

The Single Spey Cast



In what situation do we need a Single Spey Cast?

Although all Spey Casts can be used when there is no wind present, one of the first things to be taken into consideration when Spey Casting, must always be the direction of the wind if in attendance.

- **Wind direction and the important part it plays during Spey Casting.**

Although it is widely understood that Spey Casting was designed to be used when there are obstacles behind the angler, such as trees high banks etc where an extended cast behind, such as an overhead cast, would cause you all sorts of problems, it is often forgotten that they are a series of casts that are also dependant on wind direction. Obviously, if there is no wind in attendance, then this is not a problem, but as most anglers will tell you when arriving at the river with the intension of fly fishing, there is quite often an upstream wind or a downstream wind. This is what dictates which of the Spey Casting techniques you should adopt, not just to make your casting more efficient, but also much safer.

- **Which wind direction for which cast?**

At this juncture, let me just point out that a downstream wind necessitates the use of a **Double Spey cast** or it's counterpart the **Snake Roll**, (two of the techniques covered in six of the best) so therefore an upstream wind necessitates the use of a Single Spey cast and it's counterparts the **Snap T or Circle C cast**, (which I have also covered in six of the best) but for now let us concentrate on the Single Spey cast and why it performs better with an upstream wind.

As most of you will be aware, the left and right banks of a river are determined by turning your body to face downstream and thereafter the left bank is on your left and the right bank is on your right, so bearing this in mind, a Single Spey cast is adopted in an upstream wind whichever bank you may be fishing from, and believe me this does confuse some anglers, so let me explain.

- **Using the wind to your advantage.**

The casting weight or D shape of line that we create behind the rod prior to casting (as covered in articles 1 & 2) has to be placed on your safe wind side e.g. the side that the wind is blowing the D loop away from your body. So in the case of a Single Spey, taking into account that we have an upstream wind, our D loop (casting weight) must always be formed on our upstream side regardless of which bank you are on. This will give you a great advantage as the wind will fill

your D loop like a big sail allowing you more time than you would imagine to deliver a much more efficient cast. (see picture 1) The wind also assists you in keeping your fly line under tension, which is very important when progressively loading the rod spring during the forward acceleration. Notice how much more efficient a Yacht is when the wind fills its sail.



- The only rule to take into consideration when using a Single Spey cast with a double handed Salmon rod is as follows, when you are on the left bank of the river place your right hand uppermost on the handle (see picture 2) and when you are on the right bank of the river place your left hand uppermost on the handle (see picture 3). This prevents you from crossing your hands over during the set up of the D Loop and allows you to open up to the cast more effectively and therefore utilise a much longer casting stroke where required. Although this cast can also be made by crossing your hands over, this will not allow you to realise the full potential of your delivery due to its restriction and you will be more inclined to pull the rod across your body during the forward cast creating a tracking problem.

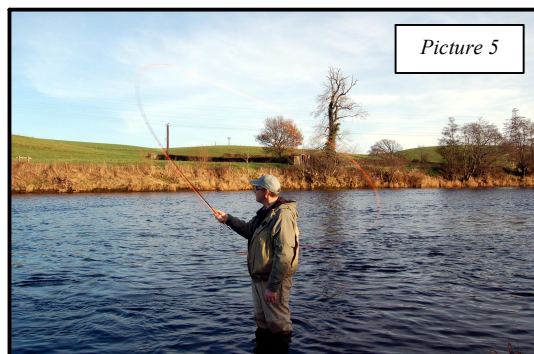


- **Tip**
Practise a little from time to time with your non-casting hand as this can be a great advantage when Spey Casting with single handed rods, and will also afford you more flexibility with both hands when fishing with Double Handed rods regardless of which bank you may be fishing from. This is not as difficult as it may sound, and a few sessions will improve your technique.
- **Executing the Cast**
As you will remember at the conclusion of my last article **The Jump Roll Cast** I mentioned that we were going to add a change of direction to that cast to create a Single Spey cast which will be of much more use to us than a jump roll cast on the river in a fishing situation. Bearing in mind the mechanics of the Jump Roll cast, (*article 2*) all we need to do with that cast to create a Single Spey is deliver it in a new direction e.g. 45 degrees from the bank down and across the stream and out into the river. It will now become apparent why we took the time to absorb and understand the Jump Roll technique. Let's give it a whirl.



body around during the cast, but I find it much easier if this movement is taken out of the equation prior to executing the cast, and from a learning point of view, it is one less movement to think about during the cast as you are now already facing your target from the outset.

- When your fly has fished out into your own bank, point your rod tip down towards your fly, as if you were going to execute a Jump Roll cast, now point your foot (*the one underneath your casting arm*) to your intended target. The rod will now be pointing downstream and across your body whilst you will be facing towards your new target out in the river (*see picture 4*). There is another technique that can be used here where the angler can swivel their body around during the cast, but I find it much easier if this movement is taken out of the equation prior to executing the cast, and from a learning point of view, it is one less movement to think about during the cast as you are now already facing your target from the outset.
- From this position, the mechanics of the Single Spey cast are almost exactly the same as the Jump Roll, the only difference being, that because you are now introducing a directional change into your cast, you have now to bring your fly line leader and fly much further around your body, so as to place your leader and fly into your anchor point position which is now upstream of you, but still as before, out to the side of the anglers casting shoulder (*approx. one to one and a half rod lengths*) prior to the forward delivery. Remember with all Spey Casts, all you are trying to do is create a roll cast set up with the D loop leader and fly all facing your intended target, rather like a large wheel, "if its not pointing that way it won't roll that way".
- The way I like to explain this process, is that every time you are Spey casting always wear a very large imaginary Sombrero. Raise the rod tip to the edge of the Sombrero, (*in the direction of your fished out fly*) then sweep it around the Sombrero creating a very shallow arc off your casting shoulder making sure that you find your anchor point. Do not at any point cut the edge of your Sombrero, as this will cause the fly line to take a different path.
- **Tip**
Remember, whichever path your thumb takes, the rod tip takes, and whichever path the rod tip takes the fly line takes. This can also assist you when fault finding.
- You are now ready to deliver the forward cast. This is done no different to the Roll cast and the Jump roll cast, smooth and progressive is the key, keeping your fly line under tension at all times, (*see picture 5*) and then lowering your rod tip after the stop at the end of the forward cast and in unison with the fly line leader and fly as they begin to fall for a good presentation.
- There are two alternative casts to the Single Spey in the form of the **Snap T, and Circle C casts**, which can also be used in an upstream wind and can be much easier to learn. I will explain these casts and the differences between the two in the next article.



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