



## Newsletter January 2007

### January Meeting on the 18th

The January meeting will be held on Thursday, January 18th at 8:00 PM.

This meeting will include nominations for the annual elections, which will be held at

the February meeting. Roy Swartz will give a presentation on Tackle Harmony (see his article later in this newsletter).

This is coming just in time to start planning tackle purchases for next season.

### December Meeting

We had another excellent holiday dinner and meeting on December 21<sup>st</sup>. We had a brief business meeting before a great roast beef meal. After eating our fill, we had the annual raffle. Jim Boesel donated

many sets of flies, which were popular prizes (the editor won a few and he's anxious to try them out!). The turkeys were great prizes, but what everyone really wanted was the duck made of seashells.

### February Meeting and Elections on February 15th

The election process for officers and board members for 2007 will begin at the January meeting. A nomination committee of Floyd Alwon, Richard Marashlian and Bob Lynch was appointed by the President. The committee's nominations will be announced at the January meeting.

According to the by-laws:

“Section 4.05 Nominations from the general membership: Any seven (7) members in good standing may nominate candidates for one or more offices by submitting the nomination, signed by them, to the Secretary twenty-one (21) days prior to the annual meeting.” So any

members who want to submit additional nominations for the officers and 3 board positions must submit them to the Secretary by January 21<sup>st</sup>. (Mac Sterling, [secretary@troutpond.com](mailto:secretary@troutpond.com))

Any candidates for office may submit a brief statement for inclusion in the February newsletter. Please submit statements to the editor at [editor@troutpond.com](mailto:editor@troutpond.com) by February 5<sup>th</sup>.

The elections for club officers will be held at the February meeting.

All members are urged to attend.

### Membership Renewal Due **NOW**

Memberships expired at the end of December. Please renew as soon as possible. Dues for 2007 will remain at

\$125.00. You can send your dues to NSC, PO Box 191, Needham MA 02492.

## TACKLE HARMONY

By: Roy Swartz

As a fly fisher looking to upgrade or expand your arsenal, you will undoubtedly be confronted with the term “**balanced outfit**” (also referred to as a complete outfit). Our favorite catalogs and shops routinely promote these pre-packaged rod/reel combinations, and everyone would agree that fly casting is most enjoyable and efficient when all the elements of your outfit are properly matched. But despite the rhetoric, some prepackaged outfits are not balanced. Many newcomers (and even veterans of the sport) unknowingly go into battle with mismatched equipment. This can upset the natural rhythm of the cast, leading to both frustration and sore muscles. Casting lessons and doctor visits may be avoided, however, with a bit of understanding and perhaps some small tackle adjustments. Let's take a look at what really constitutes a “balanced outfit”, and how you can achieve what I call “**tackle harmony**.”

First, it is a common misconception that all you have to do is match the numbers; for example, combine a #5 reel and line with a 5-weight rod. Unfortunately, this does not guarantee balance, even with pre-packaged outfits. Take a closer look at the fly fishing catalogs to see the real story. With variations in material, taper, number of sections and overall length, there are enormous differences in fly rod weights and balance points. For example, 9 foot, #5 graphite rods range in weight from about 3 to 5 ounces. The disparity in reels designated for use with #5 lines is even more extreme, ranging from about 3.5 to nearly 8 ounces (a 150% difference)! Of course, these variations are absolutely necessary, for otherwise it

would be impossible to properly balance a 6 foot “stream” rod or one of those 10 foot “float-tube” models. A problem develops when one of the lighter reels is matched with one of the heavier or longer rods. This tip-heavy configuration can cause arm fatigue, soreness and loss of distance. On the other hand, a reel that is too heavy for the rod will make it difficult to “feel” the rod tip loading and could affect line control.

In order to have a balanced fly fishing outfit, you must first establish a **static balance** between the rod and reel. The best way to accomplish this is to attach an empty reel to the rod and grip the rod normally. There is a control point in your grip where the thumb and forefinger oppose each other, normally about an inch from the end of the cork. This is also the point at which the rod and reel should balance. To check this, grip the rod normally, then let go with everything but your forefinger; the rod should remain approximately horizontal. If the rod tip goes up or down more than a few inches, you do not have a static balance and should try different reels (or rods) until balance is achieved. What if you're shopping for a new rod to go with your favorite reel and line? Bring the reel with you when you go shopping. Run the line through the guides of the rod you want to check, and pull out line until it rests on the floor. Then do the finger balance test. The weight of line along and outside the rod approximately offsets the weight of line remaining on the reel, so the rod/reel combination can be effectively checked.

Even after the rod and reel are in static balance, however, the job of optimizing your outfit is not complete. It is now time to consider the fly line. Most lines designated as #5 will work fine with most #5 rods in *most fishing situations*. However, once you start waving line back and forth through the air, the wind and other forces come into play. Now, "**kinetic balance**" will affect how the entire outfit "feels" and performs under real fishing conditions. By all means, start with brand name lines rated the same as the rod. But don't be afraid to go outside the envelope in certain fishing situations.

As you probably know, fly line ratings are generally based on the weight of the first 30 feet, which constitutes most of the "head" in a common weight forward fly line. But how much of your fishing is done at exactly 30 feet? Anyone who regularly fishes the salt (or this pond at times!) knows that casts of 50 – 80 feet may be required for success. To do this, the line must load (moderately flex) the rod at 30 feet, yet not feel too heavy when extended to 40 or 50 feet. This explains why double taper lines should not be used for distance casting. Not only do they quickly overload the rod as additional line is extended, their constant thickness creates additional friction, which hinders efficient "shooting" of line through the rod guides. Weight forward lines are far better for casting beyond about 40 feet, as they taper down to a thin running portion beyond the heavier "head" section of the line. Carrying another 20 or even 30 feet of this thinner running line in the air is not going to overload the rod.

On the other end of the spectrum, some may prefer small stream fishing (or just roll-casting under the trees at the back of the pond). In these situations, most casts will be shorter than 30 feet, and you probably won't have nearly enough line

out to effectively load the rod. You'll notice that the cast won't feel very "solid" and your accuracy will suffer. The answer here is to "over-line" the rod by using a line rated one or two line weights heavier than the rod.

The leader also affects kinetic balance. Leaders come in many lengths, but most fly fishers don't look beyond their obvious purpose of keeping the fly line away from the fish. Without question, once your fly is within the strike zone, a longer and finer leader will be less likely to spook fish and should increase your chances of hooking up. So the intentional selection of a short leader would seem to contradict our basic understanding of the sport. Just like over-lining, a short leader can also improve your accuracy in delivering a fly at short range. Try cutting down from a typical 9-ft leader to 6-ft whenever the leader is refusing to turn over and deliver the fly out beyond the line. This is especially effective in the wind. Short leaders also make it much easier to cast heavy or wind resistant flies and can help keep the fly deep when fishing a sinking line.

Finally, we have reached the fly itself. For any given combination of rod, reel, line and leader, there is a maximum fly that can be comfortably and efficiently cast. I use the term "**maximum fly**" rather than "largest fly" because, in addition to hook size, there are several other features that influence how efficiently one can cast a fly. These include the weight, wind-resistance and water-retention characteristics of the materials used to tie the fly. For example, you would probably have no trouble covering rises with a size 8 marabou streamer, but attempting to do so with the same size cone head woolly bugger or wind-resistant muddler minnow would be tiring at best. The point is, when you exceed the maximum fly for a

particular outfit, its overall kinetic balance is affected and casting becomes a chore.

Check your tackle, and try these little adjustments if you're not happy with your casting. And if you're in the market for new stuff, the best way to end up with the right "balanced outfit" is to start by

deciding on the size and type of flies to be used. This will guide you toward the right line weight, and then you can choose a rod/reel combination that brings all of these elements together to achieve "**tackle harmony.**"

### Thank You

Thanks to the following members for helping with the holiday party: to Rollie Johnson and Denis Martin for decorating the club house for the holiday banquet, to Paul Defilippo, Ed Calitri, Richard Marashlian, and John Case for preparing the meal, to our raffle-masters Paul

Defilippo and Joe Biotti, to Jim Boesel for donating many flies as raffle prizes, to Floyd Alwon for the musical accompaniment to the raffle and to everyone else who helped out.

### Fishing Report

Fishing on the recent warm days has been good in the pond. There were a number of fish feeding on the surface and they were taking small woolly buggers and dry flies, including midge emergers. Please

update the log book in the club house when you fish. Starting in 2007, members will be required to display their current membership card when fishing at the club pond.

### Visit the Website ([www.troutpond.com](http://www.troutpond.com))

The website has public and members-only pages. You can register for the members-

only forums and keep up with everyone between meetings.

### Keep Us in the Loop

When you move or change email addresses please update the club list so that we can get information to you.

Send updates to [editor@troutpond.com](mailto:editor@troutpond.com) or NSC, PO Box 191, Needham MA 02492

## Happy New Year from the Needham Sportsman's Club

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If you received this by regular mail but can receive it by email, please send your email  
address to [editor@troutpond.com](mailto:editor@troutpond.com).

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