



A beautiful summer of casting ahead. Participate. Enjoy it!

Are you ready for the big one?

The 96th American Casting Association National Tournament. Lexington, Kentucky. Home of racing, great food, warm hospitality, but also home to the Blue Grass Sportsmen's League, which will host the tournament. Those of us who were privileged to attend the 93rd National know that it's the place to be August 2-7 2004. You'll find all the details inside. Be sure to read the Ground Rules (page 8) that are in effect for this National .

The tournament trail...

The Canadian National championships, the Kentucky State, the results from the Scarborough Open etc.

Those tricky leader "win-win" formulas revealed

Okay, no more excuses about fly-casting leaders. Some of the best fly casters reveal their secret leader formulas. All you have to do is tie them, practice, practice and practice some more.

Q & A:
John Seroczynski

The president of the ACA. The affable, energetic *tour de force* of competitive casting is interviewed for his thoughts, opinions and suggestions on tournament casting.

. The way we were...

What was tournament casting like 50+ years ago? We searched the archives of the *Chicago Tribune* and were we shocked! Read about the popularity of tournament casting in decades past and you'll see what we mean.



The Canadian Casting Championships was sponsored by the Toronto Sportsmen's Association, June 12 and 13 under the able leadership of Pete Edwards. Both accuracy and distance events were held. Above: Some of the casters warm up for the tournament. Here are some of the results:

<u>DRY FLY – A CLASS</u>	<u>BASS BUG – B CLASS</u>	<u>5/8 OZ. – A CLASS</u>	John Seroczynski 48	<u>7.5 GRAM DISTANCE</u>
Zack Willson 97	Randy Olson 88	Harvey Beck 97		Dick Fujita 257
Ed Lanser 96	Doug Ryder 80	John Seroczynski 93	<u>ACCURACY FLIES – B</u>	Harvey Beck 247
Dick Fujita 95	Greg Herring 79	Ed Lanser 92	Randy Olson 29	Zack Willson 246
			Greg Herring 49	
<u>DRY FLY – B CLASS</u>	<u>1/4 OZ. – A CLASS</u>	<u>5/8 OZ. – B CLASS</u>	Doug Ryder 61	<u>2-HAND FLY DIST.</u>
Randy Olson 97	Zack Willson 95	Gus Beushausen 92		Harvey Beck 224
Michael Wong 87	Ed Lanser 93	Phil Seroczynski 82	<u>ACC'Y PLUGS – B</u>	John Seroczynski 221
Greg Herring 84	Harvey Beck 92	Martha Lanser 49	Gus Beushausen 20	Dick Fujita 219
			Phil Seroczynski 47	
<u>TROUT FLY – A CLASS</u>	<u>1/4 OZ. – B CLASS</u>	Combined Events	Doug Ryder 140	<u>1-HAND FLY DIST.</u>
John Seroczynski 96-96	Gus Beushausen 93	<u>ACCURACY FLIES – A</u>		Harvey Beck 172
Zack Willson 96-94	Phil Seroczynski 84	Zack Willson 16	<u>ALL ACCURACY – B</u>	Zack Willson 168
Dick Fujita 93	Doug Ryder 63	John Seroczynski 21	Doug Ryder 201	Randy Olson 161
		Harvey Beck 24		
<u>TROUT FLY – B CLASS</u>	<u>3/8 OZ. – A CLASS</u>	<u>ACC'Y PLUGS – A</u>	<u>2-H REV SPOOL DIST.</u>	<u>ANGLERS FLY DIST.</u>
Greg Herring 88	Harvey Beck 98	Harvey Beck 13	Harvey Beck 276	John Seroczynski 155
Randy Olson 86	Zack Willson 96	Zack Willson 21	Dick Fujita 276	Zack Willson 153
Michael Wong 83	Bill Burke 95	Bill Burke 24	Zack Willson 258	Harvey Beck 152
<u>BASS BUG – A CLASS</u>	<u>3/8 OZ. – B CLASS</u>	<u>ALL ACCURACY – A</u>	<u>2- H SPINNING DIST.</u>	<u>DISTANCE PLUGS</u>
Ed Lanser 92	Gus Beushausen 95	Zack Willson 37	Dick Fujita 350	Dick Fujita 883
John Seroczynski 91-94	Phil Seroczynski 87	Harvey Beck 37	Harvey Beck 344	Harvey Beck 867
Zack Willson 91-93	Martha Lanser 59		Gus Beushausen 322	Zack Willson 821

DISTANCE FLIES

Harvey Beck	548
Zack Willson	536
John Seroczynski	524

ALL DISTANCE

Harvey Beck	1415
Dick Fujita	1384
Zack Willson	1357

GRAND ALL ROUND POSITION PLACING

Harvey Beck	24
Zack Willson	28
John Seroczynski	36

**Attend the
BIG ONE
the 96th
ACA National
Details inside**

2004 Kentucky Open Casting Championships

May 15 & 16, 2004 Sponsored by the Blue Grass Sportsmen's League

Dry Fly Accuracy

Men's A

Zack Willson	98
--------------	----

Men's B

Pat McFadden	80
--------------	----

Women

Beth Statt	78
------------	----

Trout Fly Accuracy

Men's A

Zack Willson	98
--------------	----

John Seroczynski	98
------------------	----

Men's B

Pat McFadden	85
--------------	----

Women

Beth Statt	79
------------	----

Bass Bug Accuracy

Men's A

B.I. Farley	93
-------------	----

Men's B

Pat McFadden	85
--------------	----

Women

Beth Statt	75
------------	----

1/4 Oz. Plug Accuracy

Men's A

Zack Willson	97
--------------	----

Men's B

Phil Seroczynski	91
------------------	----

Women

Beth Statt	86
------------	----

3/8 Oz. Plug Accuracy

Men's A

John Seroczynski	99
------------------	----

Men's B

Greg Delabar	76
--------------	----

Women

Beth Statt	92
------------	----

5/8 Oz. Plug Accuracy

Men's A

Zack Willson	96
--------------	----

Men's B

Phil Seroczynski	92
------------------	----

Women

Beth Statt	81
------------	----

Intermediate

Brigett McClanahan	56
--------------------	----

COMBINED EVENTS

Accuracy Flies

Zack Willson	286
--------------	-----

Accuracy Plugs

Zack Willson	286
--------------	-----

All Accuracy

Zack Willson	572
--------------	-----

■ In the distance events, John Seroczynski won the Angler's Fly, One-Hand Distance Fly, Distance Flies and All Distance combined events with a score of 1355.

■ Dick Fujita and David Roberts tied in the Distance Plugs with 881.

■ Weather conditions were very poor for the distance events.

2004 Scarborough Open Championship

Despite very windy conditions which adversely affected scores in the accuracy events, the Scarborough Open Tournament Casting Championship, held at Scarborough, Ontario, June 5 and 6, was very successful.

Reports Gord Deval: "Harvey Beck eked out a win in the All-Round over John Seroczynski by a single point. The hotly contested *Best Sport Trophy* was won by Harold Higdon in his first casting tournament who bravely cast all six accuracies. Sharon McIntyre was also in the running for that honor, along with our scorekeeper, Deb Lloyd. If you're surprised at some of the rather poor scores in the accuracy games, it must be pointed out that the casters had to contend with extremely windy conditions."

John Seroczynski won the Class A Dry Fly with a remarkable 97 despite winds. Jay Hackney took first place in the Class B Dry fly with a score of 82.

The Class A Bass Bug was won by Harv Beck with 90, while Gord Deval beat Jim Lloyd by a single point for second place with 87.

Harold Higdon won the Class B Bass Bug with a 78.

Some of the other results:

Accuracy Events

Class A ¼ Ounce Accuracy: Harvey Beck -92

Class B ¼ Ounce Accuracy: Jay Hackney-78.

Class A 3/8 Ounce Accuracy: John Seroczynski- 99

Class B 3/8 Ounce Accuracy: Jay Hackney-81

Class A 5/8 Ounce Accuracy: Harvey Beck- 95

Class B 5/8 Ounce Accuracy: Jay Hackney- 86

Class A All Plug Accuracy: Harvey Beck

Class B All Plug Accuracy: Jay Hackney

Class B All-Round Accuracy: Jay Hackney

Class A All-Fly Accuracy trophy: John Seroczynski-276.

Class B All-Fly Accuracy trophy: Jay Hackney

Distance Events

Two Handed 5/8-oz. Revolving 1st - Harvey Beck 305'

Two-Handed Spinning 1st - Harvey Beck 357'

¼ Ounce Spin Distance 1st - John Seroczynski 260'

All-Plug Distance - Harvey Beck -920'

Salmon Fly Distance : Harvey Beck - 274'

Single Handed Fly Distance: John Seroczynski -- 178'

Anglers Fly Distance: John Seroczynski --157'

All-Fly Distance: Harvey Beck--596'

All Distance: Harvey Beck-- 1,516'

2004 Scarborough Open All-Round - Harvey Beck

Adds Deval: "George Monroe, the club's newest caster drove from Rochester, NY and made it just in time for the distance games Sunday morning. He cast all seven disciplines for the first time and did well. George is thinking seriously of attending the Nationals in Kentucky in August."

The 96th ACA National Tournament Schedule of Events

Monday, August 2

Practice Day at Distance Field

Tuesday, August 3

18G 2-Hand Revolving Spool Distance

18G 2-Hand Spinning

7.5G 1-Hand Spinning

Wednesday, August 4

2-Hand Fly Distance

1-Hand Fly Distance

Angler's Fly Distance

Thursday, August 5

Dry Fly Accuracy

Trout Fly Accuracy

Annual Business Meeting

Friday, August 6

Bass Bug Accuracy

1/4 oz. Plug Accuracy

3/8 oz. Plug Accuracy

Saturday, August 7

5/8 oz. Plug Accuracy

5/8 oz. Plug Club Team Event

Annual Banquet & Awards Ceremony

NOTE: *Practice at BGSL club grounds every day until 9:00 PM*

HOST HOTEL

Hilton Suites Lexington Green

245 Lexington Green Circle

Lexington, KY 40503

Tel: (859-271-4000

1-800-445-8667

www.lexingtongreen.hilton.com

For additional information contact:

Bill Burke bnburke@earthlink.net

1-859-362-4644



REGISTRATION FORM

96th American Casting Association National Tournament

Blue Grass Sportsmen's League Casting Division, Tournament Host

August 2-7, 2004, Lexington, KY

Please complete & return registration form by July 15, 2004.

Name _____ Club _____

Address _____ Day-Time Phone _____

City _____

State/Province _____ Zip _____ e-mail _____

(Your e-mail address will be kept confidential)

Registration Fee: Individual \$25.00
Family \$15.00 per person

Event Fees: Seniors, Women, Men, Intermediates \$8.00 per event
Juniors \$2.00 per event
Team Event (maximum of two teams per club) \$10.00 per team (paid @ event)

	Men	Women	Seniors	Inter- mediates	Juniors	Youth
Distance Events						
18 gm Revolving Spool (2-Hand) – Tuesday						
18 gm Spinning (2-Hand) – Tuesday						
7.5 gm Spinning (1-Hand) – Tuesday						
Two Hand Fly (1-Hand) – Wednesday						
Single Hand Fly – Wednesday						
Angler's Fly – Wednesday						
Accuracy Events						
Dry Fly – Thursday						
Trout Fly – Thursday						
Bass Bug – Friday						
1/4 oz. Plug – Friday						
3/8 oz. Plug – Friday						
5/8 oz. Plug – Saturday						

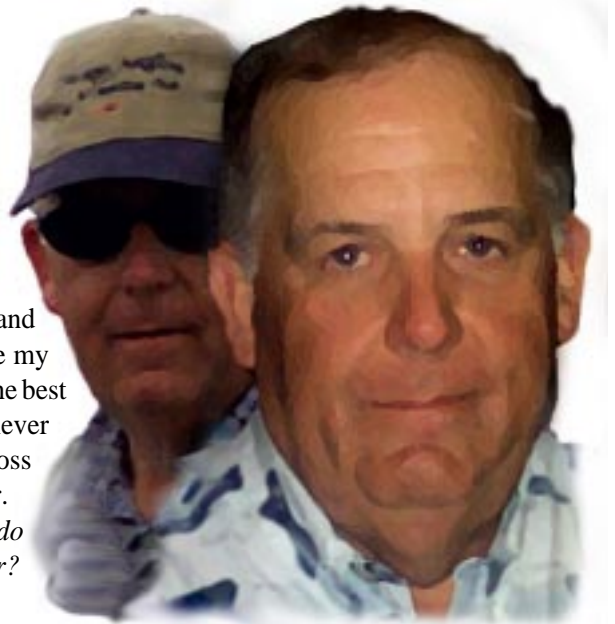
Registration Fee \$ _____
 Total Events _____ X \$8.00 \$ _____
 Total Events _____ X \$2.00 \$ _____
 Sub-Total \$ _____
 Creel Subscription (optional, \$7.00) \$ _____
 Grand Total (in U.S. Dollars) \$ _____

Make checks payable to: ACA/BGSL

ACA/BGSL
 763 Prescott Road
 Paris, KY 40361
 Tel: 1-859-362-4644
 E-mail: bnburke@earthlink.net

NOTE: Payment on-site prior to first event is permissible. Please send registration form early so that tournament officials can prepare score cards and rosters.

An Interview with John Seroczynski



We were able to catch up with John Seroczynski, the energetic, passionate president of the American Casting Association, for the following Q & A. Editor Jim Chapralis (JC) conducted the interview:

JC: How did you get interested in tournament casting and how old were you?

John S: I was 10 years old and was working as a clean-up boy at J. W. Millikan Sports in Hammond, Indiana. Some of the customers decided to start the Hammond Casting Club in Harrison Park across the street from our home. They needed a ring boy to put out the targets three days a week and I became that boy.

JC: What attracted you to tournament casting?

John S: I was an avid fisherman and I could see how it could improve my casting and therefore my fishing, and I also loved the competition.

JC: Who was your mentor or mentors in tournament casting?

John S: Bud & Rosie Rainford started the club with a number other Millikan customers. As for actual established tournament people, Frank Nulty (a member of the Lincoln Park and Jackson Park Casting Clubs in Chicago) was my favorite fly-casting instructor. He would drive to Hammond, Indiana from Chicago, to help us, and, of course, have a meal with us. Frank was a class act. He always wore a tie and straw hat when he cast.

As for the plug accuracy events it was probably my brother Tom who really pushed me to practice almost every day. But when I look back on

things today, my mother and father (Gwen and Jud) were my biggest pushers to become the best I could possibly be. They never worried about me being across the street on the casting pier.

JC: What type of fishing do you like? Are you a hunter? Archer?

John S: I love to hunt and fish and I've been a good competitive archer. I hunt deer with my bow. I enjoy all types of freshwater fishing with steelhead and bass probably being my favorite. Someday I'd like to fish for bonefish and tarpon on light tackle or fly rods. But there's always a lack of time it seems.

JC: How many years have you been seriously involved in tournament casting (when you've actually trained and practiced longer hours)?

John S: Since 1953. 51 years!

JC: Which are your favorite events? Distance? Accuracy? Fly? Plug?

John S: I prefer the accuracy events, but the distance events are in my blood, too. I really enjoy competing for the All Around. I only wish I had the time to be one of the big guns.

If I could only cast one event it would be a toss up between Trout Fly and Dry Fly Accuracy Events. In plug casting, I love the 5/8 oz. accuracy event.

With the current changes being made to the distance events, I'd say that it's the Two-Handed Fly and 7.5 gram Single-Hand Spinning events.

JC: But which is your very favorite event? Let's say you were on a deserted island and could practice only one event. Which one?

John S: I'd go with the Trout Fly Accuracy Event.

JC: You've made it to the top among the very elite casters in North America. How often do you practice and where do you practice?

John S: I concentrate on the accuracy events in my back yard, grass, and I do that maybe one two-hour session a week. As for distance I can only throw Anglers in my yard. I don't have room for the other distance events. I'm working on starting a Valparaiso Casting Club and that would make practice much more convenient.

JC: Do you get nervous in competition? If so, how do you control this?

John S: I wouldn't say I never get nervous, but I learned long ago that the nerves can be controlled, and, when I'm in a zone, no distraction will bother me. If I screw up on a cast my only concern is knowing what I did wrong and then I concentrate on not doing that again. Like everyone, I like to win and I totally love shoot-offs even though I don't always win. They force me and teach me to be focused.

JC: Suppose you have a good game in accuracy going and you miss a target with a "bad" cast. What do you say to yourself or what do you do to recover?

John S: I've said the following more than once to myself. In plug

accuracy: "Trust the cast dummy and don't put your thumb in it." In fly accuracy: "Dummy, don't ever lay down the fly until you're sure." In distance fly: "When I think I've waited long enough for the forward haul, wait a second longer."

JC: Before an event, do you mentally go over the strategies for winning or do you just cast?

John S: I always sit down and try to get focused, or, as they say, get "in a zone." In the accuracy events (especially in the fly games), I stand in the box before the event and study the target layout, distance between the targets, the wind direction and velocity,

almost lost it when Patrick made the announcement. I was overcome with emotion, not able to say much. I had to leave the room. Forgive me and thanks to all.

2) When I was an Intermediate at a Columbus National I was the last Intermediate to cast. When I stepped into the on deck station there were already Wet Fly scores of 97, 98 and 99. In those years you chose a fly from the official box of flies. The station captain was Henry Fujita Sr., in my book, the master of the fly rod. He realized that I was very nervous. I couldn't even put that fly on that heavy wet fly leader. Henry, in his wisdom

the same rules? Do you feel that a compromise is in order?

John S: I do feel that a compromise is necessary and this is one of the areas that I plan to work on in the near future.

JC: What do you think about cash tournaments? It appears that some tournaments may be going that way.

John S: We need tackle industry backing, but cash tournaments have proven recently that they bring new interest to the sport.

JC: What is necessary to make tournament casting an important activity. For example, to have some tournament casting events televised, and eventually in the Olympics, etc.?

John S: We need the media and in order to get them we need the tackle industry to be involved like they were for so many years. Long ago.

JC: If you had to eliminate two events from the present ACA Nationals—in order to make tournament casting more attractive to newcomers and spectators—which two would they be? They may include your favorites.

John S: I love all 12 events but I think it would be **Dry Fly Accuracy** because the Trout Fly relates better to the fishing. The second would be your favorite **Single-Hand Fly Distance** because it really has little relationship to actual fishing and it's without a doubt the hardest for the average person to master. It's always had the fewest number of participants.

"If I were on a deserted island and could choose only one event it would be the Trout Fly Accuracy..." J.S.



because I may want to change to a heavier line or rod. Light conditions are also important. Do I want a yellow or a white for the fly? What color plug? Bass bug? How about the color of sunglasses? Of course, I make sure that my tackle is ready and hopefully in perfect condition.

JC: In your tournament-casting career you've had many outstanding accomplishments. What do you think is the most important victory or accomplishment? Also second and third most important?

John S: Three things stand out far more than any others.

1) My induction into the ACA Hall of Fame last year was so unexpected I was, for one of the few times in my life, "speechless". In fact I'm glad you asked this question because it gives me a chance to apologize to those who were present at last year's banquet. I

and in an effort to calm my nerves said, "Let me tie it on, Johnny. Don't worry this is the last fly in the box and it's a 100." The rest is history as I still have that fly, that leader and the Gold 100 Club pendant for setting a new National record and my first perfect score at a National. It is my most cherished award over the 51 years.

3) Making the All American Team is also very high on the list because it denotes that you are one of the best of the best.

JC: Do you think that the ACA and ICF should have



JC: As a top tournament caster you have your act together. What are your suggestions to a beginner or intermediate-skilled caster, so that he/she may rise to a higher casting level?

John S: Don't try to learn all of the events at one time. First, start with the ones you do best. Develop some confidence. This will help you realize how practice can help you improve on what you already know. Second, I think you should find three or four friends or family that could enjoy casting. It's much more enjoyable doing things with others rather than by yourself. The competition will fuel your drive to improve.

JC: Finally, when one reads Cliff Netherton's two great books (*History of the Sport of Casting*) one realizes the close relationship that existed between tackle manufacturers and tournament casters. Today, many tackle companies have little or no knowledge of tournament casting. Is there a way to change this?

John S: This subject is the most important thing we need to work on and we must do it fast. Today's tackle industry is made up of young people who are not old enough to know how important our sport was and should again be. It's important to our future, but it's also important to the tackle industry's future and growth. I'm putting the groundwork together to hopefully form an international committee to address this issue.

I'm open to volunteers.

96TH ACA ANNUAL NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

GROUND RULES

DISTANCE FLY EVENTS

Tackle will be checked prior to the event only upon request. However, in the following events, tackle check will occur automatically for casters who achieve the following distances:

	<u>Anglers Fly</u>	<u>1-Hand</u>	<u>2-Hand</u>
Men	155 feet	170 feet	220 feet
Senior Men	130 feet	150 feet	190 feet
Women	100 feet	NA	NA
Intermediates	100 feet	NA	NA

DISTANCE PLUG EVENTS

1. All tackle shall be checked prior to each event.
2. Each caster may have a sufficient number of plugs weighed until a maximum of three plugs have been declared legal for each event. Plugs will be distinctively marked. The weighmaster will be instructed to notify the caster only if the plug is approved or disapproved. The "Official" scales will be available at the Host Hotel at a specified time on the evening prior to the scheduled event so that casters will be able to select their heaviest plugs.
3. Caster must release cast within one (1) minute after the box has been declared open or the cast will be scored as a "no cast". A "no cast" will be counted as a scoring cast. In the 2-Hand 5/8 oz. (18G) Revolving Spool event, the caster must begin retrieving line while walking to the plug within three (3) minutes or the cast will be scored as a "no cast". Lines will be checked on a random basis.
4. Painting of plugs will be allowed.
5. Caster shall be allowed to drop down to the end of the casting order one (1) time in each event in case of valid equipment breakage. Tournament officials shall be the sole judge of what constitutes a valid equipment breakage.

NOTE: The Executive Committee has approved the Official ACA distance plugs. The only plugs that will be allowed are the German aluminum 7.5G & 18G plugs and the American aluminum 1/4 oz. (7.5G) and 5/8 oz. (18G) distance plugs.

ACCURACY FLY EVENTS

1. All tackle shall be checked prior to the start of the each event and will be appropriately marked. If time permits, casters may have their tackle checked for the next event while an event is in progress.
2. All penalties shall be called immediately when they occur. In Trout Fly Accuracy and Bass Bug Accuracy, ticks shall count while caster is making false casts at the first target at the beginning of both the first and second rounds.
3. Casters will not be allowed to use their own Dry Fly. Each caster will be required to select a Dry Fly from the ACA supply while they are in-the-hole position. There will be no charge for the first fly. There will be a charge for extra flies.

ALL DISTANCE EVENTS

1. Casters that will be sharing equipment must notify Bill Burke the day before the event.

ACCURACY FLY AND ACCURACY PLUG EVENTS

1. Barking dogs, gunfire, or automobiles shall not be grounds for protest.

FABULOUS LEADER FORMULAS

Trout Fly leader

by Steve Rajeff

45 inches	0.024"
18 inches	0.021"
12 inches	0.018"
9 inches	0.014"
6 inches	0.011"
20-22 inches	0.008"

Total length: 9'2" - 9'4"

Trout Fly leader

by John Napoli

48 inches	0.027"
24 inches	0.019"
13 inches	0.017"
7 inches	0.015"
2 3/4 inches	0.013"
18 inches	0.008"

Total length: 9'4-3/4"

Dry Fly leader

by Steve Rajeff

24 inches	0.024"
18 inches	0.021"
15 inches	0.018"
12 inches	0.014"
6 inches	0.011"
15-18 inches	0.009"

Total length: 7'6" - 7'9"

Dry Fly leader

by John Napoli

35 inches	0.022"
17 inches	0.018"
7.5 inches	0.016"
3.5 inches	0.015"
3 inches	0.014"
20 inches	0.009"

Total length: 7'2" for # 7 line

Bass Bug leader

by Steve Rajeff

30 inches	0.028"
18 inches	0.024"
9 inches	0.021"
6 inches	0.018"
15-18 inches	0.014"

Total length: 6'6" - 6'9"

Angler's Fly Distance

leader by Steve Rajeff

48 inches	0.022"
24 inches	0.018"
12 inches	0.016"
24-60 inches	0.014"

Total length: 9' - 12'

Angler's Fly Distance

leader by Chris Korich

48 inches	0.022"
24(36) inches	0.018"
12(24) inches	0.016"
24-30(30-36) in.	0.014"

Total length: 9'-12'

Single-Hand Fly Distance

leader by Steve Rajeff

36-48 inches	0.022"
24-36 inches	0.018"
12-24 inches	0.016"
24-36 inches	0.014"

Total length: 8' - 12'

Single-Hand Fly Distance

leader by Chris Korich

36(48) in.	0.025"
18(24) in.	0.022"
6(12) in.	0.018"
24 in.	0.017"

Total length: 7'-9'

Two-Handed Fly Distance leader by Steve Rajeff

60 inches	0.028"
36-48 in.	0.024"
36 inches	0.022"
36-60 in.	0.018"

Total length: 14' - 17'

Two-Hand Fly Distance

leader by Chris Korich

60 inches	0.033"
36(48) in.	0.028"
24(36) in.	0.025"
12(24) in.	0.022"
24(36) in.	0.018"

Total length: 13'-17'

NOTE: Steve Rajeff builds his leaders with Maxima material. Chris Korich uses Maxima for distance fly events but Golden Stren for the tippets.

Distance leaders are in various lengths. Their selection is dependent on weather conditions. Under favorable conditions (e.g., back wind and low humidity) use longer leaders. Select shorter leaders for no or unpredictable wind and high humidity.

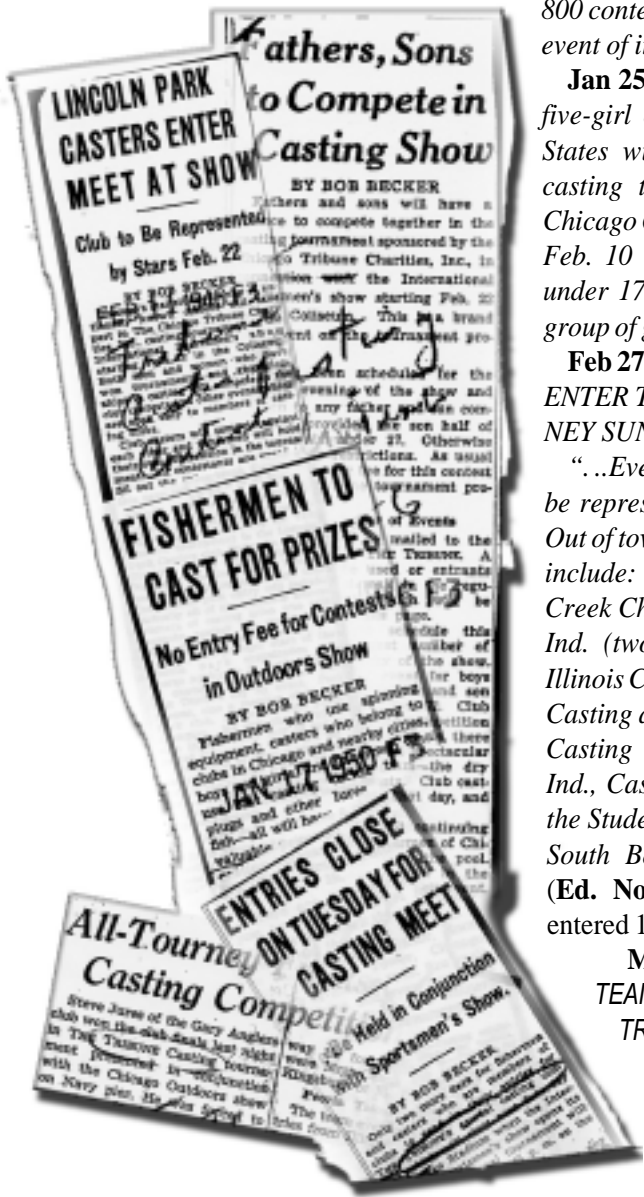
For more formulas and schematics go to <http://www.americancastingassoc.org/Equipment/Leaders.html> On this website Henry Mittel has created schematics for leaders and provides further information that will help you build winning leaders.

We thank these wonderful casters for unselfishly sharing their formulas with us. Developing leader formulas take many hours of trial and error.



THE WAY WE WERE!

By Jim C. Chapralis



I recently invested a considerable amount of time researching tournament casting in the *Chicago Tribune* archives. While I participated in competitive casting in the 1940s and '50s, many of the details are now hazy or irrevocable from my memory bank. One thing I do remember: tournament casting then was a vibrant activity that drew huge crowds at the Chicago sport shows and commanded a considerable amount of space in the *Chicago Tribune* and other daily newspapers.

Let me quote from some of the Trib articles:

Feb. 15, 1942: "Last year the casting tournament drew more than 800 contestants to become the biggest event of its kind in the country..."

Jan 25, 1950: "...the only teenage, five-girl casting team in the United States will compete in the Tribune casting tournament during the big Chicago Outdoors Show at Navy Pier, Feb. 10 to 19th...Migas says all are under 17 years of age, the youngest group of girl casters in the country..."

Feb 27 1941: (headline) 27 TEAMS ENTER TRIBUNE CASTING TOURNEY SUNDAY

"...Every Chicago casting club will be represented by at least one team. Out of town clubs which will take part include: Gary, Ind. (four teams); the Creek Chub Casting Club of Garrett, Ind. (two teams); the Bloomington Illinois Casting club; Fort Wayne Ind. Casting association; Waukesha Wis., Casting Club (two teams); Elkhart, Ind., Casting Club (two teams); and the Studebaker Rod and Gun Club of South Bend Ind., (three teams)..." (Ed. Note: Chicago casting clubs entered 12 teams).

Mar. 1 1942: (headline) 36 TEAMS WILL CAST TODAY IN TRIBUNE EVENT.

"This (36 casting teams) represents an all-time high recorded in the history of bait casting contests, according to W. R. Collins, Chi-

cago secretary of the National Association of Angling and Casting Clubs...

"Ready for this out of state invasion will be 13 Chicago Casting teams: McKinley Park Casting Club, three teams; North Shore Rod and Reel Club (two teams); Scales and Tales Club, two; Illinois Casting Club, Jackson Park Bait and Fly Casting Club; Lincoln Park Casting Club; Sherman Park Rod and Reel Club; Chicago Junction Rod and Reel Club; and the Chicago Fly Casting Club each entered one team..."

Mar. 1 1946: "...Last night he shot three perfects in a row...A crowd of more than 3,000 was watching..." Ed. Note: Please read this again and again. "...more than 3,000 were watching."

While the main interest was in plug casting, fly fishing drew many expert participants. Here's an example from the Mar. 19, 1945 Tribune:

"Last night (Frank) Steel and (Norman) Taxman, 14, one of his casting pupils, tied with scores of 98 in the bass bug, but the youngster defeated his teacher, 98 to 97 in the cast-off. Carol Steel, Frank's 17-year old daughter, was third with 97."

That's some casting. This was in the days of split bamboo rods (slow action) and silk fly lines.

George Applegren Jr., who many of us remember as an outstanding fly casting champion, won many of these fly-casting tournaments.

Women casters? One article talks about Margaret Weaver shooting a 99 in 5/8-ounce plug casting, and Mrs. Harry McDonald shooting a 98 to place first and second in the **Open** finals, "leaving 23 male casters scratching their heads in wonderment as to what the women will do next."

Another article (Feb, 27, 1941) stated that Mrs. Florence Manasin won the women's casting competition with a 96. Florence competed in the 94th ACA National and the two recent Indoor Nationals in Chicago.

There were husband and wife teams. Father and son teams. Father and daughter teams, too, I believe.

Another article stated that the number of casters would be limited to 850 that year because the previous year had 935 entrants which was way too many. I'm not sure of the exact numbers as I was so stunned in reading this, that I forgot to note the details and publication date. Folks, we're talking about a regional casting tournament **attracting almost 1,000 casters.**

There were so many entries that casters were assigned different days to compete (e.g., last names that began with A-G cast on one day, H-O on another, etc.)

I found hundreds of articles on the casting tournaments. I'm talking full-length articles, and personality pieces on some of the casters. There were entry blanks in the Trib (which co-sponsored the tournaments) for interested casters. There were special events for fishermen (noncasting club members) in addition to the casting club members.

And the prizes? Besides trophies, there were fishing trips, outboard motors, boats etc. In a Feb. 19, 1950 article, top prize included a week's fishing trip for two to a prime Ontario resort. The winner in the fishermen's casting final (for participants who didn't belong to a casting club) was awarded a Dunphy Portage boat. Second place won a Scott Atwater outboard and third place was a Wagemaker boat.

For the casting club competition, first place was a 12-ft. AlumaCraft boat; for second place a Champion Outboard motor; and, for third place, a Mercury outboard. Because of the solid

interest in competitive casting, manufacturers were more than willing to contribute big-time to the success of the tournament. The prizes, in turn, drew even more participants and larger audiences. It became a "win-win" deal.

I just read Bill Ward's gutsy comments (from last year's minutes of the San Francisco meeting). I'm sure that it disturbed many—I found it very disturbing—but after thinking about it, I came to the conclusion that he was absolutely right.

Ward wasn't the first one to voice the need for change. I remember reading an old issue of *The Creel* in which the late Jimmy Green

voiced similar opinions. *Change or perish*, he warned more than a decade ago. What have we done about this?

Believe me, tournament casting is a wonderful activity but band-aid solutions won't work. Said Bill Ward, "You've got more people racing turtles and frogs than you've got casting. We've got more people in Woodside

[the gated community where Bill lives] that chase foxes on horses on Sunday afternoon..."

I recently saw considerably coverage in the electronic and print media about a cherry pit *spitting* contest! This event has received more pub than any recent casting tournament.

Who could spit a cherry pit farther apparently is of more interest than how far Rajeff or Korich can cast a fly or a plug. Don't you find this upsetting?

Changes are necessary. **Right now.**

Not two years from now, as Ward warns.

If casting is to survive, tackle and the casting events have to mirror fishing closely.

Tackle used in tournaments must be readily available at least at better tackle stores. Back in the '50s Clare Bryan tried to popularize Skish tournaments (which used standard fishing gear). But we didn't listen.

We need to speed up events. Take the Dry Fly Accuracy event. Eight minutes to hit ten targets. *Geez!*

I watched curious observers at the Indoor National Tournament in January during the Dry fly Event. At first, the casting pool attracted considerable interest. Fly fishing is "in," these days.

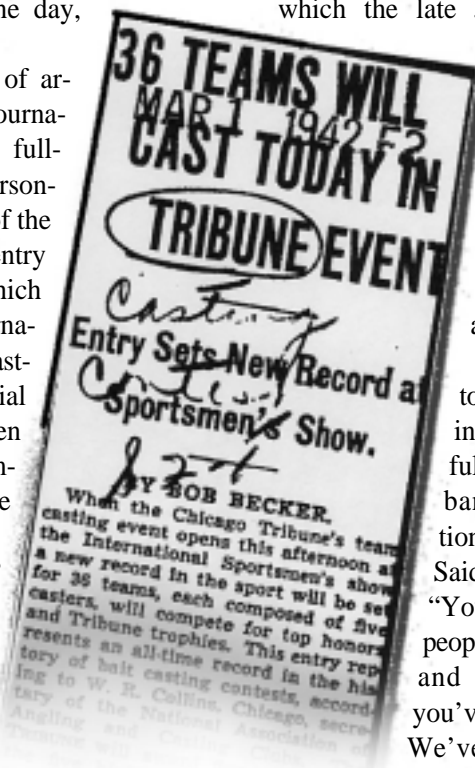
The caster would do his false casting. Back and forth. Back and forth. Maybe a dozen false casts to hit a single target. Observers would lose interest. Wander off. B-O-R-I-N-G ! And folks, this took place indoors where the only breeze may have been created by someone's yawn.

Sometimes the fly caster would throw the line behind him to rest his hand. What is that? Hey, with all that false casting he needs to rest.

Change the event to an average of four or five false casts max per target, or better yet limit the ten targets to 2½ minutes and immediately you have a more appealing event.

The two-handed salmon event should be a light 14-foot standard rod. Can you imagine anyone fishing with the 17-ft. poles and heavy lines that we use in this event? Casting that all day? And if one hooked a fish, what fun would the angler have in playing the fish on that outfit? The present event produces tremendous, awe-inspiring casts which look good in a record book, but it turns anglers off. It turns off the outdoor writers. The media. The tackle guys. Where's the sense?

My favorite event is the single-handed fly distance. I enjoy it. It's great exercise. It's exhilarating. I like the



Angler's Fly Distance, too. Combine them into one event, as many have suggested. Use a standard 38-foot shooting head as a compromise and you're going to get a lot more participants. And audience.

Another thing: Use a brightly colored lines so audiences (and casters) can watch the line unfurl especially on the final cast. Fly casting is a wonderful, beautiful thing. Why not flaunt it? What's with this dull grey flyline finish anyway?

Of course we need to revise our PR (?) program, print some brochures, get an 800 number, you know, operate in this century.

These are just some of the off-the-cuff thoughts that come to mind.

The path to success is easy and simple. It's well marked with arrows, but we meander. Why? Use tackle that resembles fishing; make the games more interesting to the audiences; sharpen up our PR and then we will attract the tackle manufacturers, the media and participants.

But what happens with our "old tackle" and games? We can still cast them as classic events on occasion, but the thrust has to be on new ideas, new events, new philosophies. Read again some of the statements in the beginning of this article. Read about how the number of contestants were limited to 800 participants one year because the previous year almost 1,000 casters participated. Read again, how casting events attracted an audience of 3,000. How 37 casting teams competed in a regional tournament. But times have changed, you rightfully point out. Yes, they have. And we must change, also.

We're on the clock. We must change or eventually our sport will die.

And that would be a shame.

Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick.

(The above commentary reflects the author's opinion only, and not necessarily that of the American Casting Association or any of its officers or members.)



■ **THE BFCC:** In the past few months we've been in touch with Dr. Sam Davis, an American, who lives in England. In a year's time he and others have organized a very active casting club in Britain.

"I've only been doing it for a year as of June 2004 but have been interested in fly fishing for about three years. I have been fishing all of my life practically (I'm 40 years old)," he explains.

The club's interest right now is in distance fly casting, but accuracy will be added. It's unbelievable how, in such a short time, Sam and fellow casters, have organized a very successful, active club.

We've just received some results from his July 4, '04 tournament:

Double Handed Fly Distance

- 1st—Sam Davis (USA) 250 ft.
- 2nd—Mike Marshall (UK) 215 ft.
- 3rd—Carl Hutchinson (UK) 190 ft.
- 4th—James Smith (UK) 174 ft.

Single Handed Fly Distance

- 1st—Sam Davis (USA) 182 ft.
- 2nd—John Reynolds (UK) 176 ft.
- 3rd—Mike Marshall (UK) 167 ft.
- 4th—Carl Hutchinson (UK) 166 ft.

WF7 Fisherman's Distance

- 1st—John Reynolds (UK) 120 ft. 6"
- 2nd—Carl Hutchinson (UK) 116 ft. 8"
- 3rd—Sam Davis (USA) 116 ft. 6"
- 4th—James Smith (UK) 115 ft. 8"

Please note that Sam cast 250 feet in the two-handed salmon distance fly and 182 ft. in the single handed fly distance event. And he has been at it only a short time.

Click on the casting club's site, <http://www.thebfcc.co.uk/>

You will be amazed at the

tremendous progress Dr. Sam and fellow casters have made in about a year's time.

■ **CORRECTION:** In the All-American Casting Team listing (winter issue of *The Creel*) we did not list Buck Kipper, who was elected to this prestigious group in 1967. His father (Bill Kipper) was an All-American caster twice, but we had him down for three times. Bill Kipper made the team twice and Buck Kipper once.

■ **NEED CASTING RESULTS:** Please, please send *The Creel* the results of your tournaments so that they can be included in future issues.

■ **FINALLY:** We all wish Billy Peters a fast and complete recovery. Through the years, Billy is a champion caster and has won many tournaments.

The Creel

the official newsletter of the
American Casting Association
is published several times a year.

Editor: Jim C. Chapralis
jchapralis@ameritech.net

Mailing address:

Jim C. Chapralis

P.O. Box 4938

Skokie, IL 60076-4938