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The Casting Pool

Illustration by Gordy Allen

Corkscrew Curve Cast

(FOR THE EXPERT CASTER)

**BOB PELZL
and
GARY BORGER**

A BETTER METHOD of casting a curve in the fly line has long been needed. Several methods are commonly used, but each has its limitations. Turning the wrist over at the end of the power stroke produces a wide, open curve, when a sharp, tight curve may be called for instead. A sharper curve can be made by using a sidearm stroke and overpowering the cast; however, there is often not room on the stream to tip the rod to one side and make the cast. The underpowered curve cast requires accurate timing and controlled energy application to achieve anything better than a sloppy delivery, and even then it is at the mercy of the slightest breeze. It is also difficult to shoot line with any of these casts and still control the line's curve.

A method that removes these limitations, and that we have come to call the corkscrew curve cast, was developed as a result of a casual discussion we had about curve casting. Bob began working on a method that had been mentioned in our discussion only in an offhand way. The original discussion led him to experiment extensively in an attempt to duplicate what he thought had been described. After numerous practice sessions, the tip of the line began to fall in a sharp, right-angle curve. But the method he used was like no other we had ever seen.

With mounting enthusiasm we analyzed this new cast. One exciting feature was that the curve remained intact while shooting line, even when using the double haul. The ability to add energy with the double haul also helped make the cast manageable in the wind. Control emerged as a major advantage of this cast over other curve casts—the line was easy to control even

with weighted flies or small shot on the leader. Finally, we performed the cast with the rod held in the normal vertical plane, the line traveling straight behind and straight forward, then hooking around.

The corkscrew curve cast is neither a variation of the underpowered curve cast nor a variation on the overpowered curve cast. It is, rather, the result of two traveling waves, or loops: a simple pulse loop followed by a corkscrew-shaped loop. As we explain the cast, keep in mind that these traveling loops form the curve.

TO MAKE A NORMAL forward cast, the rod is accelerated smoothly and stopped positively (Figure 1). The extra hand motions used to execute the corkscrew curve cast are made at the end of the forward power stroke and are completed the moment the rod is stopped. They come during the period of fastest line acceleration. For a curve to the left, you bring the rod forward. Then, as full power is applied to the stroke, your casting hand moves sharply to the left a short distance, sharply back to the right, and finishes with a tight, clockwise, semicircular movement that ends with a positive stop (Figure 2). You make these motions rapidly and with the same amount of energy as you apply to a normal cast. Your casting wrist is not rotated during any of these motions; rather, it is kept stiff while you move your forearm to make the rod trace the required path.

The left-and-right motions start the line around in a wide curve to the left. Moving the rod farther left and right will cause more line to hook around the final curve.

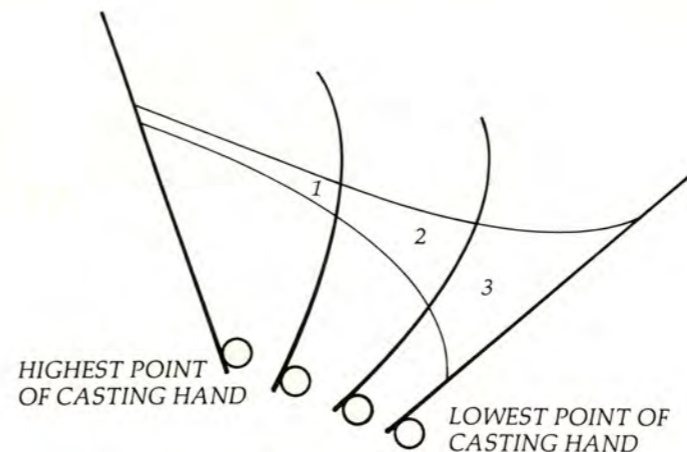


Figure 1. Movement of the rod during the normal forward casting stroke. The width of the rod's path indicates the relative speed of the rod. The numbered zones are where the movements shown in Figure 2 are superimposed on the basic casting stroke to curve the line tip to the left. To curve the line tip to the right, superimpose the movements shown in Figure 3.

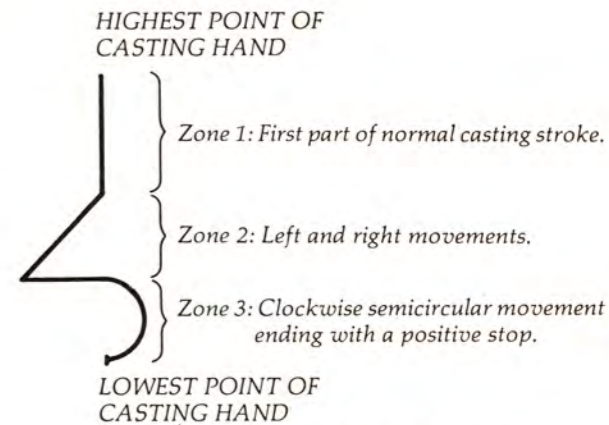


Figure 2. Path of the hand (as seen from behind) when making the left-hand corkscrew curve cast.

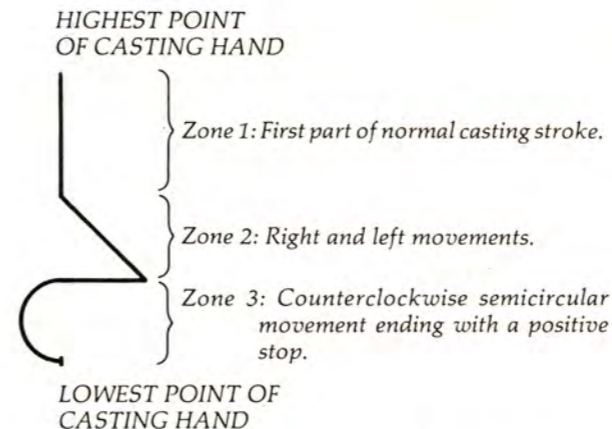


Figure 3. Path of the hand (as seen from behind) when making the right-hand corkscrew curve cast.



The semicircular motion generates a corkscrew in the line. If your casting hand traces less than a semicircle, a complete corkscrew will not develop, and the line will form a wide curve beginning at the tip of the rod. If you make a full circle, two corkscrews will develop, and the line will end up a tangled mess. When you make a cast correctly, the single corkscrew travels forward, following the pulse set up by your

left-and-right hand motions. The result is a sharp hook to the left that forms in the very end of the line. A mirror image of the motions used for the left-hand curve will produce a right-hand curve (Figure 3).

Practice the basic pattern without the rod, moving your hand through the correct path slowly and repeating the motions again and again until they blend together and feel comfortable. Then practice for speed.

If the motions seem too confusing when you pick up the rod, revert to the dry-run sessions. Don't be discouraged if your first attempts fail to yield the desired result. It takes practice to add the extra movements at the proper time. But the satisfaction of watching your corkscrew curve cast shoot forward and drop to the water, angling sharply to a rising trout, will make the practice worthwhile.

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