

SLACK LINE CASTS AND MENDS

The nomenclature in the fly-casting literature can be confusing as we consult the works of several authors. Soft or no real distinctions between "casts" and "mends" have been made over the years.

As you know, my "working definitions" of a mend are, "Alteration of the position and layout of the line after the cast", or "Repositioning the line after the cast". We don't have any official definition as yet.

You CAN make a long series of wiggles on the cast. Sometimes called the "STUTTER CAST". Start the vibrations (wiggles) the second you begin your forward stroke and continue them 'til your stop sequence begins. Works for me even at hi speed. The disadvantage of doing it this way is that I cannot control the placement of the curves as I can when I make them as mends after the cast. Works OK, however, if mend placement isn't an issue.

Interesting that I have not found that described clearly in any of the texts I've studied as a pure and simple wiggle move made strictly during the cast. I think Jason Borger comes closest in the modern literature :-

Check out figure 11-3 and figure 11-4, pp. 183 and 184 of **Jason Borger's NATURE OF FLY CASTING**, 2001. These are CASTS... not MENDS. In my opinion his text makes it more complicated than I think it really is as he describes it as a **"...true Puddle Cast family (it is not a puddle mend)."** Then he goes on to describe it as a **"cross body cast with a backhanded flip"** performed in the vertical rod plane.

Now let's go back in time as we consult C.L. Cliff Netherton's **ANGLING AND CASTING**, 1977, p 85. I quote, **"The slack-line cast is sometimes used in running water to delay the drag of a floating fly. The cast is made by putting a slight wiggle into the rod top on the forward cast, causing the line and leader to land on the water in a series of small curves."** (Photo's on the same page.)

Going one year back to **In The RING OF THE RISE**, by Vincent Marino, 1976, pp. 34-35, we find quite another description of what he called the "wiggle cast" " : **"The final or power cast is driven rod high parallel with the water. The rod point is stopped high, thus killing the headway of the cast, causing the front and or leader portion to kick backward, thus allowing the leader and some of the line to fall in compact loose coils out he water. "** (I've heard casters refer to this as a "bounce-back cast". I have trouble controlling this one.)

For a soft landing, a similar layout can be achieved with a well controlled pile cast ("stack cast", "puddle cast", "dump cast", "parachute cast".... etc.) Here we rely on the leader & line collapsing in a series of waves by making the cast high with slow to moderate line speed after a low trajectory back cast. It works because there simply isn't enough energy in the system to carry the unfurling forward loop out and up against gravity resulting in a contrived collapse as the rod is lowered ("rod fade").

Marinaro also described this, but I think is best described on pp. 182 - 190 of Lefty Kreh's **CASTING WITH LEFTY KREH**, 2008. Great photos!

Lefty also describes his SLACK LINE CAST in his **ADVANCED FLY CASTING**, 1994, Lefty's Little Library of Fly Casting Series, pp. 141-144. Here, he emphasizes a slow cast such that the energy is exhausted as the leader straightens at which point the rod & arm are lowered. "**Illustration 149 - The instant the fly line and leader are fully extended the total forward cast is finished, drop the arm and the rod as shown. you will find that numerous and desirable soft waves have been created in the forward portion of the line and leader**" then follows with : "**Illustration 150 - But, if the rod remains elevated for even a few seconds, as shown, few, if any, waves will be created in the line.**"

Mac Brown, in his **CASTING ANGLES** writes about the SLACK CAST... However, on p. 168, Figure 7.15 he depicts a slack line MEND, (as I view it) since the back and forth movements of the rod are made after the cast. Same with his text on p. 169.

Doug Swisher & Carl Richards wrote about the "stutter cast" in their FLY FISHING STRATEGY. Their description on p. 28 : "**Still another method of producing slack line is what we call the 'stutter cast'. To perform this cast, make the rod quiver or vibrate back and forth in the horizontal plane as the line shoots out.**" (Mending, as I see it.) The "cast" and layout is depicted on p. 28 at the bottom. Doug taught this to me immediately after he'd passed me years ago on my CCI exam years ago. He also showed my how to do it during the casting stroke along with the differences in controlling the layout.

Ed Jaworowski, in his book, **THE CAST**, 1992, also calls it an "S-CAST" or "SERPENTINE CAST". He shows it as what I'd call a wiggle mend on pp. 170 & 171.

On p. 169 he describes it that way in text.

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