

The Mulson Wind Cast

Those romantic tropical breezes the travel brochures talk about can cause havoc with your cast; particularly when you want it out there fast, accurately, and right into the wind. Wind on the flats can be blustery. One time it is head on, the next moment it is coming from the side.

One way to alleviate the impact of the wind on your cast is to try to get the fly to turn over at the surface. Unfortunately for most of us, with the high line speed needed to cast into the wind, the fly will literally crash onto the surface.

Most casts are made to some spot above the target with the line and fly momentarily at rest before dropping to the water. It is at this point that the wind causes the most damage to the cast. In addition if sufficient line speed is not generated, the turnover will be weak and often incomplete. “Wind effect” and poor turnover will lead to a highly inaccurate cast.

An alternate method may be this cast developed by Joe Mulson of Maitland, Florida who is an experienced “flats” fisherman. The cast described here is a tool that Joe has developed for dealing with the wind. It is not indicative of his over all style which consists of standard casting techniques but rather as one of many “special casting tools” he has developed over the years for overcoming a variety of problematic situations from casting out of canoes to casting under mangrove trees.

Joe’s wind cast has been the source of much controversy. For many, this cast may appear as a simple dump cast where a large loop is splashed down onto the surface. The inattentive, or ego-blind may see this cast as something they can do on their first try. However they soon realize that they can not usually match the line speed or accuracy or gentle presentation of this cast when it is done correctly. Others will look at it and say “so what”; not fully appreciating what they have just seen or its implications for resolving wind problems. Then there are those who lack the initial skills to make a cast of this type. To them, this cast just doesn’t work. It is a complex cast both bio-mechanically and mentally. It utilizes all the tricks of top fly casters including large long strokes, rod torsion, powerful hauling and turning the wrist over just prior to the stop. There are also forces at work in this cast that once honed through practice will amaze those that will take the time to really learn how to do it.

The full cast has never been written down and illustrated until now. We have all seen similar casts but none have the line speed or the ability to deliver large flies to the target in gusty winds and then drop the pattern gently to a feeding fish. This cast can be used virtually anywhere and anyplace from saltwater flats to river fishing for Steelhead.

The Mulson Cast is essentially a narrow loop cast, made with a rotating wrist, and where the lower leg of the loop is immediately placed on the water. Placing the lower leg on the water anchors your line for a more accurate delivery. The anchored bottom leg also makes the line impervious to gusting winds. Surface adhesion stalls the bottom leg giving

the front loop an apparent boost as the top leg is now traveling much faster than the bottom leg. Continuing to drop the rod hand, after the rotational stop of the wrist, brings the rod tip down. When the hand stops low near the water surface the rod tip continues downward, throwing the line onto the water surface. (Figure 6). This cast is not designed as a distance cast, but rather as a fast short cast that is highly wind resistant and extremely accurate. Average distances for these casts range from 60 to 75 feet.

The critical part of this cast is getting the lower line of the loop on the water as quickly as possible. With this highly accurate cast, the turnover of the fly is above the water's surface and stabilized by the line anchored on the water and little affected by the wind. Of course the upper line in the loop is quite high resulting in a wide pointed loop. Most casters would say a wide loop is a very bad thing to have when casting into the wind.

Remember, the bottom line has been laid down on the water, stationary but out of the wind. The top line is straight and moving at a good speed toward the target on the water in an open V shape (Figure 1). Although the loop is traveling forward into the wind, the line in the front section is not. The upper line is continually regenerating the loop, which is straight and moving forward fast. The cross section of that line is small and minimally affected by the wind. Now the front section is anchored at its bottom by the line on the water and the top of the loop is rolling forward while its bottom is rotating to the water's surface. The loop is under tension and therefore the wind effect is lessened. This results in a large loop that is shaped somewhat like a ship's prow (Figure 1).

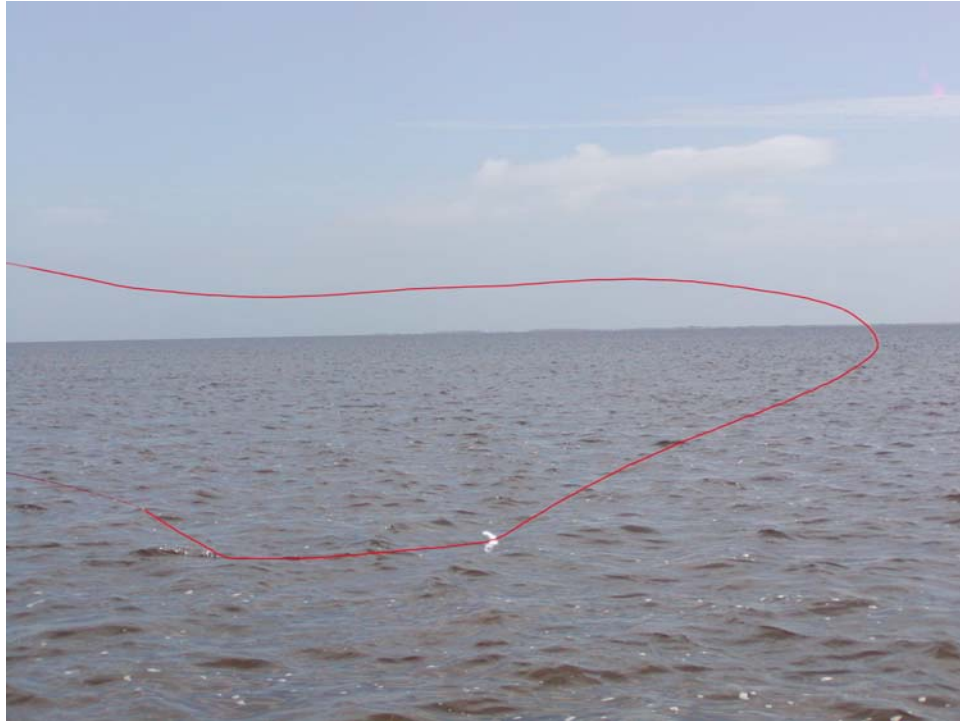


Figure 1. Line is on the water. The loop is in a typical prow shape for this cast.

Generating High line speed is critical. This is best accomplished by getting the rod to load deep into the butt section, along with a strong haul during the rod rotation at the end of the stroke. This is done by using the following method. On the back cast, with the rod at an angle between 45 and 60 degrees from the vertical off to the side and by turning the shoulders, the rod hand can now be extended with a slight drift backwards. At the start or the forecast, the rod is set at an angle of 30 degrees or less above the horizontal (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Shoulder is back, rod is off to side and tilted back

The rod off to the side makes a longer stroke possible, resulting in maximum line speed. The rod has no choice but to load down low in the rod during the forward stroke. (Figure 3)



Figure 3. Wrist-reel angle is open. Rod is loading deep into the rod.

Start the cast by rotating the shoulder with the feeling that you are leading with the elbow and the hand is following. This straightens the line and preloads the rod (Figure 4).



*Figure 4. Shoulder is turning, elbow is down and leading.
Wrist-reel angle is opening,*

As the cast progresses, keep the rod angle above the horizontal constant by opening the angle between the reel and the wrist. When the rod has moved somewhere near to 24 inches, the wrist-reel angle has reached its maximum (Figure 3). Now close it rapidly, rotating the wrist by pulling down and around with the last two fingers of the rod hand. The thumb should be moving in a straight line to the target. The rod itself will then be rotating about the thumb. (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Wrist-reel angle has closed. Rod has maximum load.

The line speed generated is determined by how hard and sharp this last motion is accomplished.

There is an automatic stop in this cast by the physical limitation of the hand rotation. At the end of this rotation the hand continues down. When it stops the tip continues down throwing the line onto the water (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Hand has stopped. Tip continues down, throwing the line onto the water. Loop is starting to form.

For more power, the last two and possibly the third finger can be relaxed and allowed to open slightly with the handle resting against them (Figure 7).



Figure 7. The last two fingers are slightly open. They are closed at the end of the wrist rotation, adding quickness and power to the cast.

At the end of the stroke, the hand is rotated and the fingers are closed. The additional power generated in this cast is determined by the amount the fingers are opened and how fast they are closed. The abrupt closing of the fingers accelerates the rod rotation to a quick stop at the end of the stroke, unloading the rod in the direction of the target. As before the hand continues down (Figure 6).

This cast has probably got you thinking. Have I seen it before? Can it be done another way? Is this a new cast or a clever combination of known techniques? Whatever your opinion you can not deny it is different and has proven to be very effective. Give it a try, practice it and when you think you have it down right, think about what a great addition it has been to your array of casting tools particularly when it comes to casting in the wind.

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