



Spin-casting

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Best Time: This lesson can be taught as the first lesson on casting. Depending on the age group and time you have available, you may want to start with the Can-Casting Lesson, followed by the Equipment and Casting Basics.

Best Location: Large enough open area to spread the number of kids out that you want casting at one time. Park, playground, a parking lot that has been marked off from cars.

Time Required: 30 to 45 minutes

Objectives:

Participants will:

1. Learn about the spin-cast equipment
2. Learn to hold a spin-cast outfit
3. Learn to safety considerations
3. Learn to cast using a spin-cast reel

Youth Objectives:

1. Develop a skill
2. Develop self-esteem and confidence
3. Develop coordination
4. Develop responsibility

Evaluation:

1. Can participants on a regular basis cast with a spin-casting reel with little effort
2. Can participants get close to a target.

Equipment/Materials

1. A spin-cast rod and reel (filled with line) for each participant
(If there are not enough rods and reels to go around, split the kids into groups and have them take turns.)
2. Casting plugs (no hooks)
3. Some kind of target
4. Encourage students to wear glasses or sunglasses

Safety Considerations: A flying casting plug is the greatest safety consideration particularly if it should hit someone's eye. A casting plug hitting someone on the body can also cause a bruise. The ends of rods can also poke into someone if participants are not careful. Have participants follow safety rules.

Outline

1. Spin-cast Equipment
2. Grip
3. Drag
4. Getting the hang of it
5. Two handed grip
6. Safety Considerations
7. Two-handed Overhead Cast
 - a. Stance
 - b. Cast
 - c. Retrieval
8. Other Casts

Summary Activity: Have participants practice the overhead cast casting at a variety of targets.

Narrative

Spin-Cast Equipment

Spin-casting reels may be described as a "closed-face spinning reel." It has a "nose cone" or "hood" (front cover) that houses the line and stationary spool. On the cast, after the line has been first released from the spool by depressing a lever or "push-button" with the thumb, the line passes from the spool through a hole in the front of the cone. Spin-casting reels are designed chiefly to be mounted on the top of a standard bait-casting or spin-casting rod. A spin-casting rod has small line guides and a straight handle.

Spin-casting tackle is ideal for beginning anglers because it works well and is easy to use. However, spin-casting tackle is not limited to beginners. Spin-casting tackle is used often while fishing for bluegill, crappie and other panfish. Specialized models are utilized by professional anglers for flipping for big bass.

Grip

The first step in casting is properly gripping the rod and reel. If you are right handed, grip the rod handle with your right hand with the forefinger in front of the rod handle trigger. Rotate your hand counterclockwise so that the reel handle is on the top.

Most people have a tendency to have the reel handle to the side and the button on top. With the handle on top it puts you in a position to have more flexibility at your wrist. This position is less tiring for your wrist and provides better accuracy.

Drag

All reels have an adjustment called a drag that controls how easily the line is pulled off the reel. The drag on a spin-cast reel can be located in different positions depending on the brand. Some drags are just ahead of the thumb button, some are between the reel handle and the reel itself. Follow the directions that come with your reel to set the drag correctly.

Your drag should be set loosely while in storage, so when you pick up the rod for the first time it will be important to adjust the drag. When practicing, it is good to have the drag set so that you

can pull the line out with a little tug. If you are using actual targets like Yard Sharks, participants will learn quickly to adjust their drags or they will not be able to reel in their catch.

When fishing, you need to adjust your drag according to the line size, to the type of fish you plan to catch, and the environment that you are in. If you are fishing with light line, you may need your drag set a little looser than you will with heavier line. If you are fishing for a fish where you have to set the hook solidly, then you'll need a tighter drag set than fishing for fish such as bluegill or trout.

With experience, you'll learn how to adjust drag setting for different situations.

Getting the hang of it

Everyone's reel should be equipped with line, appropriately threaded through the line guides with a casting plug tied to the end of the line. If the equipment is not set up have the participants assist in threading their own line and tying on their own casting plug.

The following activity can be done to start to help participants get the feel of the button and to assist them with the coordination of when to depress the button.

Step 1: Have everyone depress the button and hold it down.

2: Release the button. (casting plug should fall to the ground)

3. Turn the handle until the casting plug is within two inches of the guide

4. Put a piece of paper/ wastebasket or other target about where the casting plug fell to the ground.

5. Have everyone move their rod tip to the left and then in a smooth motion move it to the right (so it goes over the target)

6. Now repeat that motion but this time, tell everyone to release the button when the rod passes over the target. They are not suppose to stop the rod at the target. How many hit the target.

7. Repeat this exercise until everyone feels comfortable with the button.

Two-handed Grip

Place the right hand as directed above. Now place your left hand just ahead of the reel and take the line lightly between your thumb and index finger. Depress the thumb stop and let the weight of your plug take the line out. Feel it slip through your thumb and finger? Do it again, and this time use the same thumb and finger to slow the line down a bit. Now one more time -- only this time stop the line completely: at a foot; midway; just as the plug touches the floor. Practice until everyone has a good feel for it.

Safety Considerations Before the Cast

Participants need to learn that they have to take responsibility for their actions. Casting plugs can hurt but once hooks are added great pain can be inflicted if someone does not get in the habit of paying attention to where their plug is at all times. An angler needs to be aware of where his/her plug behind, overhead and in front.

The back cast is the greatest concern. Fishermen get so intense about where they are going to cast to that they sometimes forget to look behind them to see if their back cast is going to hit someone or get hung in a tree. When you are fishing from the bank, someone may come up behind to watch you or just be causally walking by. When in a boat, most anglers know their partner(s) are there, but don't realize that their back cast can reach their partner(s).

On the forward cast most anglers are aware of other people, but sometimes forget about power lines and overhanging trees. Be cautious also of throwing over someone else's line.

Once the cast has been made, the plug can get hung up including during practice. Caution, participants about putting too much pressure to retrieve the snagged plug. Once it comes loose it can shoot back like a bullet and hurt whomever it hits.

Two-handed Overhead Cast

Stance

Assume a casual, sure-footed stance before the target, your body angled so that your "pitching arm" takes the lead, and your right foot is aimed at the target. Now lift the rod until its tip is just above the target (10 o'clock). Note that your elbow and upper arm should be close to, but not against the body; that the forearm parallels the angle of the rod.

The Cast

- a. To start the cast, bend your casting arm at the elbow, raising your arm with a smooth, accelerating motion of the wrist that puts your hands at eye-level. Stop the rod at approximately 1 o'clock, allowing the momentum of the lure to flex the rod tip backward.
- b. Without hesitation, commence the forward stroke with a quickly accelerated motion of the wrist and forearm. Follow exactly the same path as you took on the upstroke. At about 11 o'clock, release the thumb stop to set the lure in flight. The wrist motion in spin-casting is very similar to that used in throwing a dart.
- c. Follow through by lowering the tip of the rod to flow the flight of the lure.

Note: If the lure goes straight up into the air, you released the line too soon; if it takes a nose-dive at your feet, you let go too late.

- d. As the lure nears the target, begin to apply pressure to the line with the thumb and index finger of your line hand. This braking or "feathering" action allows pinpoint accuracy by bringing the lure to a slow gentle stop. More precise than relying on the thumb stop, it also prevents the line from back-looping inside your reel.

Retrieval

Retrieval is simply a matter of turning the crank handle. There's no need even to switch the rod to the other hand, for your "other" hand has been there from the beginning. Let the line flow through the thumb and index finger of this hand on its way back to the reel. It's a trick that serves to maintain tension on the pick-up mechanism, cleans the line and assures no loops are taken into the reel for another trouble-free cast.

Other Casts

The overhead cast can be done with one or two hands. See which is most comfortable for yourself. To adjust the distance of your cast with a one-hand cast while your plug is in the air depress the button to slow the plug. To stop the plug completely, fully depress the button and allow the plug to drop on the target.

The overhead cast cannot be used in all situations and anglers are encouraged to learn a side cast, flipping, and pitching. You utilized the same grip as explained in this lesson, but the stance and arm action are the essentially the same for all types of casting and spinning gear. See other casts under the Bait-Casting Lesson for advanced casting methods.

Catching Fish On Shore. As part of each casting lesson, include a section on how to appropriately use the equipment to catch a fish. C feel the bite, set the hook and reel in the fish. This exercise allows you to help anglers correct any problems.

Is the line tight? Teach the angler that they must have a tight line in order to Afeel the bite.@ With the line loose, tug lightly on the angler=s line. Can he/she feel anything? Have angler tighten line, then tug again. Can they feel the difference?

Set the hook. Teach the angler how to set the hook. This time when you tug on the line, ask the angler to set the hook. In most cases, only one sharp snap of the rod is needed to set the hook on a fish. Do not let the casting plug fly out of your hand! Review with the angler if he/she has done it properly and do again until he/she gets it right. You may want to discuss that you set the hook a little differently depending on the fish you are trying to catch. They won=t have to set the hook very hard on bluegill or trout, but will have to use a little more force when setting the hook on a bass.

Reel in the fish. Remember, as the fish, you are a bluegill or a bass, not a whale. Be careful that you do not ruin the rod and reel. Begin by having the angler reel you in. Watch to see that they have the rod tip up and that they are using the rod to help fight the fish. Is the drag set correctly? You may have to help them adjust the drag. Return to the angler as many times as necessary to assist them make adjustments. Do they have the correct grip on the rod handle? With the casting plug in your hand, run away from them. It is very important to tell them not to reel while the fish is running away so it won=t twist their line. Explain, that their drag is set so that line will come out when the fish makes its run. Let the fish make its run and do not reel, but be prepared to reel once the fish stops so that the line does not go slack. They need to always keep their line tight. Run toward the angler and ask them to try to keep the line tight.. Run to each side and show them how to adjust the rod direction. As they get you close to Ashore@ discuss how they should leave some line out to bring the fish to shore. In other words, do not reel to the top of the eye, which can knock the fish off the hook.

Congratulations. Once the angler has successfully brought you ashore. They deserve congratulations.

References

Basic Casting from A to Z booklet developed by Zebco.
Sportfishing and Aquatic Resources Handbook