

*If you're becoming fidgety about the fast-approaching season,  
here are some ways to . . .*

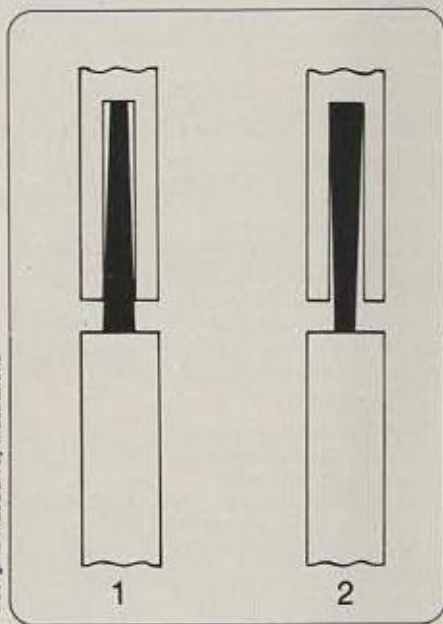
# Be Prepared for Opening Day

## *Correcting Ferrule Misfits*

ONE OF THE MOST critical components of a fly rod is the ferrule. This has been true since the ferrule was developed as a way to join rod sections, and probably will be for some time to come. No other part—other than the blank itself—has as much to do with a rod's performance in casting and playing large fish as does the ferrule.

Today's graphite and fiberglass rods generally use ferrules of the same material as the blank—that is, the ferrule is an integral part of the rod. This allows rod-builders to work with much less critical tolerances than with traditional nickel-silver ferrules, which had to be machine tooled with great precision. The resultant savings in time and material costs benefit the consumer in the form of less expensive fly rods.

Still, accuracy in ferrule construction is needed—but is sometimes lacking. This seems to be particularly true in the case of graphite rods. I build a number of fly rods from graphite blanks each year and find that ferrule fit often leaves much to be desired. The most commonly encountered ferrule problem is nonconformity of the male and female parts. This means that the exterior shape and/or diameter of the male does not precisely correspond to the interior shape and/or diameter of the female. (Figures 1 and 2.) At best, this causes bothersome clicking during casting. More serious misfits will cause the rod to disjoint during use. I know a man who lost a salmon because of this. At worst, a



poor ferrule fit can result in a damaged or broken rod.

You can compensate for looseness at the front of the ferrule by carefully reducing the tip end of the male. Ideally, this should be done with a rotating device such as a lathe or drill. This insures that the ferrule will remain round during resizing. Use very fine sandpaper and go slowly—you can always remove more material, but if you take off too much a new and different problem is created. Try for fit frequently as you sand.

Looseness at the bottom of the ferrule is much more difficult to correct by sanding because it's hard to isolate the particular area on the male that needs to be resized. A mistake here could ruin a ferrule—if too much material is removed, the fit will be too loose. This is particularly true of spigot-type ferrules that employ a thin graphite dowel as the male part.

I have experimented with an alternative technique that involves supplementing the tip end of the male rather than reducing the bottom part. Having used this method on four rods, all of which have been fished hard for three seasons, I now feel I can recommend it without reservation.

To enlarge the tip end of the male I use epoxy glue. I prefer slow-setting varieties over the five-minute type because part of the process involves allowing gravity to distribute the epoxy evenly around the ferrule. Five-minute epoxy sets up so fast that uniform distribution may be inhibited.

Here is the procedure: Spread a layer of epoxy around the tip end of the male ferrule, supplementing the last quarter inch or so. Try to get the layer as even as possible, using your finger or an applicator. Then hang the rod section by the tip, making sure it is plumb. Allow the glue to dry almost completely so that it is dry to the touch (check the container for timing), removing any large globules that form early in the drying process. When the epoxy is nearly cured, carefully join the two rod sections, seating the ferrule as you wish it to be. Then rehang the treated section and allow the adhesive to dry thoroughly.

In some cases the process must be repeated to bring the male ferrule up to the proper diameter. Don't be overly concerned about applying too much epoxy because it can be sanded down when dry.

Finally, a suggestion for prevention of sticking in glass or graphite ferrules: Rub a thin coat of paraffin on the male ferrule before assembling the rod. It works like a charm.

DICK TALLEUR

## Observing Nymphs

THERE IS LITTLE question that catches will increase with imitations that accurately duplicate the size, form and color of insects when trout are feeding selectively.

But there is one more thing that should be observed to insure success: the motion of the captured insect. You can't tell if a nymph swims, crawls or burrows by holding it in the palm of your hand. Therefore, you can't predict how fish are likely to see it or whether you should retrieve your fly quickly or drift it slowly to imitate the action of the insect.

There are two ways to observe specimens to see how they behave underwater. The first, an aquarium stocked with aquatic insects, gives many insights into how to fish imitations in a convincing manner. It can also give hours of fireside pleasure as you observe the antics of insects and understand them better.

The second way is to release a captured natural in quiet currents or along the margin of a pond or lake. By observing the way it seeks shelter you can quickly tell whether it swims agilely or not at all. For example, a free-living caddis larva dropped into the water will tumble until it hits the bottom. Then it will crawl away. An *Ephemera* mayfly will attempt to swim, but its efforts will be awkward, and it likely will be tossed and turned by wedges of current. A swimming mayfly, on the other hand, will dart through the water with a burst of speed that is clearly independent of the force of the flow. Each different reaction suggests a different presentation.

DAVE HUGHES

## Vest Pocket Entomology Kit

MATCHING THE HATCH from a casual observation of floating or flying insects can be futile. A specimen should be closely observed to select the right imitation. To exactly identify insects, they must be preserved for later study, and it isn't

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