



THE SEXYLOOPS FLYCASTING CHALLENGE

ESSENTIAL LEVEL

TACKLE: 6WT DT Floater AFFTA conforming, min length 90ft. 2m hoop size - apart from Bow and Arrow cast; 0.5m. 9ft leader. Maximum rod length 9ft. Fly is greased wool or hookless fly. Three attempts at each task. Candidate must perform task successfully on at least one out of three attempts.

One possible variation is:

Line weights 4-6; tasks at 40ft, carry 50ft, distance 75ft

Line weights 7 and above; tasks at 40ft, carry 50ft, distance 90ft.

(For further details see full notes...)

ESSENTIAL LEVEL TEN TASKS

1 PICK UP AND LAY DOWN

PUALD 40 ft into target three times landing fly first, fly and line together, and finally line first running from rod tip to fly. Both shoulders. Three attempts each side.

RIGHT 1: 2: 3: LEFT 1: 2: 3:

2 ROLL CAST

Roll cast into a target 40ft. Both shoulders. Straight line.

RIGHT 1: 2: 3: LEFT 1: 2: 3:

3. REACH CAST

Reach Cast into a target 40ft left and right.

RIGHT 1: 2: 3: LEFT 1: 2: 3:

4 AERIAL MENDS

Mend. Target 40ft. Mend in middle. Left and right. Object placed mid point - minimum mend 3ft.

RIGHT 1: 2: 3: LEFT 1: 2: 3:

5 ROD/CASTING PLANES

from 40ft pick up vertical. 2 false casts vertical, two 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, back to 12, then 11, 10 and 9 o'clock, back to 12 for two false casts and deliver into target.

ATTEMPT 1: 2: 3:

6 ROLL CAST PICK UP

Roll cast pick up from 30ft and hit a target at 60ft - see notes below.

ATTEMPT 1: 2: 3:

7 OVERPOWERED CURVES

Overpowered curve cast around object at 30ft both sides. Approx 90 degree curve. Bend should be 2 metres or greater.

RIGHT 1: 2: 3: LEFT 1: 2: 3:

8 COLLAPSED CASTS

Collapse cast into target at 30ft using both roll and overhead casts. Repeat with opposite shoulders.

ROLL RIGHT 1: 2: 3: ROLL LEFT 1: 2: 3:
OVERHEAD RIGHT 1: 2: 3: OVERHEAD LEFT 1: 2: 3:

9 DISTANCE CAST

Double hauling carry 50ft of flyline for 30 seconds. Deliver past 75 feet between two lines 10ft apart. Repeat Backhand. No ticks. See notes.

RIGHT 1: 2: 3: LEFT 1: 2: 3:

10. BOW AND ARROW CAST

Bow and Arrow cast into a hoop at 20ft.

ATTEMPT 1: 2: 3:

Overview:

It's a natural progression at some point for the fly fisher to become interested in fly casting; after all if the fish doesn't see the fly properly - because we were too slow in delivering it, put the fly in the wrong place, failed to appreciate the complexity of the currents or cast the fly into a tree, then we don't catch that fish. One of the essences of fly fishing is fly casting, and being able to present a light-weight fly to a fish, using a loop of fly line, and with great delicacy is one of the essential skills.

Currently there are many fly fishers challenging themselves to become better fly casters through taking instructor examinations. However the purpose of taking an instructor examination is to *teach* fly casting and hopefully also fly fishing.

We envisage three or four levels to this "Sexyloops Casting Challenge". The first level is the "Essential Level" which is intended to challenge the caster - hence its name! It is not easy, but also it should be very much attainable with some dedicated practise. The casts on the whole are fishing orientated - learn these casts to the level where you can pass this test every time and you will definitely see the results in your fishing. These casts can all be found on www.sexyloops.com/flycast/

The test level is approx CI casting level of ability, slightly more fishing orientated, and clearly measurable because the fly either goes into the target or it doesn't. The purpose of the targets - apart from making the casts more purposeful - is to remove all ambiguity from the testing side. Now it has been questioned, what if there is a wind? Or what if there is no water for the roll cast? Instructor associations make allowances for the wind, although nowadays they all insist on water for the roll cast. As far as I'm concerned if it's too windy to perform the tests in the way that they were intended, then it is too windy to examine the test. If we make for allowances for conditions then unfortunately we open the door for ambiguity. This test is to be fully examined over water. However for ease of testing tasks 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10 *could* be examined over grass. If any portion of this test is examined over grass then no allowances are to be made.

Also it's very important that the test should be fun and examined in a friendly environment. We are all anglers here and exams can be very stressful. We want to get the absolute best from the candidate. Not everyone will pass this test first time. The candidate should practise and train so that 9 times out of 10 he can perform each task, in the Essential Level we are only asking him or her to be able to perform the task successfully 1 out of 3 attempts. If the candidate doesn't pass the test first time around, then when he/she does it will be even more satisfying. One time I spent three weeks fishing for a trout on the Water of Leith in Edinburgh, finally I caught it, it was no bigger than any of the other fish, but it sure as hell meant more.

Tackle Considerations:

This test is standardised to a 90ft or longer Double Taper 6 Floating Line that conforms to AFTM/AFFTA line ratings, ie the first thirty feet excluding the level tip should weigh approx 160 grains, 10.42 grams or 0.366 ounces. The line should be a visible colour - for example orange. Attached to the line should be a 9ft tapered leader - longer leaders will appear later in the Sexyloops Casting Challenge. The rod itself should be 9ft, it can be of any stiffness that the candidate prefers.

Possible tackle variations as mentioned at the start.

Distances and Hoop Sizes:

Distances are to be measured from a line behind which the caster stands to the centre of the hoop. The hoop for Essential Level is 2m in diameter - which gives an accuracy of 1m to the target. In the centre of the hoop can be a small ball which makes the tasks significantly easier (This is not competition accuracy!). The Bow and Arrow hoop size is reduced to 0.5m to make this particular task more challenging - and to give the candidate proper training in this cast.

The Challenge:

The Challenge is to perform every task with 100% success rate. The caster has three attempts at performing each task. On at least one of the three attempts he/she must perform the task correctly in order to be able to pass the complete examination. To pass the complete examination the candidate must have completed every task at least once correctly out of his or her three attempts.

In the event that the candidate has successfully completed 9 out of 10 tasks correctly, but failed one task, then he/she has three more attempts at the one task previously failed.

There shall be no ticks. Ticking counts as a failure of that attempt. We are not measuring loop sizes in the Essential Level, but we are testing for loop performance. The height of the caster's feet should be approximately level with the water. Line measurements are measured from fly to the line where the caster stands, apart from "carry" in exercise 9 which is the length of fly line measured from the fly line tip - ie without the leader - to the hauling hand.

There shall be no measuring. Lines must be unmarked. For tasks such as shooting into a target on roll-cast pickup, the line may *not* be measured to the reel! For this task it is expected that the caster "checks" the shoot with his/her line hand - as he or she would when fishing.

During the test there can be no coaching. The time for coaching was long before the test!

Ten Tasks Essential Level Challenge Explained:

1 PICK UP AND LAY DOWN.

PUALD 40 ft into target 1) fly first, 2) fly and line together, 3) line at rod tip first. Both shoulders.

Notes: PUALD is an essential cast, being able to cleanly, without disturbance, pick up the line, forming a nice tight loop is the essence of a good PUALD. Much practise time should be devoted to this simple cast using both shoulders.

The purpose of the fly first requirement is a control drill - that can also be very useful when fishing. The fly does not (and should not) tuck, only that the trajectories were used so that the fly lands first and the line lands straight. Fly and line together is a standard stream task. Fly line first running from rod tip to fly at this level is a control drill but has many uses later.

Three attempts off one shoulder. Three attempts off the opposite shoulder.

2 ROLL CAST.

Roll cast into a target 40ft. Both shoulders. Straight line.

Notes: Three attempts off one shoulder. Three attempts off the opposite shoulder.

3. REACH CAST.

Reach Cast into a target 40ft left and right.

Notes: This cast can be performed shooting line or not shooting line at the caster's preference. What matters is 1) that the fly hits the target and 2) that the reach is a full rod tip or more to the side and that 3) the line should be reasonably straight.

As most of us know, the Reach Cast is an extremely important cast, particularly for cross and downstream presentations.

4 MENDS.

Aerial Mend placing the fly in the Target at 40ft. Mend in middle. Left and right. Object to be placed mid-point 3 feet from the centre-line, both to the left and to the right.

5 CASTING (ROD) PLANES.

From 40ft pick-up vertical. 2 false casts vertical plane, two false casts 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, back to 12 for two false casts, then 11 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 9, o'clock back to 12 for two false casts and deliver the fly into target.

Notes: No ticking. Horizontal rod plane on the off-shoulder is a difficult cast.

6 ROLL CAST PICKUP.

Roll cast pick up from 30ft and hit a target at 60ft.

Notes: No false casting! There shall be one roll cast and one overhead cast. Line can be slipped while forming the D-loop. It is expected that the candidate shoots line on his overhead backcast. The line may not be measured and there must be plenty of line such that the candidate must check the shoot in order to be accurate.

7 OVER-POWERED CURVE CASTS.

Over-power curve cast around object at 30ft both sides. Approx 90 degree curve.

Notes: the line should bend a minimum of 2 metres. If the candidate bends the fly line and entire leader then this is really what he should be aiming for. Rod plane can be close to horizontal. The line must bend however, and not connect with the object. The object could be a 5m tall post.

The backhand over-powered curve is difficult and will take practise. The candidate may switch hands if he finds that easier.

8 COLLAPSED CASTS

Collapse cast into target 30ft roll and overhead. Both shoulders.

Notes: Most of the leader is expected to collapse into the target with the fly landing close to the end of the flyline. This is possibly the most underrated and yet most useful slack line fishing cast of all. There should be a minimum of approx six feet of slack line.

9 DISTANCE CASTING

Double Hauling carry 50ft of fly line for 30 seconds. Deliver the fly past 75 feet between two lines 10ft apart. Repeat Backhand. No ticks.

Notes: Line can be lengthened in the air prior to the delivery cast.

10. BOW AND ARROW CAST

Bow and Arrow cast into a hoop at 20ft. The hoop in this case is 0.5m diameter.

Notes: This is a good cast to practise with saucers at various distances!

Please have fun with this challenge. All enquiries on testing and certification can be addressed to me on paul@sexyloops.com

Paul Arden - 31st August 2018