

## **Rod Building 107D: Guides – Spacing & Size**

This is the last of four articles covering guide sizing and spacing on a blank. It covers the importance of considering types of fly lines when choosing guide sizes.

**Fly Lines:** Modern fly lines will vary in taper design and weight depending on the individual manufacturer and the company's marketing philosophy. One company's five-weight line may vary greatly from another company's five-weight line. Standards have been established by the American Sportfishing Association (ASA, formerly the American Fly Tackle Manufacturers Association or AFTMA) that relate a fly line weight for a given 30 feet in length. There will be an article later going into detail discussing different lines and how they affect your rod.

In general, the larger the weight of the fly line, the larger the cross-sectional area of the line used and the farther it can be cast. In addition, floating lines are much larger in diameter than sinking lines. Some lines have both floating and sinking segments. Recently, some manufacturers have begun producing larger diameter floating fly lines so that the line floats higher in the water. This type of line may have a diameter up to 1/64" larger than typical floating fly lines. **Beware of purchasing a new floating fly line because you may notice that you can cast the line neither as far nor as easily as when using the older style of floating fly line.**

If you upgrade the diameter of the line without a change in guide sizing, the line has less room through which to slide, creating less freedom of movement for the fly line. If this does occur, you will need to clean your line more often and dress your fly line with a slick substance to reduce the friction between the line and the guides. When looking to achieve a longer cast with a larger diameter line, you may want to use larger guides when building your rod to accommodate the line.

Here are some basics to consider when choosing your guide sizes with respect to line sizing:

- Consider manufacturer recommendations, and maybe even enlarge the guides a size or two to compensate for larger diameter floating lines.
- Consider selecting a fly line size that matches your rod using the ASA standards.
- Consider trying titanium carbide eyes. They are very hard, and provide minimal line sliding resistance.
- Consider using the Fuji "New Concept" method (<http://www.fujitackle.com.au/concept.htm>). Fuji has put a lot of time and effort in developing it. I have used this method on several rods and it has worked very well. This link discusses spinning and bait casting rods, but fly rods can also benefit from this concept.

The following manufacturers also have some good recommendations:

- 1) Batson Enterprises (<http://www.batsonenterprises.com/>), and
- 2) St. Croix (<http://www.stcroixrod.com/content.asp?id=68&section=builder>).

I have spent a large amount of time researching many sources of what to look for in terms of guide sizing and spacing to use for a new rod (internet, books, and various knowledgeable people). It can be very confusing because there are so many differing opinions. There are many guide sizes that can be used for the same weight and same action of rod. However, in the end, if you follow the basics that have been outlined in this and the previous three articles, you will be off to a good head start in choosing the right guides and spacing for your new rod.

If you would like to discuss more about guide spacing and sizing, please feel free to contact me at [larrylee@L3rods.com](mailto:larrylee@L3rods.com) or call me at 916-962-0616.

