

STATION: 4

CASTING

PREPARATION

Objectives

The Casting Station addresses issues participants must consider when casting and teaches them to use a push-button spincast rod & reel. Overhand casting is featured; consequently, it is imperative for this station to be set up in an open area where casting plugs will not catch on trees, fences, power lines and other hazards.

Because novice anglers will be learning to cast in a group environment, the station uses plastic casting plugs instead of hooks. Participants should be taught safety awareness and practices as if actual hooks were in use.

Upon completion of the station, participants will be able to:

1. **Explain why they should use sunglasses, sunscreen and hats when fishing**
2. **Implement basic safety for casting**
3. **Use a fishing rod with a push-button spincast reel**
4. **Understand the considerations associated with casting from a boat**

Materials

For Presenter:

- Life jacket to wear throughout the program

For Casting Exercises:

- Push-button spincast rods & reels (one for each participant, if possible)
- 5 targets for casting

Possibilities include hula hoops, weighted cardboard boxes, plastic kiddie pools filled with water, rope circles staked or taped to the ground, stand-up plywood with open-mouthed (target hole) fish illustration, etc.

- 4 chairs (or more) to simulate casting from a boat
- Extra sunglasses and hats for participants who forgot theirs



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- Where to purchase materials:
 - **Mark Stephens, of Project F.I.S.H.**
at Michigan State University.
Mark may be reached via phone 517-432-2700,
email steph143@msu.edu or visit www.projectfish.org
 - Visit your local retailer.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- I. Introduce yourself and the station.
- II. Objective 1: Using sun protection
 - A. Discuss safety as an integral element of casting.
 1. The more participants exercise safety steps, the more fun they'll have.
 2. Sun protection is the first step in safety.
 - B. Sunglasses, sunscreen and hats are the primary protection.
 1. Explain that water reflects rays and intensifies the sun's effects on the body.
 2. Using these three items protects skin, eyes and head/scalp from burning.
 3. Hats and sunglasses also protect participants from flyaway hooks and plugs.
 4. Remind group they're exposed to potentially damaging rays even when fishing on a cloudy /overcast day.
 5. Make sure each participant has adequate sun protection, offering loaner supplies if needed.
- III. Objective 2: Implementing casting safety
 - A. Review components of the rod & reel combo.
 1. Briefly describe the function of each component and how the components work together in casting; mention that plugs are being used in lieu of hooks to protect participants while they learn.
 2. Explain that monofilament comes in different strengths – 2 lb test, 4 lb test, etc.



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- a. Line may be capable of handling fish of heavier weight per rod bend and reel drag system sharing burden with monofilament.
 - b. Encourage participants to know equipment well and practice technique so they're prepared for positive surprises – such as catching a bigger fish.
3. Reinforce the importance of paying attention to rig to prevent tangles and to stop what they're doing as soon as they see a tangle.
 4. Instruct group to look for and use monofilament recycling receptacles on docks and piers, in tackle shops, etc., especially when they cut out a large tangle.
- B. Emphasize the importance handling the rod & reel safely.
1. Demonstrate how to carry the rig properly – hold at first line guide and point tip toward sky.
 2. Have participants come forward, pick up a rod & reel and carry it safely back to their position.
 3. Show group how to establish a safety circle to ensure there's sufficient distance between themselves and other anglers and/or objects.
 - a. Hold out rod away from body with fully extended arm; turn around in a complete circle.
 - b. Explain that they must recheck their safety circle often.
 - c. Have participants move into position (for upcoming casting) and instruct them to make a safety circle to verify they're safe to cast.
- IV. Objective 3: Learning to cast
- A. Instruct group to **watch** you demonstrate and **wait** to practice until you give the go-ahead.
 - B. Demonstrate how to release the line – talking through each of the five steps.
 1. "Hold the rod in your writing hand."
 2. "Make a fist with your thumb on top."
 3. "Push down the button on the reel with your thumb."
 4. "Bring your hand up to your ear."

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5. "At the same time, move your arm forward and release the button." (Use an abbreviated motion to demonstrate at this point – not a full casting arc.)

C. Tell group to begin practicing releasing the line; confirm that each participant has mastered the task before moving on.

D. Demonstrate casting as you say the instructions for each step aloud.

1. "Turn the handle to reel in the plug until it hangs no more than four inches from the rod tip."

2. "Keep your feet on the ground, slightly apart, and face the target."

3. "Keep your eye on the plug or hook at all times."

4. "Push down the button on the reel with your thumb."

5. "Bring your hand up to your ear."

6. "At the same time, move your arm forward and release the button."

7. "Follow through by pointing the tip of the rod at the target."

8. "When a fish bites, set the hook – rod tip up."

E. Have the group begin casting at targets.

1. Small groups or even one-at-a-time may work best.

2. Remind casters their objective is to hit the target – not to launch the plug as far as they can.

3. Caution participants to remain mindful of their safety circle and to keep their eyes on the plug.

4. Assist until everyone gets the hang of casting.

V. Objective 4: Casting from a boat

A. Explain that fishing from a boat requires different casting techniques.

1. Limited space means safety circle is usually not possible.

2. For safety's sake, fishing from a seated position is preferable to standing.

3. Boat is a less stable environment than fishing from land, dock or pier.

B. Sit in a chair (to simulate boat seating) and demonstrate how to cast by dropping line over boat's side.

1. Have participants occupying chairs practice dropping line in groups of four (or more, depending on number of chairs available.)



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2. Encourage their continual awareness of their plugs and of their fellow anglers' actions.
- C. End the session by having participants reel in the plug and carry their rig properly back to the return pile or box.

- VI. Review of station's major points
 - A. Sun protection is essential, even when fishing on a cloudy day.
 - B. Carrying the rig properly – by holding it at the first line guide and pointing it upward – and establishing a safety circle are rules to be observed at all times.
 - C. Practice improves casting technique and reinforces safety lessons.
 - D. Focusing on accuracy over distance, watching for tangles and staying aware of the plug are key things to remember when casting.
 - E. Casting from a boat requires different techniques because anglers are seated and are positioned closer together.

TIPS and OPTIONS

- To prevent health hazards, sunglasses and hats loaned to participants must be clean for each use – no sharing.
- Because this station involves much movement of participants and equipment, nearby groups can get distracted. Setting up the Casting Station away from other stations can help.
- Repeating catch phrases such as “Rod tip up,” “Look at the hook,” and “Circle for safety” can help participants keep safety considerations at the forefront of their awareness.
- If plastic casting plugs are unavailable, substitute with a 1” – 3” piece of garden hose.
- It's a good idea to have extra rod & reel set-ups so you can keep things moving in the event of tangles, equipment failure, etc.



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- Presenter can bring to life how easily rigs can tangle and show how to handle tangles by deliberately creating and resolving a tangle situation with a demonstration rod & reel.
- If you have participants who've already mastered overhand casting and/or if time permits for teaching a second method, Pitch Casting is a good choice. Position Pitch Casting as a reliable method when there are obstacles to overhand casting, such as bushes and trees, and teach the method in four steps:
 1. Hold the rod in front of you.
 2. Use the weight of the rig to swing the line like a pendulum.
 3. Bend your elbow and throw the line forward as you straighten your arm.
 4. Release the button when the plug/hook reaches the far swing of the pendulum.
- If time runs short, casting from a boat can be handled as a demonstration by the presenter rather than a group participation exercise.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further background information applicable to the Casting Station:

- Take Me Fishing®:
<http://www.takemefishing.org/fishing/fishopedia/how-to-fish/fishing-techniques>
- Cabela's® Field Guide Story: http://www.cabelas.com/story-123/carl_spincast_reel_061008_bg/92/Spincast%252BReel%252BBuyer%2527s%252BGuide.shtml
- 4-H Sportfishing Program:
http://www.4hfishing.org/resources/angling_skills_pdfs/2c_spincasting.pdf

