

Fly Tyers Corner

November, 2011

Shambles Caddis II

by Bill Carnazzo

Yes, I'm still on a Caddis kick. Maybe it's because lately I seem to be catching a lot of fish on Caddis imitations. In the July, 2009 Leader I featured a very successful fly that I call the "Shambles Caddis." I like to tinker, tweak, and fiddle around when I hold a hook captive in my vise—perhaps it's an exercise in creativity, an artistic expression if you will. Sometimes (not always), it's based on something I've observed while stumbling around on a stream, but mostly I think it's just a "what if....?" that flits through my psyche as I crank the bobbin. These brainstormers are not always productive—meaning they sometimes result in miserable failures when presented to wily trout: rejections, or just downright ignoring of the rendition that I am so proud of. But on occasion something I've created does actually work—and when I say "work" I mean it catches fish regularly in a routine of rigorous testing over time.

And so it was with the Shambles Caddis. It has never failed me when I fish it myself, and it has amazed guide clients in canyon stream settings—even rookies. In fact, I recently took two of my young grandsons to a little stream at around 6,000' elevation and they both caught trout on the S.C.

But I couldn't leave it alone; there's always that little tickle or voice inside that prods me to mess with success. And so I did. The result was Shambles Caddis II, and after a year or so of testing, it has proven itself by outshining Shambles Caddis I. The new features are a "tail" that I believe the fish mistake for a trailing shuck; a body base of opal tinsel; and a touch-dubbed rib that allows the opal tinsel to show through. The tail is made of a material called "Temple dog." I looked this term up on the Internet, and got numerous conflicting stories about what the devil a temple dog is—it seems that no one really knows. But I love the material; it's soft, pliable, and easy to work with. Oh, I forgot—I also stack the wing hair, which I didn't do for the original Shambles Caddis.

Materials

Hook	Tiemco 102, sizes 14, 16
Thread	Tan 8/0
Tail (shuck?)	Temple dog fur (olive or light brown)
Abdomen	Medium opal tinsel and "touch dubbed" antron dubbing (olive or light brown)
Hackle	Palmered dry fly quality neck feather of a neutral color
Wing	High quality deer hair (natural or burnt orange)
Head	Thread

Tying Instructions

1. Smash the hook barb.
2. Cover the rear of the shank with thread, leaving the bobbin at the back of the barb. Keep thread winds very sparse (don't overlap them) because we want a nice flat surface for the opal tinsel to lie on.
3. Tie in a "tail" made with a small pinch temple dog fur; keep it sparse, and the length should be no longer than the hook shank.



4. At the same spot, tie in a properly sized rooster neck hackle by its tip, and then a 3" length of medium opal tinsel. Leave the bobbin at the tie-in point.



5. Wrap the tinsel forward to just behind the hook eye and then rearward back to the hook bend. Tie it off there, and let the bobbin hang.



6. Apply tacky dubbing wax to the thread; take a pinch of antron dubbing (hint: chop it finely with your scissors beforehand) and touch it to the waxed thread. This will trap some of the fibers of the dubbing in the wax and results in a sparse, translucent effect. Wind the dubbed thread forward, to the 1/3 point on the hook behind the eye, and leave the bobbin there. The winds should be spaced so that the dubbed thread appears to be a rib.



7. Grab the hackle with your hackle pliers and wind the hackle forward in the spaces between the dubbed rib. Tie the hackle off at that same 1/3 point and apply a tiny drop of superglue at that spot. Important: rotate the fly so that the hook point is in the up position, and trim all of the hackle from the bottom of the fly; this will allow the fly to sit flat on the water, as a natural insect does. Return the fly to the normal upright position.



8. Stack a medium sized clump of natural or burnt orange deer hair after cleaning out the under fur. Measure the hair so that it will reach from the front 1/3 point to just beyond the hook bend; any longer is too long. Pinch the hair, add ¼" in length, and trim the butts. Keep it pinched tightly in preparation for the next step. We want that additional ¼" so that we can create a "top notch" such as is sported by the Elk Hair Caddis.



9. Take a loose turn around the butts of the hair before applying it to the hook; this turn should be taken about ¼" behind the butts. Bring the thread and butts to the top of the hook and hold the hair there tightly while taking 10 tight turns around the hair and shank. Keep all of the hair on top of the shank; don't let it roll over or you'll have an unbalanced fly.
10. Push the top notch back and up and create a small head in front of it. Whip finish the head.
11. Turn the fly over and put a drop of superglue at the base of the wing tie-in point. Return the fly to normal position and with your bodkin put a drop of superglue on the front of the "top notch." Push the top notch upward and rearward with your bodkin, holding it there for a few seconds until it stays in that position. Gluing at these two spots will make the fly very durable. A few days ago I guided two anglers on a small stream; they managed to fish the entire day each with one of these bad boys, while catching many trout. They even managed to keep the flies out of the trees and bushes (which is where most flies are lost, and no amount of super glue will help save them from oblivion).

Tying Tips

1. Gluing at the two spots mentioned in step 11 will make the fly very durable. A few days ago I guided two anglers on a small stream; they managed to fish the entire day each with a single one of these bad boys, while catching many trout. Miraculously, they even managed to keep the flies out of the trees and bushes (which is where most flies are lost, and no amount of super glue will help save them from oblivion).
2. The touch dubbing process is a Gary LaFontaine innovation. For more information, do a Google search on "touch dubbing."
3. If, at the end of step 9, your clump of deer hair wants to spin around the shank, it's probably because you didn't cover that part of the shank with some thread over the opal tinsel, or because your turns of thread were not tight enough. If it wants to spin, unwind it and do it over as there is no cure for this malady, at least in my view.

Go build and float a few of these bad boys, and....See ya on the creek.