

MY CAST IS FOR THE SIDE CAST.

Amongst the few criticisms of the side cast reel, has been the ~~off~~^{oft}-stated fallacy that it is not capable of casting the long distances sometimes necessary in surf and rock-fishing. Perhaps the value of this type of reel, so well known and proven in estuary fishing is not fully appreciated in surf and rock fishing.

Along the Northern Rivers Coast of New South Wales particularly from Ballina to the Tweed the side cast ~~reigns~~^{hoppers} reigns supreme among rock ~~and~~^{and beach anglers} ~~and~~^{and} fishermen. Further south we find an increasing percentage of revolving drum enthusiasts and north of the border the revolving drum reel shows some slight gain in popularity although the side cast still has by far the more supporters. Odd revolving drum exponents have and do occasionally invade this strip of Coastline often with hopes ~~and~~ of converting the local side cast die-hards. ~~Surprisingly~~^{Surprisingly} enough most of these exponents stay long enough in the area to be themselves converted to the side cast reel.

The side cast gear may be summed up as robust, reliable, highly efficient and inexpensive. Does this give the answer as to why there should be this overwhelming and almost exclusive ~~pre~~ preference for one type of reel along ~~this strip of coastline?~~^{stretch of coast} Without wishing to enter the old controversy of which reel is the better I believe we must look further for the answer to our question. This reason may be summed up as the necessity at times to ^{accurately} cast heavy weights over long distances. You may well ask ~~why heavy weights~~ "Why heavy weights?" The surf conditions met with along this stretch of coast, noted as it is for heavy surf with strong sweeps, may necessitate the use of leads of up to 6 oz. merely to slow down the movement of the bait to within reasonable limits. I say accurately because off-shore reefs and "boney" ~~land~~ country interspersed with good fishing water call for accuracy as well as the ability to cover long distances.

The relative ability of the two types of reels has been the subject of friendly argument wherever and whenever fishermen gather. However, whilst the side cast exponents have not been reticent in their claims they have ~~kept~~^{until now/recently} the tongue in cheek, as no real comparison over dry land under tournament conditions has been made ~~yet~~. Some people will remind me that a side cast distance throw ~~was~~ held in conjunction with the Australian Angling Association Carnival at Tweed Heads in June, 1953, but conditions for this event would surely have been frowned upon by the Australian Casting Association.

Now a band of enthusiastic surf anglers from Tweed Heads Amateur Fishing Club recently determined that they would find out what distances could be covered on the tournament field with their simple, inexpensive gear. A hope was and still is held that casting tournaments may be promoted where all types of reels may be permitted to compete against each other under equal conditions. The A.C.A. conditions for two ~~particular~~ particular casts were adopted as being the nearest to practical fishing conditions. They are, namely - Level line long distance any weight and artificial bait cast. As leaders are seldom, if ever, used with a side cast, it was ~~felt~~ felt that a level line was an essential condition; that is, the line must be of one continuous length without a leader.

These ~~casts~~ casts should not be confused with unrestricted events where spectacular and much publicised distances are thrown. The gear used in these throws is very much specialised and absolutely useless from a fishing point of view. Even the grasshoppers of grasshopper fishing would surely take some landing on nylon stocking thread using a reel of cotton reel size equipped with clock bearings.

Here is what Joe Carnemolla, who holds and has held more casting records than anyone in Australia, had to say as published in the September issue of Anglers' Digest. Speaking of the long distance level line cast (any weight): "Usually a standard fishing reel is used with no leader. It is a good fisherman's throw like the artificial bait throw and is very popular - ". Of the artificial bait cast he has this to say: "The artificial bait is the real fisherman's throw. The line has to be level throughout, no leader." The bait for this throw consists of a piece of ~~a~~ dowel $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. x $\frac{1}{2}$ in. rounded both ends, and attached to the end of a 20 in. trace. It is rigged with a running sinker above the trace.

The Australian record for this throw is held by G. Buckton, of ~~Newcastle~~ Newcastle, at 425 ft. 4 ins. This is an exceptional cast made with the assistance of a 55 m.p.h. wind. Tournaments for this cast are usually won with casts of 350 ft. The Australian record for long distance level line stands at 457 ft. and is to the credit of Joe Carnemolla. Again this distance is far above average, as a perusal of Club results will show.

Now the sixty-four dollar question is, "How can the side cast reel compare with the revolving drum on the tournament field under equal conditions?" The answer is that, on any day, irrespective of wind conditions, these Australian records will be approached and under favourable conditions may be bettered by the best of the side cast exponents. As yet no officially sponsored tournament has been held, but that would appear ~~that~~ all that is necessary to set figures which will surprise many

southern casting experts. Whilst admitting that many outstanding casts are made in practice and not emulated on the tournament field, it is pointed out that the Australian records for both casts have been exceeded in practice and I would confidently predict that they will in time be ~~exceeded~~ exceeded officially. Whilst this may not concern the Australian Casting Association it will be of great interest to all surf and rock fishermen.

An average cast may be expected ^{to be} in the vicinity ~~in~~ of 400 feet for long distance level line, with no guarantee that ~~this~~ ^{feet} 470 would be good enough to win a tournament. A similar result could be expected with the artificial bait cast, where an average cast would be better than 350 feet and the winning cast should be closer to 400 feet. It is doubtful whether such consistent casting could be made by any type of reel anywhere in the World.

What is the gear for these colossal distances? The rod is a ragoon cane from 14 feet to 16 feet in length. The reels are standard side cast reels from 5 inches to 6½ inches in diameter as sold at any sports store. The lines used would vary in breaking strain from 12 to ~~18~~ 18 lbs. In every respect this ~~gear~~ gear can be and is used for surf and rock fishing ^{as well as} ~~and when not used~~ ~~without~~ for casting practice.

An opportunity will be given to see some of the leading casters in particular Ian Phillip, Hugh Phillip, and John Anderson of Tweed Heads A.F.C. at Johnny Fern's Field day on 5th December. Casts of 450 feet can be confidently expected.

(Allan Gynther)

No, fellow angler, do not be misled by invidious propaganda or well meaning but misinformed friends; be assured that this rugged and indispensable side cast reel will more than hold its own at distance casting. It is in fact unexcelled by any reel of any type, with any weight, from a split shot to ½ lb. Would you like to throw 100 yards every time, without the fear of 'backlash'? Correctly balanced gear, instruction in the right method, a few minutes practice (NOT years) and this hope is achieved.

Far from being a weak point, the casting ability of the mullock or side cast reel is one of its greatest virtues. When a distance casting tournament is promoted, open to all types of fishing reels, using practical fishing gear, I will cast my bet for the side cast. Are there any takers? 