

Clive Mitchelhill

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For those of you, who I have not yet had the good fortune to meet, my name is Clive Mitchelhill and I am a fully qualified, full time, game angling Instructor living in Cumbria, specialising in fly casting and fly fishing techniques. I mention both, because in my opinion they really are two separate entities. That said I am also a firm believer that without realising your full casting potential you cannot reap the benefits that this can bring to your fishing, and ultimately improve your success as an angler.

Apart from being a very keen angler for well over 40 years now, I am also an active member of the Association of Advanced Professional Game Angling Instructors and hold all of their qualifications for both Single and Double handed rods. I also hold all of the Federation of Fly Fishers USA qualifications.

During my time as a dedicated game angler I have often adopted a variety of baits and lures to produce the desired results, this, in my opinion, has not only given me a better understanding of my quarry, but has also given me a real insight into their preferred environment, and therefore where you are likely to find them in ever changing conditions, especially when fishing on rivers. However, over the years I must admit, nothing has given me more pleasure, nor has been more rewarding, than my fly fishing, during which time I have discovered a few things along the way (*which I might add is an ongoing process*).

Therefore, if I may, I would like to share some of these discoveries with you and in this instance I refer to a group of casts known as the Spey casts, so called, (*as many of you will already know*) because they originated on the banks of the River Spey in Scotland, where large sections of the river is tree lined, creating many natural obstacles behind the angler making the overhead cast very difficult to execute at times, although this is not the only reason why (*in certain situations*) we need to be able to produce, (*as well as to understand*) a good Spey cast, especially in difficult situations on running water. Over a series of articles which I have labelled Six Of The Best I would like to explain this further.

Food for Thought:

Checking for obstacles behind and considering the elements are things that are often overlooked prior to casting your fly on the water. The main element in question is wind, but not only the fact that it may be a windy day, but also the direction in which the wind is blowing. This will be a major factor in the choice of cast you will require for a safe and efficient presentation of your fly. When considering wind direction, also take into account the direction the river is flowing (*if on a river*) i.e. is it an upstream wind or is it a downstream wind? Already we have given ourselves three things to take into consideration when approaching the river, and that's before we get started:

- (a) Obstacles behind.
- (b) Wind direction (*if any*).
- (c) The direction of flow.

All of these factors will have a bearing on the way in which we decide to tackle the job in hand, but first and foremost, making the right decision will allow us to enjoy our day's fishing in a safe and relaxing manner. Another compelling reason for us to learn these Spey casting techniques, (*and there are several of them*) is that they can also potentially improve our success rate, as it will allow us to deliver a fly safely into areas that have been inaccessible to us in the past. It is only now that your fly fishing techniques will begin to evolve and your confidence will grow. This is when fly casting begins its transition into fly fishing.

Over the course of the six articles (*shown in the links below*) I will be visiting this brief introduction in more depth to hopefully provide a better understanding of the advantages of Spey Casting. I am also very aware that there are already many good Spey casters out there and it is far from my intension to teach Granny how to suck eggs, but hopefully within the following articles there may be something for everyone, (*however small*) as there is often a big difference between being able to cast well and understanding the mechanics of what you are trying to achieve, ultimately improving your technique.

In article 1 (*from left to right*) I would like to take a look at the *Roll Cast*, as it is this cast that is the corner stone to a successful Spey casting technique, and one that is often neglected by many anglers.

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