



# The Five Essentials Over Time

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# The Essentials of Fly Casting

- Origins
- Overview
- Questions
- Evolution
- Observations
- Discussion throughout



# The History of the Essentials

- 1968. J.W. Gammel of Baytown, Texas begins to teach himself flycasting.
- J.W.'s son Bill (b. 1970) shows keen interest and eventually joins J.W.
- 1988. The IFFF asks the Gammels to write a 24 page pamphlet on fly casting for beginners. They watch and extensively video top casters to determine what they have in common.
- 1990. The Gammels complete the Essentials. The IFFF and other casting organisations worldwide continue to make prominent use of them today.
- 1992. Bill Gammel becomes the first CI (assessed by Mel Krieger) and later a CBOG
- 1997. J.W. Gammel passes away at age 60 after a courageous battle with illness
- The Essentials today might appear to be set in stone
  - The Summer 2009 Loop reprints the Essentials unchanged.
  - The original Essentials remain part of the official CI Study Materials.



# The Essentials -- 1990

1. There must be a **Pause** between each stroke, which varies in duration with the amount of line outside the rod tip.
2. **Slack** line should be kept to an absolute minimum.
3. In order to form the most efficient, least air resistant loops, and to direct the energy of the cast to a specific target, the caster must move the rod tip in a **Straight Line**.
4. The size of the casting **Arc** must vary with the length of line past the rod tip.
5. **Power** must be applied in the proper amount at the proper place in the stroke.



# Questions -- 1990 Essentials

- **Structure**
  - Why this order? Pause first??
  - Are the Essentials equally important?
  - How do the Essentials fit together and how should they be taught?
  - Other questions?
- **Possible additions**
  - Stop?
  - Stroke length?
  - Anything else possibly missing?
- **Questions**
  - Which SLP? 180° rule not explicit.
  - Arc and Pause only related to line length. Line speed, rod flex, effect of wind on rod itself?
  - Other?

# 1993 to Present -- The Essentials Evolve



- **Bill Gammel**
  - Teaches extensively
  - 2002 video - "Teaching Yourself to Fly Cast"
  - Summer 2010 and Summer 2016 Loop article and interview
- **SLP first and overall essential**
  - SLP Essential is a direct caster action to avoid tracking errors
  - Next four Essentials work together to maintain SLP in rod plane.
- **Pause**
  - Now depends on time for line to straighten
- **Arc**
  - Now depends on rod bend
- **Stop**
  - Was once Sixth Essential before Gammels removed it
  - Importance emphasized in full text of Essentials
  - Bill considers Stop covered by Power (applied in opposite direction) and Arc Essentials
- **Stroke**
  - Bill considers to be style but accepts most adjust Arc through stroke length



# How The Essentials Might Look Today

1. In order to form the most efficient, least air resistant loops, and to direct the energy of the cast to a specific target, the caster must move the rod tip in a single **Straight Line** in all planes.
2. The size of the casting **Arc** must vary with the amount of bend placed on the rod.
3. **Power** must be applied in the proper amount at the proper place in the stroke
4. There must be a **Pause** between each stroke, which varies in duration with the length of time it takes the line to straighten.
5. **Slack** line should be kept to an absolute minimum.



# Observations

- The Gammels relied on evidence and hard work, not on opinions and conventional wisdom
- Teaching teaches instructors too
- Even the best keep learning and improving their work