

DISTANCE CASTING



Freespool adjustment

There are times when fishermen would like to make longer casts such as when shoreline fishing, spring fishing, or fishing the shallows when fish are spooky. This article will discuss equipment and techniques that can be used to get longer casts. We will also cover the disadvantages of longer casts. In his material, Buck Perry covered several ways to attain longer casts, and I have been fortunate over the years to have been given tips by Terry O'Malley, John Bales, and Don Dickson on how to improve casting. Most of the comments will relate to medium weight baitcasting equipment with artificial lures.

SPINNING vs. BAITCASTING

Spinning equipment usually gets more distance if equivalent rod, line, and weight lures are used, although newer baitcasting reels can get close. Lighter lure weights to ¼ ounce are best cast on spinning equipment with light line. Slow speeds and light lures are indicated for spring and late fall fishing. Warmer weather involves the use of heavier lures and faster speeds where baitcasting reels are best. Advantages are mostly in the baitcasting drag system, which is smoother and does not twist the line when the drag is pulled out. The more compact baitcasting reels seem to get more distance because there is less spool resistance and inertia. For surf fishing with long stiff rods, heavy weights, and strong line, spinning equipment seems to do best.

ROD LENGTH AND ACTION

6 feet is a common length for fishing rods and many are too flexible (light action) to have enough power to throw a ½ to 1 ounce lure. A 7 or 7 ½ foot medium-heavy rod would give better distance and still is workable.

GUIDES

With each line guide and the tip, there is rubbing and resistance as the line goes out on the cast. More guides create more resistance, shortening the cast. 5 guides, including the tip, would be adequate for a 7 foot rod. Most rods have more than that.

LURE WEIGHT AND STREAMLINING

3/8 to 1 ounce lures seem to be the most popular weight used for most gamefish. If the power of the rod (stiffness and taper) is matched with the weight of the lure, a heavier lure will get greater distance. With a given weight lure, some lures can be cast further because they have less air resistance when cast. For example, a ½ ounce bladebait weighs about the same as a #200 Spoonplug but can be cast much farther. For jump lures, Terry O'Malley prefers those that "cast like a bullet and sink like a rock"!

LINE DIAMETER AND STIFFNESS

Thinner and more flexible lines cast farther. However, it is wise to match the line with the lure weight. You would not want to cast a ¾ ounce lure with 6 pound line unless you are ready to lose lures---and fish! Lines come in many diameters, not necessarily related to pound test, especially when we compare mono to braid. Stiffness found in certain braids and inexpensive monofilament can often cut down on casting distance.

BAITCASTING REEL ADJUSTMENT

There are many good reels on the market. It is important to read the directions and learn how to adjust the drag system. The knurled knob for freespool adjustment (arrow) is especially critical. You must balance the lure weight with the looseness of the spool. With the lure attached, adjust the knob so the lure falls slowly, then try casting. If you get a backlash, the spool is too loose, so tighten it. If you get a short cast, loosen the knob slightly. You will quickly get a feel of how to adjust for the longest casts without getting a backlash.

REEL CLEANING AND OILING

Keeping your reels clean and periodically oiling them can result in more casting distance. However, over oiling can be a problem and gum them up. Use only tiny amounts of high quality reel oil and wipe off the excess. Quantum makes an excellent reel oil called "Hot Sauce". Some spray reel oils can be used on fishing lines also to lubricate the line for longer casts.

FULL SPOOLS OF LINE

With both spinning and baitcasting reels it is important to fill the spools with line to near the top. This allows the line to come off the spool faster and more freely for longer casts.

CASTING TECHNIQUE

This is one of the most important factors in getting long casts. It should be a long smooth motion with follow-through toward the 11 O'clock position, not down or abrupt stop. This takes time and practice to get it right. Instruction from an experienced caster and practice in your backyard is recommended. Always cast with the wind if possible for greater distance and fewer backlashes.

DISADVANTAGES OF LONG CASTS

One of the biggest disadvantages of a long cast is line stretch not allowing for a good hookset. Monofilament is especially vulnerable to stretch, and braid would work better. Even with braid, there is more bow in the line with a long cast that must be taken out. If you intend to fish an area thoroughly, shorter fan casts and re-anchoring the boat is recommended. More accurate cast placement, better feel, and better control of hooked fish will result.

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