

Fly-Casting Finesse: A Complete Guide to Improving All Aspects of Your Casting

By John L. Field

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Reviewed by Topher Browne

THE ESSENTIAL (and not-so-essential) techniques of casting and presenting a fly with a single-handed rod have been dissected, cataloged and articulated with precision by such casting luminaries as Joan Wulff, Mel Krieger, Lefty Kreh, Ed Jaworowski, Al Kyte, Macauley Lord and Bill Gammell. Does the sport of fly fishing need yet another book on casting a fly? If you asked me that question two weeks ago, I would have answered with an emphatic "no." Then I read John Field's new book, *Fly-Casting Finesse*.

John Field's casting background mirrors my own. We share similar instructors for tournament distance and accuracy fly casting (Mel Krieger, Steve Rajeff, Tim Rajeff and Chris Korich) and we cut our teeth in the classrooms and on the casting lawns of the sport's *de facto* proving ground for fly-casting instructors- the Federation of Fly Fishers Casting Instructor Certification Program. Both venues are unforgiving. In tournament casting, the tape measure does not lie. In the FFF Casting Instructor Certification Program, your fly casting and your teaching methodology are subject to peer-reviewed analysis and commentary that can make ABC's reality television show *Shark Tank* look tame by comparison.

This dual emphasis on results (tournament casting) and peer reviewed instruction separates John Field's *Fly-Casting Finesse* from most books on the subject. Field and other tournament casters have spent a lot of time and effort thinking about (and practicing) how to throw a fly farther or with greater accuracy. Tournament casting sure ain't fishing, but the similarities are greater than you might think. Hollow-built bamboo rods, shooting heads (and their influence on the design of modern weight-forward lines) and the double haul were invented or perfected in tournament casting. If you cast a good score in the Dry Fly Accuracy Event in a tournament setting, your next presentation to that snarky bank feeder on the West Branch should be right on the money.

If you focus a critical eye at the sundry manifestos on fly casting by famous instructors, you may find, as Field states in his Introduction, that some instructors express "technically untrue ideas." This technically true statement is a nice way of saying that some casting instructors are just flat-out wrong on some points. Herein lies the efficient and sometimes savage beauty of the peer-reviewed methodology (FFF (casting Instructor Certification Program)). If you are in a room filled with certified casting instructors, your explanation of the top three causes of the tailing loop better pass muster or you'll be invited to take a sear. This process is in marked contrast to the casting instructor who develops a personal methodology on his own and then invests decades or even a lifetime espousing its platitudes. Multiple heads are usually better than one. This truism is a nice way of saying that there are no "technically untrue ideas" on casting in *Fly-Casting Finesse*. The book has been peer-reviewed to a fare-thee-well.

Field teaches the mechanics of casting-stance, grip, stroke, timing, tempo, rod plane, trajectory, line control, hauling-in the manner of a seasoned FFF casting professional. His explanations are technically correct and his delivery is spare, efficient and effective. His discussion of presentation casts and their scenarios, maximizing casting distance, and modern fly

tackle is everything you need to know on the subject. Fly Casting Finesse is the most important book on fly casting to come along in quite some time.

It may be the only book on the subject that you ever need to read.