

HAULS. TEACHING - By Gary Eaton

On INSTRUCTING double haul for overhead casts

I try not to teach skills that need to be un-learned or modified significantly as the caster progresses. My experience with the *mirror image* description leads to questions like, "Where does the mirror sit to generate that image in both directions?" and "Does that mean I should be reaching as far with my rod hand as I am with my hauling hand?" The plethora of literal and visual inconsistencies remain a reason that I save it for a last resort in describing simultaneous and matching acceleration and reach of double hauls. More advanced casters may tolerate it with less disruption.

Most of the verbal descriptions of the haul inadequately convey the transforming dynamic that this skill adds to casting. Mel Krieger's "down-up" with and without pantomime probably reach as close to solid basis for verbal and visual practice as any. The downward pull of the line against the resistance of the loaded rod is pretty intuitive; as I described in the hauled pick-up of line from the surface. What is counter-intuitive and hard to instill is the "**up**" of Mel's "down-up" repetition. Instructors *demonstrate* the haul and *describe* the haul, but nothing works like the kinesthetic of feeling the critical "give back" portion of the haul as Joan Wulff describes it in her *Dynamics* video.

Going back to the described $\geq 40\%$ one-hand shoot, this is the ideal foundation to introduce the kinesthetic *feel* of the powerful increase in line speed by the line hand haul. I encourage all instructors to try this with some individual students and see if they like it. My students report benefit. The procedure follows -

- 1) Have the caster with a good ($\geq 40\%$) one-hand shoot, as previously described, hold the line about a foot behind where it is gripped by the rod hand index finger for shooting. You will need a foot or so of line stripped from the reel and hanging beneath the rod hand index finger.
- 2) Have the caster hold the line with just thumb and one or two fingertips. This imparts some lightness of grip and enhances sensitivity for the following part.
- 3) When the line is shot by pointing the index finger that clamped the line against the handle (*like shooting with your hand as an imaginary pistol*), have the line hand "ride-up" toward the stripping guide. It may take a couple of tries to feel the shooting line *assist the line hand* in this **up** movement. A stronger one-hand shoot enhances the sensation.
- 4) Reinforce that this "ride-up" is the *feel* of the "**up**" portion of the "down-up". The implication being that this nuanced awareness helps the caster.

After very few repetitions of experiencing this "*up assist*" feel, most people recognize a portion of the double haul process that seemed less clear from mere verbal descriptions and watching demonstrations. The counter-intuitive part of the haul recovery, or double

haul, achieves another dimension, *rhythm*.

5) At this point I let the student run wild, experimenting with synchronous movement of the line hand with the line shoot for a few **forward** casts. I interject that everyone occasionally crashes and loses grip or timing and not to be discouraged. Then I move to other indicators of haul prowess for increased loop / line speed and power.

- 1) No slack between the line hand and the stripping guide (tight like a banjo string; rubber band; spring-etc) {Lots of people pull the line to remove slack and pretend it is a haul. I expect a haul to increase line speed or rod bend by pulling with the line hand}
- 2) Line accelerating into the stripping guide "like a kid slurping a spaghetti noodle" or "a fast fish on a run"
- 3) Sensing that the "haul" is bending the rod butt slightly more deeply than without the haul (I suggest that an inch of bend of the thick butt section is worth a foot of bend at the tip as an inexact analogy to embed the tremendous value of the more deeply flexed butt section)
- 4) The hands become more automatically together at STOP to make ready for the next hand separating haul.

This is where I remind people that their back-cast "shoots" are typically only about one-fifth as effective as good forward "shoots". We have been practicing one-handed back cast shooting along with forward shoots.

We begin the analogous process for developing a feel for the back cast shoot, **up-assist**, **rhythm**, and **taught feel**. Usually this is where people need more reminders not to try to *push* the line into the stripping guide, creating slack. They know what "up-assist" feels like on forward casts and quickly discover that the sensation is much more subtle on most back casts.

Other exercises, in no particular order, include-

- Closing the eyes and "*feeling* the rod bend" and how this changes with and without the haul.
- Focusing on the line entering the stripping guide and allowing no slack
- Putting the haul movement to a musical beat. Most people can infer a waltz or similar pattern
- Focus on smoothness in line hand and rod movement acceleration
- Increasing and decreasing speed of casting and hauling stroke
- Increasing and decreasing length of haul stroke for a constant *carry*
- Initiating the haul at mid stroke, then early, then late - and feeling the altered "*up-*

assist"

- Reducing the force and power used to both move the rod and apply the haul (much elbow pain from casting occurs from hauling movement that is "aggressive")

When the students have worked out the kinks of this series we take one back cast and forward shoot off of a double haul. We repeat this until consistency improves. Often shoulder-girdle rotation will cause deviated SLP and casting arcs creep too wide.

When these are smoothed out, we try two back and two forward false casts with shoot. Kinks need to be worked-out and I often return to exercises employed previously.

For most people discovering good double haul technique, the primary benefit is less effort in their casting and using the haul to defeat variations in casting stroke or tip travel. In this phase, most people only increase their shoot as a percentage of length of fly line *carried* about ten percent. Often they dramatically increase the length of line that they can carry beyond the rod tip. (Casting induced pain often increases with increased distances cast.)

The combination of longer carry and more consistent loop control may generate relatively large increases in maximum distance cast. Gradually shooting line into false casts provides opportunities to discover new sensations and loop pictures including *overhang, hinging, and casting injuries*. As distance milestones are met most casters need to regain good SLP and optimal tracking for efficiency of longer casts.

Commonly the kinesthetic aspect of line "give back" is not developed in the sequence of instructing double-haul skills. This sequential method provides emphasis on a critical element for helping students feel an important part of the double haul movement.

Gary Eaton

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