

Clive Mitchelhill

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For those of you who do not know me, my name is Clive Mitchelhill, and I am a fully qualified, full time game angling Instructor, 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 the past 40 years, I am also a member of the Association of Advanced Professional Game angling Instructors in the UK and the Federation of Fly Fishers USA for which

I hold all of their casting qualifications for both Single and Double handed rods.

Over the years I have used a variety of fishing methods such as baits and lures, as well as the fly, to produce the desired results, which in my opinion not only gives you a good understanding of your preferred quarry, but also a good understanding of it's environment and therefore where it likes to reside in the river, as well as how it reacts to different baits etc, but over many years, nothing has given me more enjoyment 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 things with you, and over a series of articles which I have described as Six Of The Best I would like to focus on 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 a large section of the river is tree lined, therefore 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 we need to understand, as well as be able to produce, a good Spey cast, especially in difficult situations on running water.

Allow me to explain:

First of all we need to consider the elements, something that is 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.

Already we have given ourselves three things to take into consideration when we approach the river. (a) Obstacles behind, (b) the direction of flow, and (c) Wind direction (*if any*) in relation to the flow of the river. 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, although another compelling reason for us to learn these Spey casting techniques, (*and there are several of them*) is that it can also potentially improve our success rate, as it will allow you to deliver a fly safely into areas that have been inaccessible to you in the past. It is now that your fly-fishing techniques will evolve and your confidence will begin to grow. This is when fly-casting begins its transition into fly-fishing.

Over the course of the six articles shown below I will visit this brief explanation in more depth to give a better understanding of the advantages of Spey Casting.

I am also very aware that there are 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, and there is often a big difference between being able to cast well and understanding the mechanics of what you are trying to achieve which may ultimately improve your technique.

In article one, (*from left to right below*) 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.