

Olympic Peninsula Skagit Tactics (OPST) and others

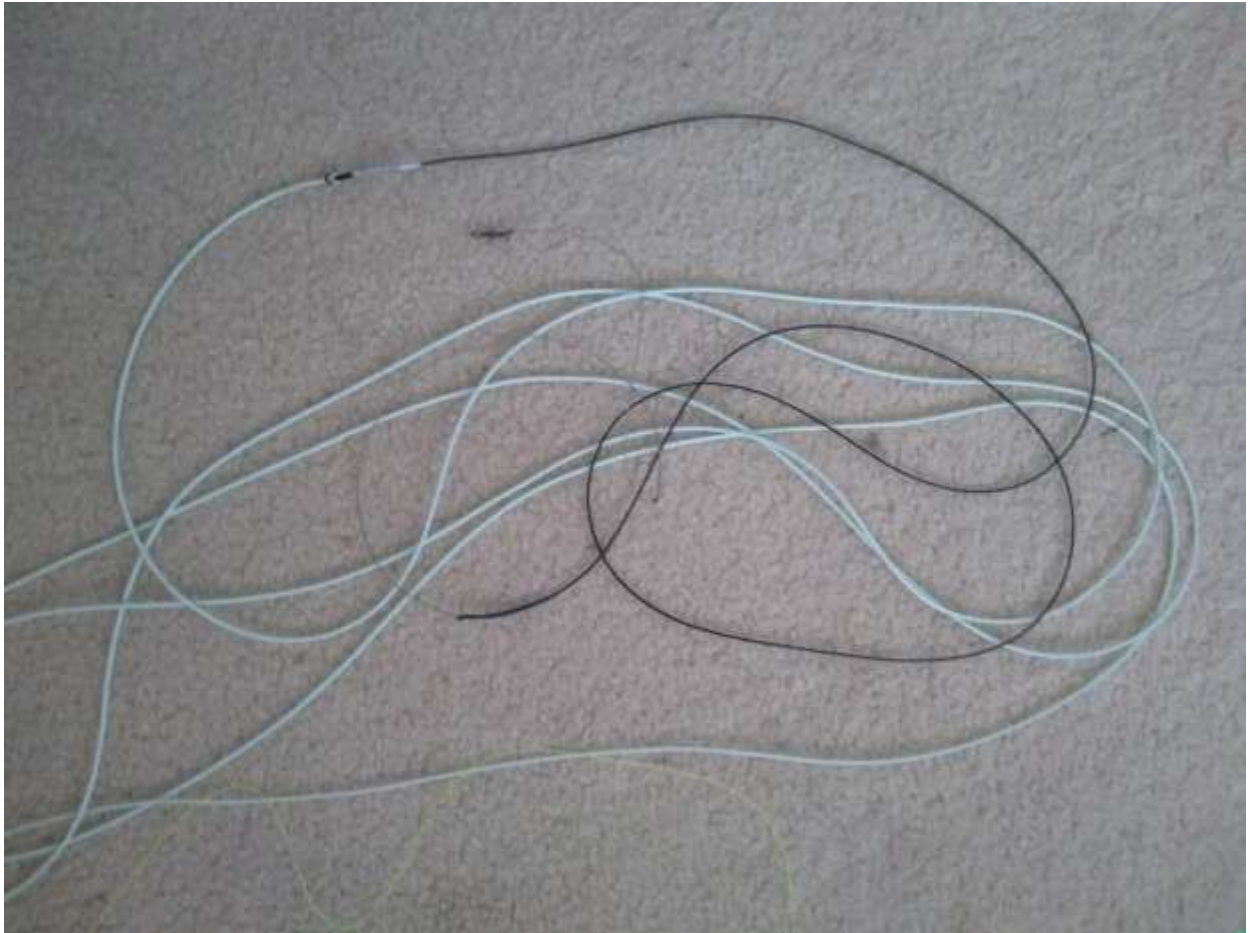
Leon continues his search for carp on fly experimenting with interesting rigs:



A juvenile carp from the Murrumbidgee. It went for three bundles of marabou on a size 6 hook. Purple, black and pink. 150 grain Airflo Scout head plus OPST floating tip plus furled leader plus mono running line (copolymer). 7' 6" 4 weight fly rod. Setup not clunky at all for sight fishing.



This carp was caught using my 10' 3 weight fly rod from the Murrumbidgee river 3 days ago using the OPST system. It would have been almost impossible (possible but uncomfortable) to cast a big fly using the standard weight forward line, not to mention the distance I can get with the OPST system. I also have a barrel swivel before my tippet. In this photo, I'm showing also my 3 weight 10 footer.



Yellow mono running line looped onto 200 grain head, in turn looped on to 5' OPST sink tip, a small furlled section with swivel at the end. Then the tippet. Furlled section smooths transition and prevents the tippet cutting the sink tip. This is used on my 10' 3 weight. Recommended is 175 grains which I don't have. 200 is more suitable for 9' 5 weight. Airflo Scout 150 grains is a few feet longer. Works well on 10' 3 weight. I like the Airflo Scout 150 on my 7'6" 4 weight.

OPST is Olympic Peninsula Skagit Tactics. Ed Wards and friends came up with these short Skagit heads (with the front ends thicker than the rears but still retaining the front and rear tapers) to replace the traditional long Skagit heads. These short heads can be cast using single handed fly rods as short as 6' 6". At first they only used sink tips at various sink rates. Then they introduce the floating tips (5', 7.5' and 10') to fish the dry flies. These setups are fantastic for distance and big flies (mouse, frogs etc) using low weight single handers. It is possible to fish midges too if you lengthen the leader. OPST recommends their mono running lines called Lazaar but which I substituted with a cheaper copolymer mono. You can overhead cast and Spey cast with this system. They recommend catching small fish using low weight rods. I have no problems landing a few 5 kilo carp using a cheap 10' 3 weight Czech nymphing rod (cheap enough to be sacrificed).

OPST has revised their grain weight chart for various rods. I think these downward revisions reflect their improved skills in casting these short heads. They had to relearn their casting to avoid blowing the anchor etc. I find this system very user friendly. You can use switch rods and trout Spey rods as well. I used to use the Rio Switch Chucker line of 325 grains on my 4 weight switch rod. I can use the OPST head (225 grains) now. I have asked them (a while ago) to produce integrated lines such that I can strip my fly all the way in. However, it's possible to strip all the way in using the present modular system. I just have to remember to keep my rod aligned with the line to avoid the loops getting caught in the guides. Yellow bellies tend to follow the fly all the way in to your feet. I have spooked quite a few of them when I tried to back away to strip the fly in more.

I even use a barrel swivel (if that is what it is called) for attaching the tippetts on my 3 weight rod. Imagine the advantage in fast water without the split shots. The swivel also serves to stop the fly from spinning. Leon