

How to Choose a Fly Rod

by

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Some thoughts on choosing a fly rod: There are a lot of new fly rods on the market that you might like to acquire. But, how do you know which one will become one of your “favorites”? The following are some of my thoughts on the subject.

1. Put a lot of thought into what you “need”. By this I mean have a clear understanding of how you will be using this rod. It’s a good idea to make a list of the important items and don’t lose focus on your specific needs during your search.
2. Some “need” items might include such things like: a. What type fish will you be targeting with this rod? What is the likely size range? What type water will you be fishing - small stream, large rivers, float tubes, salt water, etc.? b. What is my budget range? 3. What length of rod should I get?
3. Remember the need and know the application. Shorter rods find use in tight casting situations like streams and heavy cover. Longer rods are better suited for open conditions like float tube fishing. Remember, the longer the rod the more it magnifies what you do - both good and bad. Loop control is of primary importance, so if you get better control with a shorter rod you will find you will be casting farther and more accurately than with a longer rod. You should consider comparing an 8' vs a 9' rod in the same model series and line weight.
4. Rod “action” has been used by the marketing departments for years to help sell rods. They have introduced a number of “words” that seem to offer help to the buyer but there are no standards in the industry. What you want is something that “feels good” to you. This “feels good” depends on the rod, line, leader, fly combination. In general a stiff, fast action, tip flex rod will make it easier to cast tight line loops. This helps for distance and accuracy but is not forgiving to tippets. A softer, slower, mid flex, rod will be a lot more forgiving to tippets. We are lucky because in our greater metropolitan area we have several very good fly shops that can let you cast a wide range of rods. Take your “needs” list and some note paper. Ask to cast those rods that will likely fit those needs. If you have the reel, line, leader and a practice fly approximating what you will use. Evaluate each as it affects the “feel” to you. Be prepared to spend more than an hour at each shop. Take notes as you do your comparisons. I like to do “A vs B” tests keeping the rod I like best for the next comparison. You may find a rod well below your budget maximum is your first choice. Be sure to try several different makes of rods and several different “grades” or “styles” ,etc. Remember, you want this rod to become a “favorite”. You can also contact one of our experienced members and ask to cast any rods they have that might meet your needs. The club also has a wide range of rods that you can cast to help zero in on what you like give Ron Robinson a call to set a practice time.
5. The more you take the time to do “quality” practice the more you will appreciate the subtle differences among rods. If you don’t know how to practice or need a practice routine give Ron Robinson a call and he can set you up with a plan to help you improve.