

The Snap T & Circle C Casts



Do we need to restrict ourselves to a Single Spey Cast in an upstream wind situation?

The answer is No, as we have alternative options in the form of the Snap T & Circle C casts. Both casts enable us to keep our D Loop on our upstream side if faced with an upstream wind.

- As mentioned above, these casts are simply alternatives to the Single Spey cast, and although they can also be used effectively on calm days (*when there is no wind at all*) it is comforting to know, (*and important*) that like the Single Spey, they too can be used safely in an upstream wind situation. Not only can they be introduced into your armoury simply to break the monotony of Single Spey casting, but amongst other things, (*which we will visit below*) they can be easier to control than a Single Spey cast, especially in a strong upstream wind scenario. Here's why!
- **The Snap T**
In my opinion, the Snap T cast is not one you should try before learning the Circle C cast, as there is less room for error if executed incorrectly and therefore not as safe as the Circle C cast can be. This is because the fly will often pass the rod tip in close proximity whilst executing this cast and in some cases (*if done incorrectly*) actually collide with it, especially if it is a cast you are just getting to grips with. However, once mastered, it can be a great asset and one that will become very useful to you in difficult situations, especially along river banks where there are overhanging branches and other obstacles to contend with (*later mentioned below*).
- So that said, you may be wondering why I am about to explain the mechanics of the Snap T cast first as apposed to the Circle C cast. This is because, (*in my opinion*) it is easier to explain the transition between the two casts in this way, so that when you go out onto the river it will hopefully be easier to differentiate between the two, therefore understanding them better. I will let you decide!



• To start the Snap T cast, first face your target out into the stream (*as you did with the Single Spey cast*) and also as before, make sure that your rod tip is pointing downstream towards the fished out fly. "For now" raise the rod tip to 45 degrees (**Picture 1**) which will once again release some line from the water surface (*this lift may not be necessary once you have become proficient with the cast*). It is at this point where the Snap T cast will differ from that of the Single Spey cast. So, from this elevated position, (**Picture 1**) the rod tip should now be progressively accelerated upstream in a straight line path, (*directly in front of the angler*) to a position of around 45 degrees upstream of the angler before continuing into the next movement. (*Once again, as your cast improves, this stroke length may be altered to enable you to manipulate your anchor point positions, and the upstream lift can also be performed with a slight incline if beginning your upstream sweep directly from the water surface, however this technique is aimed at the more advanced caster*).

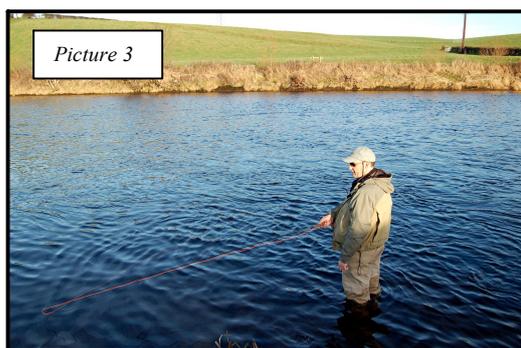
Explanation

This straight line path in front of you will be dictated by the angle you are facing e.g. if you want to cast 45 degrees out into the river the angle you will initially be facing will also be 45 degrees, and if you want to cast 90 degrees out into the river the angle you will initially be facing will be 90 degrees. Therefore the straight line path that the rod tip must take to pass directly in front of you will differ depending on the direction you want your cast to go. The easiest way to remember this is: Start with the rod tip pointing downstream with your fly in the fished out position, face your target, and wherever you are now facing, simply draw the required straight line path in front of your face (**Picture 2**).

- It is at this point, immediately following the accelerated upstream sweep, that the rod tip is cut underneath the moving fly line, with the introduction of a downstream chop, (**Picture 2**) (rather like chopping into the side of a tree with an axe). After the chop, the rod tip must then be casually drawn back downstream and into the bank, on the same straight line path from whence it came, until it eventually reaches the position it was in prior to the start of the cast, (rod tip just above the water surface) pointing downstream towards the fished out fly. You will notice (*in picture 2*) a similar shape (with rod and line) to that of a Capital T (hence the name Snap T). (If you are still not sure about the angle of the straight line path, stick your arms out to the side like an aeroplane whilst facing your target and between the two points is the straight line path the rod tip must take during both the upstream and the downstream movements of the cast).



- The downstream chop increases the line speed as it travels upstream and projects the fly onto the water upstream of the angler and into the anchor point position, approximately a rod to a rod and a half length out from the anglers casting shoulder (the same position as in the Single Spey). If these initial movements of the cast are performed correctly then you will find that you have an almost guaranteed anchor point position on the water. A distinct advantage over the Single Spey cast.



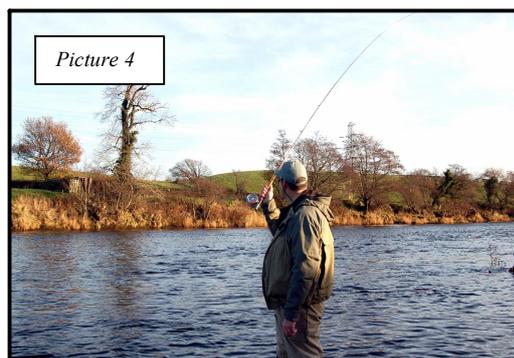
- Because (following the chop, or snap, as it is named) you have casually drawn your rod tip, and therefore your fly line, back downstream and into your own bank, (**Picture 3**) whilst at the same time your fly was being catapulted upstream and into your anchor point position, you are now presented with the availability of a long upstream sweep during the next part of the cast. It is this long sweep that affords you the luxury of being able to move the fly line (that is now laying on the water) in a

much more controlled manner, to enable you to create a large D Loop on your safe wind side, exactly as you would have required for a Single Spey cast. To do this you must now sweep the rod tip upstream and around your imaginary tilted Sombrero (see article 3) as if you were taking it up and around a spiral staircase (do not take the rod tip any further back than 45 degrees and keep it canted out to the side prior to the delivery) (**Picture 4**). You have now once again created a large D Loop on your upstream side, rather like a big sail filled with air, whilst facing the direction to which you are going to deliver your fly. You have already pre-determined your anchor point position, and your wheel (D loop) is ready to roll, i.e. a progressively accelerated forward delivery.

Explanation

If you did not continue into the downstream draw with your rod tip, following the snap, and simply left your rod tip pointing out in front of you, at the position shown in picture 2. Your fly would then travel too far upstream, causing your anchor point to land too far away from you and leaving you no sweep available to create an efficient D loop, in line with your target.

- Depending on your location, where you may often be faced with difficult situations such as overhanging trees etc. where a Single Spey cast, or for that matter a Circle C cast (or Circle Spey as it is often called) cannot be used because you would run the risk of throwing your fly line into the low branches of the trees, then the Snap T (and variations of this cast) will inevitably become very useful. In these particular situations (especially once you get to grips with this cast) your fly line, leader and fly can be accelerated from a downstream position (under low branches etc) directly from the water surface, without an initial lift, enabling you to keep the fly line low to avoid contact with the overhanging branches. The point at which you make the snap (or chop) can also vary allowing you to manipulate your anchor point position.



Try it for yourself

- Experiment with all these things using a piece of wool on the end of your leader, as apposed to a fly and finally, please note, the Snap T is not a user friendly cast when used in conjunction with large heavy flies and sunk lines, especially if you value your rod tip. This brings me nicely onto a cast that can be used in these situations: “The Circle C cast”.
- **The Circle C cast**
This for me is the more user friendly of the two casts to perform, and although you could argue that the Snap T can be a definite advantage in more confined spaces, such as overhanging trees etc. (*as discussed above*) the Circle C is a more versatile cast and can be executed in a much safer and leisurely manner, especially if attempting these casts for the first time. Here’s why!



- The main difference between the two casts manifests itself in the shape created in the air in front of the angler during the initial upstream and downstream movements of each of the individual casts, prior to the sweep into your D Loop. With the Circle C cast, this initial movement now becomes a circular rotation of the rod tip as apposed to the much narrower path taken in the previous cast culminating in a snap.
- Let me explain this further! Instead of the straight (*or even slightly inclined*) upstream acceleration, and the chopping of the tree with the axe that we discussed in the Snap T cast, (**Picture 2**) which gives you a fast and tight upstream casting loop that could potentially cause the fly to come very close to your rod tip, (**Picture 5**) a simple circular movement of the rod tip can now be introduced into the cast. This circular movement is in the shape of a capital C (*hence the name Circle “C” cast*) or alternatively, an inverted capital C (Like this \complement) depending on which bank you are fishing from (*remember these casts can both be used safely and efficiently in an upstream wind regardless of which bank you are fishing from as long as your D Loop is created on your upstream side*).
- **So here we go.** Raise the rod tip to 45 degrees, (*as in the Single Spey and the early learning stages of the Snap T cast*) but this time continue into a very circular movement in the form of a large capital C, or inverted C, (*as described above*) depending on which bank you are fishing from (*Left Bank, inverted \complement*) as shown in (**Picture 6**) and right bank, (*normal C*). Continue around the C shape with a progressive acceleration, (*as always*) once again drawing your rod tip continuously on and into your bank as before. Everything from now on is exactly the same as the Snap T cast.
- All the rules we covered in the Snap T cast with regard to angles and straight line paths etc. still apply, the only significant difference at this stage is the more open (C) shape you have now created, as apposed to the much flatter (>) shape created during the Snap T (**Picture 5**). The anchor point will still be directed to the same place (*off your casting shoulder*) as it was in the Snap T, however, your fly, or flies, will now be much further away from your rod tip during the set up of the cast, therefore creating a much safer cast.
- The most significant and noticeable differences with this cast compared to the Snap T are two fold (**a**) the distance that your fly, or flies, are away from the rod tip during the initial circular movement of the cast, (*as described above*) and (**b**) the amount of time available to you throughout the set up of the cast, which actually allows you time to observe what is happening during this process. This is always a big advantage.
- Remember, (*as discussed earlier*) to complete the Circle C cast everything after the Circular movement (*returning your rod tip back to your bank etc*) is exactly the same as your Snap T cast, including the delivery. The only difference there might be, is the angle of the climb around your imaginary Sombrero, (*spiral staircase*) as this will be determined by how much space you have available to you during this sweep, e.g. where a Snap T is deployed under overhanging branches etc, the climb (*or incline*) will be much shallower to avoid your fly line catching these branches. If all of these things have been executed correctly then your Circle C cast will be successful.



Additional Information



surface tension and all the way around the climbing sweep (*spiral staircase*) to create your D loop. This will therefore afford you much more control over what you are trying to achieve during the final set up stages of these casts, which as with all Spey casts is simply to create your basic roll cast position (*albeit with a larger D Loop*) as efficiently as possible prior to the delivery of the cast (*this surface tension also assists with the loading of the rod, helping to create this bigger D loop*).

- You may remember, at the beginning of this article, I mentioned that the Snap T and Circle C casts can be easier to control than a Single Spey cast, especially in a very strong upstream wind situation. This is because, during the upstream sweep into your D Loop, (*after the circular movement*) you are actually using the surface tension of the water to grip your fly line, leader, and fly, which in turn, allows you to stay in better contact with the cast as you peel it from this surface tension and all the way around the climbing sweep (*spiral staircase*) to create your D loop. This will therefore afford you much more control over what you are trying to achieve during the final set up stages of these casts, which as with all Spey casts is simply to create your basic roll cast position (*albeit with a larger D Loop*) as efficiently as possible prior to the delivery of the cast (*this surface tension also assists with the loading of the rod, helping to create this bigger D loop*).
- The additional control that these casts can offer you are often a great advantage over the Single Spey cast, especially when you have a very strong upstream wind in attendance as your D Loop can often get away from you in these situations (*loss of control*). This is partly due to the fact that because you have to lift your fly line clear of the water during the upstream sweep (*with a Single Spey cast*) and place it quite accurately into your anchor point position again, this can often prove very difficult to do, especially when learning the Single Spey cast for the first time as your anchor point will often be inconsistent which will only exacerbate the problem. However, in these very windy conditions you're Snap T and the Circle C casts can also give you an additional advantage over your Single Spey cast in this area too, because if it is set up correctly, then your anchor point position is almost guaranteed. Always remember, with all of these casts, that once your D Loop is formed, deliver the cast high to assist with distance and a good presentation. (**Picture 7**).
- The Snap T and Circle C casts can be used efficiently with both the double and single handed fly rods, not only for traditional Spey lines, (*in the situations explained earlier*) but also for shooting heads and Skagit lines with very heavy flies, (*Circle C only*) often used on double handed rods. The Circle C cast will lift these lines relatively easily (*even sinking lines*) and lay your fly/flyes out straight on the water (*into your anchor point position*) during the circular movement of the cast, with less chance of your flies tangling with the leader, and also if executed correctly it will guarantee your anchor point position prior to the delivery of the cast as mentioned above.
- The Circle C cast can also be a big advantage when fishing for Trout or Grayling on your single handed rod, whilst using a team of spiders or a couple of heavy bugs, as your flies will once again lay out in a straight line on the water following the circular movement of your rod tip, allowing for a clean delivery, with no chance of a crashed anchor, (*fly line, Leader and fly landing in a heap*) which could happen with a Single Spey cast, causing a monumental tangle that will waste you valuable fishing time either untangling it or having to make up a new leader. As you can see, it most definitely has its uses.
- When we are using these casts in a fishing situation, the cast that is most commonly used (*where possible*) is actually a combination of the two techniques and more of an oval shape is adopted as apposed to the sharp Snap (*of the Snap T*) or the wide Circle (*of the Circle C*) which is quite comfortable to do, very efficient, and will cover most upstream wind situations.
- In the next article I will be taking a look at the Double Spey cast, and why we need to be ready to change to this technique (*when required*) at the drop of a hat.

Clive Mitchelhill