

Rod Building 201C Preparing and Gluing a Reel Seat Together using Epoxy

By Larry Lee

The purpose of this article is to provide guidance for gluing reel seat components together for assembly on the blank. The reel seat is important because when casting a fly, it holds the line to the rod.

Reel Seat Preparation:

Reel seats come in several styles, colors, and shapes. The reel can hold various types of line such as floating, sinking, sink-tip, shooting-heads and others, depending on the fish you are attempting to catch.



Photo 1 shows four different unassembled (also called a *skeleton*) reel seats that are manufactured by Batson Enterprises. Notice that Seats (A), (B), and (D) all have different types of wood and graphite inserts that must be glued to the reel seat threaded barrel. Reel seat (C) has no detachable insert and the threaded barrel is located below the insert area. Also in the photo (located on the left side of the photo between reel seats (C) and (D)), there is a fighting butt assembly that can be glued into the reel seat, instead of an end cap. Fighting butts are typically used on rods 7 wt. and larger. Also shown in Photo 1, reel seats (A) and (B), there is a single locking ring that provides the pressure against the rear sliding hood of the reel seat. On the larger reel seats ((C) and (D)), there are two locking nuts to hold the rear sliding hood against the rear sliding hood.

Prior to mounting the reel seat to the blank, the rod builder must glue the unassembled reel seat components together. The reel seat pieces must be in the correct position and facing the proper directions before the epoxy glue is applied. The next step is to prepare the epoxy for application. Both Flex Coat and Trondak have great epoxy for gluing reel seats and handles. In addition, Flex Coat and Trondak have 5-minute curing epoxy that works very well for reel seat assembly. This allows the rod builder to glue and cure the reel seat quickly, which consequently allows the rod builder to be able to move onto the next step of rod construction (mounting the reel seat onto the blank) sooner rather than later.

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When the glue is properly mixed (see directions for mixing on the epoxy label) and ready for application, apply the glue between the threaded barrel and insert, between the end-cap (or fighting butt insert) and barrel, and finally between the insert and the upper fixed hood. As you to glue the parts together, continuously clean any excess epoxy from the threads of the barrel and from the insert and the upper fixed hood. When applying the glue, it is important to avoid getting glue on the threaded barrel, which can prevent the locking nuts from turning freely. Also be careful to prevent the epoxy from filling in the hole for the upper hood, so that reel seat can be inserted properly. Acetone, paper towels, and a toothbrush work really well in keeping the unwanted epoxy away from critical areas. There is no particular order in which the pieces must be glued, so whatever feels the most practical to you.

Another word of caution: all very quick drying super glues do not stand up to impact, so I would recommend not using it. If you have the time, slower curing epoxy glue (which will take about 2 to 8 hours to cure) is the most dependable and will work the best to keep the reel seat assembled. Also, make sure you work with the epoxy in a well ventilated area. Rubber or vinyl gloves and a face-mask that filter fumes originating from the epoxy is highly recommended.



Photo 2 shows what the assembled reel seats will look like when the reel seat components are properly glued together.

The next rod building article will provide guidance for preparing the rod blank for gluing the reel seat onto the blank, then gluing the handle, reel seat, and winding check to the blank. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Larry Lee at LLLee@L3rods.com or by telephone at (916) 962-0616.