Lift up, make no false cast for your third presentation cast to Target A. Now lift the fly, and using the same procedure (three false casts) go to the Target B. *You will have to strip line from the reel while false casting.* Remember, no more than three false casts on the first presentation cast; two or less false casts on the second presentation cast and no false cast on the third cast. Repeat this as you advance to Targets C, D and E. If the fly strikes the water/ground while false casting it is a scored cast with zero points.



TARGET CASTING ORDER: A, B, C, D and E.

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) That the first cast is very important, not only for a high score in this event, but in actual fishing, because it's the first presentation cast that usually determines whether you will be rewarded with a rise or a strike; (2) To strip line from your reel and shooting it while false casting as you advance from target to target; (3) To avoid ticking or striking the water/ground in front of you while false casting; (4) Muscle memory and eye-hand coordination as you adjust your casts.

SCORING: 10 points for the first presentation cast at each target; 6 points for the second presentation and 4 points for the third cast. Perfect Score: 100 points.

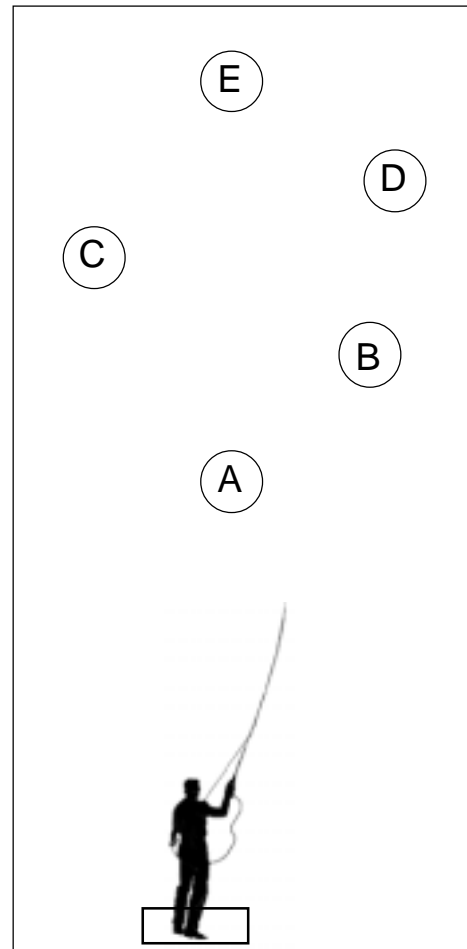
■ **QUALIFICATION FOR MERIT LEVEL 3:** 60 points, but missed casts should be within a couple of feet.

EXPERT Classification Level Four

TARGETS: Same as Level Three. Place targets approximately 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 feet away from the casting box. The closest (Target A) at 25 feet and the farthest (Target E) at 45 feet are directly in front of the box, whereas the other three (B, C and D) are scattered as indicated in the diagram.

ROUND ONE: Start with a few feet of fly line, leader and practice fly beyond the rod tip. Begin false casting and extend line by stripping it from the reel and shooting it on the forward cast until you feel you have reached Target A. Make sure the fly doesn't hit the ground/water during false casts. Make your presentation cast to Target A. Lift up, make no more than two false casts and cast to Target B. You will have to strip sufficient line from the reel while false casting to reach the target. Lift up, make no more than two false casts and make a presentation cast to Target C. Continue to Targets D and E. Remember, no more than two false casts between targets. If the fly strikes the water/ground while false casting it is a scored cast with zero points.

TARGET CASTING ORDER: A, B, C, D and E.



ROUND TWO: Reel in line so that you have only a few feet of fly line beyond the rod tip. False cast as many times as you like and make your presentation cast to Target A. Repeat the same procedure as Round One but now with **only one false cast** between targets.

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) To false cast without hitting the water/ground in front of you; (2) To strip line from the reel and to shoot it on forward casts; (3) To judge distances between targets while stripping sufficient amount of line; (4) To develop eye-hand coordination; (5) To make a fast, accurate delivery (particularly in Round Two) so essential when casting to moving fish.

YOU'LL IMPROVE FASTER IF: You concentrate on throwing a narrow loop on both the back and forward casts. Narrow loops will increase your accuracy and make fly casting a wonderful, relaxing activity. On close targets, experiment with releasing a little line on the back cast during false casts but shoot the majority of the line on the forward false and/or presentation casts.

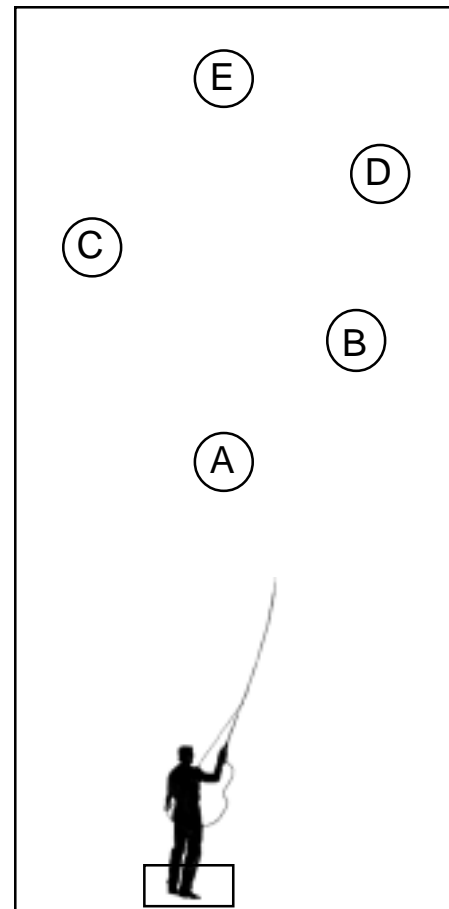
SCORING: 10 points for every hit. Perfect Score: 100

■ **QUALIFICATION FOR EXPERT LEVEL 4:** 60 points and coming close on missed targets.

EXPERT Classification Level Five

TARGETS: Same as Levels Three and Four. Place targets approximately 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 feet away from the casting box. The closest (Target A) at 25 feet and the farthest (Target E) at 45 feet are directly in front of the box, whereas the other three (B, C and D) are scattered as indicated in the diagram.

FIRST ROUND: Begin false casting. Strip line from the reel and shoot enough line until you hit Target B (30 ft.). Lift up, make three false casts, stripping line from your reel, and make a presentation cast to Target E (45 ft.). Lift the fly, make three false casts and then proceed to Target C (35 ft.). *Note:* To go from a distant target to a closer target you will have to **strip line in while false casting**. Strip line in with your left hand while pulling it through your right index finger against the rod handle. Lift, make three false casts, (allowing



sufficient line to shoot through the guides) and hit Target D (40 ft.). Lift, make three false casts while stripping line in, and deliver the fly to Target A (25 ft.).

TARGET SEQUENCE: B, E, C, D and A.

SECOND ROUND: Same as above but with **only two false casts** between targets. Going from Target D (40 ft.) to Target A (25 ft.) in two false casts is not easy. Best way is to strip line with your left hand through the index finger of your casting hand on the initial pick up, then another few feet on the first and second false casts and stop your rod high on the presentation cast.

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) To strip out line from the reel and shooting it while false casting; (2) To strip line in with your left hand (while false casting) to shorten distance and using your right index finger and rod handle to control the amount of line; (3) To develop and improve eye/brain/hands coordination and muscle memory as you gauge distances and adjust line between targets.

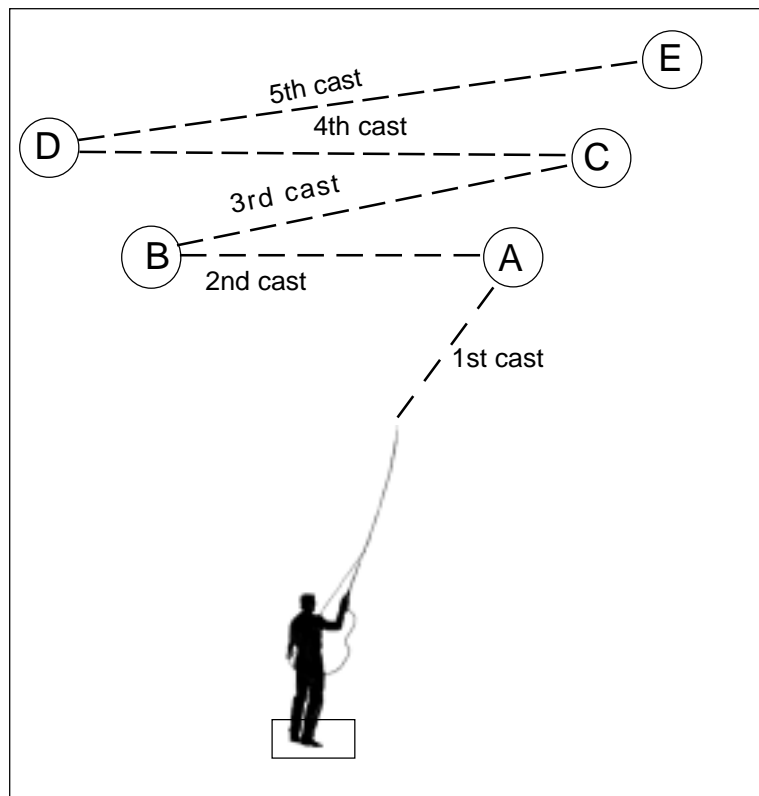
YOU'LL IMPROVE FASTER IF: You practice, without actually casting, pulling line in with your left hand, in two- to three-foot lengths while the line passes under your index finger of your casting hand against the rod handle.

SCORING: 10 points for every hit. Perfect Score: 100

■ **QUALIFICATION FOR EXPERT LEVEL 5:** 50 points (within two feet on missed targets).

EXPERT Classification Level Six

TARGETS: Place Targets A and B at approximately 25 feet from casting box but at about a 45-degree angle left and right. Place Targets C and D approximately 35 feet from casting box, also at a 45-degree angle (left and right). Target E is placed 45 feet from the casting box at a



45-degree angle to the right of the casting box as per diagram.

ROUND ONE: Start with a few feet of fly line, leader and practice fly beyond the rod tip, and begin false casting and extending line, by stripping it from the reel and shooting it on the forward cast until you have reached Target A. Make your presentation (scoring) cast. Lift up, make two false casts and go to Target B. Lift up make two more false casts and go to Target C. Do the same for Target D and E. Where required, you will have to strip sufficient line from your reel during false casts as you progress from target to target.

ROUND TWO: Lift up fly from target E and begin false casting and stripping in line (while false casting--max five false casts) and when you have retrieved sufficient line make your presentation cast to Target A. Repeat the same procedure as in the First Round but this time only allow only one false cast between targets.

TARGET SEQUENCE: A, B, C, D and E (Both Rounds).

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) To switch directions quickly with one or two false casts. This is important particularly when you are casting to rising trout or moving fish such as bonefish; (2) To strip and feed line through the guides while false casting; (3) The importance of line control in switching directions from target to target.

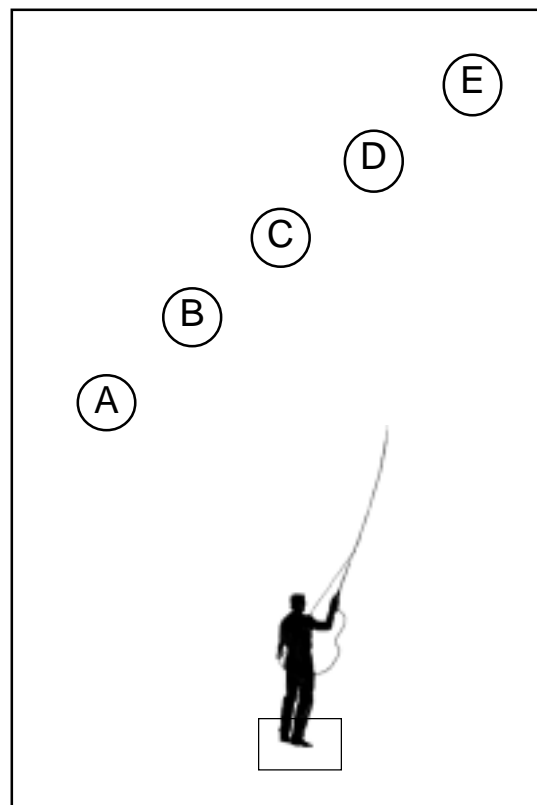
SCORING: 10 points for every hit. Perfect Score: 100

■ **QUALIFICATION FOR EXPERT LEVEL 6:** 60 points.

MASTERS Classification Level Seven

TARGET: Place Target A about 25 feet from caster's box and to the left at a 30 to 45 degree angle. Place Target E about 45 feet away and at a 30 to 45 degree angle to the right of the box. The three other targets (B, C, and D) are placed equidistant (between Targets A and E) at 30, 35 and 40 feet as per diagram.

ROUND ONE: Start with a few feet of fly line, leader and practice fly beyond the rod tip, and begin false casting and extending the line, by



stripping it from the reel and shooting it on the forward cast until you think that you have reached Target A. Now make your presentation cast. If you miss, keep casting to Target A until you hit it, but **you must make one false cast between presentation casts.** When you hit it, pick up, strip line from the reel, make one false cast, and deliver the fly to target B. If you miss, keep casting until you hit the target. Then proceed to Targets C, D and E progressively. ***You must make one false cast between presentation casts whether you miss or hit the target.***

TARGET SEQUENCE: A, B, C, D and E.

ROUND TWO: After you hit Target E, pickup, lift the line make one false cast and hit E again. Pickup make one false cast (stripping in line with your left hand) and deliver the fly to target D. Lift up and proceed to Targets C, B and A. Don't forget to make a false cast between presentation casts.

TARGET SEQUENCE: E, D, C, B and A.

✓ **IMPORTANT:** This is a timed event! You have one minute and time begins after your first presentation cast to Target A. **For a perfect score, you must hit all ten targets within one minute.** You must hit a target before advancing to the next. If you hit all ten targets in less than a minute repeat Rounds One and Two until your time expires and earn bonus points.

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) How to make rapid-fire accurate casts (important when casting to rising or fast moving fish); (2) How to strip line (out or in) quickly while calculating and making quick eye/brain/hand adjustments.

SCORING: 10 points for every hit. Perfect Score: 100 but you get 10 bonus points for every target you hit beyond 10 within the one-minute time limit. *There is a demerit of two points for each tick.*

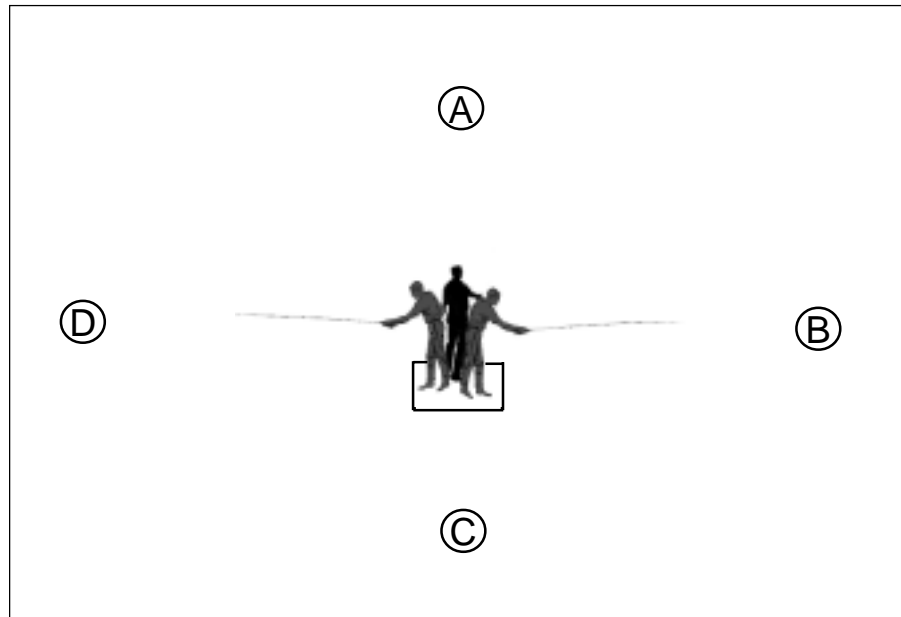
■ **QUALIFICATION FOR MASTERS LEVEL 7:** Minimum—80 points (hit eight targets within one minute).

MASTERS CLASSIFICATION

Level Eight

TARGETS: Place four targets (A, B, C and D) approximately 40 feet from caster's box at 0, 90, 180 and 270 degrees as per diagram.

ROUND ONE: All casts in this round are via side or horizontal casting (rod, line and leader travel horizontal to ground/water). Make no more than four horizontal false casts to each target. Start with a few feet of



fly line, leader and practice fly beyond the rod tip, and begin *horizontal* false casting and extending line, by stripping it from the reel and shooting it on the forward cast until you have reached Target A. Make your presentation cast. Do the same for other targets, turning your body as you see fit to cast to each target.

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) To cast accurately in a horizontal plane which, among other advantages, allows you to place fly under overhanging branches; (2) To change directions quickly while fishing; (3) To develop and improve a very narrow loop because you can observe the back casts and forward casts easily; (4) An excellent cast for windy conditions (usually there is less wind closer to the water); (5) A superb cast for heavy or bulky flies as you are less likely to hit yourself with a horizontal cast than with a vertical cast.

ROUND TWO: The procedure is the same as Round One except that all casts are made via the backhand cast on the opposite side of your casting arm. If you are right handed, the rod travels almost horizontally above your head on your left side (**see accompanying sketch**). After completing Round One, reel in so that you have just a few feet of line beyond the rod tip and begin false casting using the backhand cast (same target sequence).



YOU WILL LEARN: (1) That this is a safer cast when the wind is blowing from your right side (if you are right handed), because it reduces the chances of hooking yourself; (2) When fishing in a skiff or small craft with a partner, you can direct the line away from him/her depending on wind direction; (3) That this is a useful and safer cast when wading a stream with a companion or guide who is just to the right of you.

TARGET SEQUENCE: A, B, C, D, & A (both rounds, ten casts total).

SCORING: 10 points for every hit. Perfect Score: 100

■ **QUALIFICATION FOR MASTERS LEVEL 8:** 70 points.

MASTERS CLASSIFICATION

Level Nine

TARGETS: Place Targets A and C approximately 40 feet from the caster's box and Targets B, E, and D 60 feet from the box. Target E is directly in line with the Caster's Box. Targets A and C are about 12 feet apart. Targets B, E, and D are also placed 12 feet apart, as per diagram.

REQUIRED: *Knowledge and execution of double haul.*

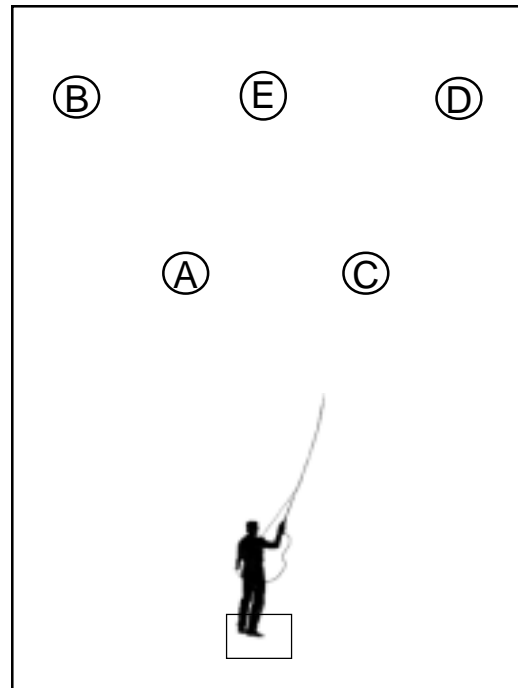
ROUND ONE: Strip about 70 feet from the reel. Spread it loosely on the ground in approximate three-foot loops. Begin false casting and make your presentation cast to Target A. Pick up, make two false casts and go to Target B. Strip in line (on the ground or water) so that the fly is approximately at the 40-foot targets. Lift up, make two false casts and then a presentation cast to Target C. Lift up, two false casts, and cast to Target E.

Strip back on the ground or water to the 40-foot targets, lift, two false casts, and make a presentation cast to Target A again. Lift up, two false casts and hit Target D.

ROUND TWO: Same as Round One but only **one false cast** permitted between targets.

TARGET SEQUENCE: A, B, C, D, A, E (Six casts total each round.)

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) The advantage of the double-haul casting technique, which is



so essential to distance casting (e.g., going from the close targets [A & C] to the distant targets [B, E, D]). Anyone fishing saltwater for permit, tarpon, bonefish and other marine species or in freshwater for pike, bass, muskie and other fish should concentrate on this event. Tie on similar flies to what you expect to use in actual fishing, but remove the hook point at the bend for safety reasons; (2) A great discipline for the experienced fly caster who wishes to perfect his double-haul technique and accuracy in moderately long casts.

YOU'LL IMPROVE FASTER IF YOU: Study and practice the double-haul technique (away from the targets) until you have developed a smooth motion. It is an essential technique for many saltwater and freshwater applications. After you've attained a fairly smooth double haul practice this event.

SCORING: 5 points for any hits on the closer targets (A and C). 10 points for any hits on the distant targets (B, E and D) in the first round (where two false casts are allowed); and 15 points for any hits on the distant targets in the second round (where only one false cast is permitted). Perfect score: 105 points.

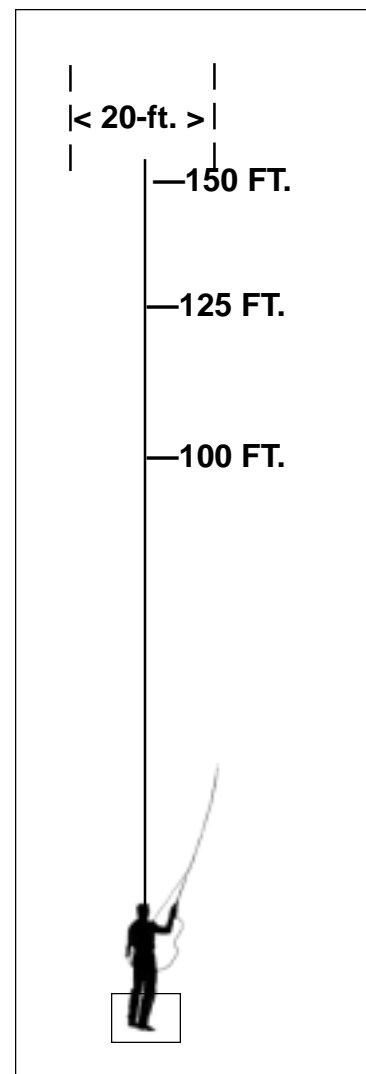
■ **QUALIFICATION FOR MASTERS LEVEL 9:** 70 points.

MASTERS CLASSIFICATION Level Ten

TARGETS: None. But a long measuring line is necessary. You can make one easily enough from 30-pound monofilament or braided line spooled on an old fishing reel. Tie in small pieces of different colored bright yarn as markers at distances of 100, 125 and 150 feet. On the field, you can place bigger markers (hat, pieces of cloth, etc.) next to the yarn for better visibility from the caster's box. Mark off a 20-foot boundary (counted casts must land within this boundary). See diagram.

DISTANCE FLY CASTING EVENT: The emphasis is definitely on distance here but within the 20-ft. boundary. A knowledge and ability to execute a smooth double-haul technique is absolutely essential here.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT: This event is best cast with a longer, heavier rod, ideally a 9-ft. calibrated to handle a 9 or 10 weight head (e.g., Orvis T3, 9-ft., 9 wt., Tip 10.0 or the Orvis T3, 9-ft., 10-wt., Tip 9.5). Use a fast sinking head such as Orvis J1485-60 which has an ideal 38-ft. length. For



running line try a monofilament that has a diameter of .015" or slightly heavier. Use about a 7-foot leader that tapers down to 2X and tie on a small piece of brightly-colored yarn as your practice fly. Any fly reel that can accommodate the shooting head and running can be used for this event but the preference is for lightweight, large arbor reels.

PROCEDURE: You will need a lawn, park, or athletic field that has about 200 feet of cleared space to accommodate your back and presentation casts. You want a tail wind, but if only a side wind is available (because of trees or other obstacles) position yourself so that the wind blows from your left to right if you're a right handed caster.

Stretch out your measuring line as indicated in the diagram.

✓ **Important:** Before you begin to cast, you should warm up for a few minutes: perform some stretching exercises and move your outstretched arms in circles for a few minutes and then swing them back and forth in front of you.

After a few, short warm-up casts, begin your distance casts down the measuring line, paying particular attention to executing the double haul, line speed, throwing a narrow loop, and "accelerating to a sudden stop" on the back and forward casts. You'll probably find that two false casts prior to your presentation distance cast will work best. Timing is more essential than brawn. Cast for five minutes at each session and then rest for about 10 minutes; otherwise, bad casting habits could develop. Do not cast more than three five-minute segments a day during your initial practice sessions.

During each session write down your best cast on a scorecard. You can estimate the distances accurately (e.g., if your fly lands halfway between the 125- and 150-foot markers on your measuring line, then your cast is probably about 137 feet.) It's important to keep track of your distance casts so that you will note your progress, which will fire you up for future sessions.

YOU WILL LEARN: (1) That the double-haul technique is vital in distance casting and for casting bulky flies (particularly under windy conditions); (2) The importance of casting a narrow loop; (3) That precise timing and blending of the double haul, stroke, line speed and trajectory are more important than brawn; (3) How to handle monofilament as a shooting or running line, (5) That distance casting is a wonderful exercise (and what an exhilarating feeling you'll have when you cast 150-feet and become a member of the exclusive "Orvis 150' Club)."

SCORING: Measure your longest cast within the five-minute casting session, and be sure to keep score to note your progress.

■ **QUALIFICATION FOR MASTERS LEVEL 10:** A 150-foot cast using a 9- or 10-wt. fly rod and shooting head within five minutes after first cast.