



## Casting the "Mendoza Line"

By Joe Mahler & Dusty Sprague

In baseball, a batting average of .200 is what is known as the "Mendoza Line" and is generally regarded to be the demarcation of acceptable and unacceptable hitting. There is some controversy as to whether it was named after Minnie Mendoza, or Mario Mendoza-both major league infielders, both unremarkable hitters. For our purposes the term will describe the threshold of casting skills needed to reasonably expect success in a saltwater fly fishing situation. In our experience, most angling visitors feel more prepared than they actually are. Success on the trout stream or lake is great, but for salt water fly fishing, additional skills are needed. Here is what we consider to be the Salt water caster's Mendoza Line and some practice tips to boost your average.

### Distance

Being able to cast a longer line improves your opportunities. While unloading a fly line to 100 feet is not necessary, a solid and CONTROLLED cast of 60 feet will suffice in most situations, if it can be delivered with speed, accuracy and in a breeze. While it may be true that most fish are caught at less than 60 feet, a stiff headwind can quickly reduce the distance you can cast. And, the farther you can cast with control, accuracy and speed, the more quickly and easily you can execute a shorter cast. Practice by

Next meeting:

**Monday, January 9, 2017**

**6:30 pm Conservancy of Southwest Florida**

**"Everything You Wanted to Know About Sharks & More"**

**Speaker: Dr. Bob Hueter, Mote Lab**

throwing your tightest loops at a distance of 40 ft, and then make the loops go faster. As you increase hand speed and rod bend you'll need to increase stroke length and rod arc to match the bend in the rod to keep the rod tip moving in a straight path to keep the loops tight. Add 5 feet, get the loops tight again and make them go faster. Keep adding 5 feet until you reach a plateau - you lose control - the loops fall apart. Reduce the length of line a few feet and work to gain control again. Fine tuning the mechanics of the cast will allow you to reach out gaining more distance with good loops, under control. It does no good to cast long distances if the line does not go where it is intended - practice using a target. And, use a measuring tape to know how far you are actually casting - it's easy to misjudge casting distances.

### False Casting and Shooting line

Many freshwater fly fishermen tend to false cast a lot, measuring the cast and fine tuning the loop to achieve tea-cup accuracy for relatively stationary fish. Often there is no



time limit to the presentation. Excessive false casting in the salt can result in lost opportunities. Many species in the salt are on the move and opportunities to present the fly are brief. One of the most useful skills is to very quickly turn a short line into a long line. Practice by picking up 30 feet of line and with one backcast, present the fly at 50 feet. You'll need to shoot line in both directions. Remember to first STOP the rod, and then SHOOT.

## Double Haul

If you don't know how to haul—learn. Effective hauling adds line speed and can dramatically increase casting distance. For many anglers, when casting 50 feet or longer even with little wind the rod hand struggles to make the cast - just not enough strength and control. Hauling can help by reducing the work of the rod hand by shifting some effort to the line hand. We consider it essential for distance casting, penetrating wind and simply making casting more balanced and comfortable even at moderate ranges. However, there is an important point to remember - one must be able to control the size of the casting loop before a haul will significantly help. Making a big loop go faster with a haul is not very productive. Get your loops under control then add the haul.

## Speed cast

Good opportunities at fish - shot windows - can last mere seconds. You need to get the fly in the water before the fish detects your presence or the fish is out of range, or the retrieve angle changes to the point the retrieve



Check out the BFF Channel:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRqeRI5zYAhhQ59ZnhZ\\_PuA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRqeRI5zYAhhQ59ZnhZ_PuA)

attacks the fish with the fly. If you can make a controlled cast to 60 feet, with three or fewer false casts, in less than five seconds, you'll be in good shape. Practice by stripping 65 feet of line off the reel and re stacking the line to get the front of the line on the top of the pile. Extend 30 ft of fly line out the rod tip. With that 30 feet of line out the rod tip, let approximately 15 feet hang in a large loop from the rod tip. Coil the remaining line and hold with the index finger and thumb of the rod hand, trapped against the cork. Hold the fly in the line hand with hook point forward. Begin by dropping all the coiled line from the rod hand, continuing to hold the main line with the rod hand. Roll cast to position the line on the water in front of you, letting the roll cast pull the fly from your line hand. Make a long back cast stroke, hauling, then shooting line opposite your target area. False cast, haul and shoot line. Use no more than three false casts - two is even better. Practice using a target.

## Dealing with Wind

Almost always an issue, the wind can turn a great day of fishing into complete frustration, unless you are prepared to effectively deal with it. For wind coming in to your casting arm, practice casting side-arm with the rod traveling horizontally, parallel to the water - increase your tempo and line speed to avoid the fly and leader hitting the water. If the wind is strong into your casting side practice casting with the rod tip angled over your opposite, down-wind shoulder. Or, turn to face away from your target and present the fly on your back cast. Learning to present the fly on your back cast, casting off your line-hand shoul-

## Upcoming Outing

### Goodland – January 16

Rescheduled from Jan. 11!

**HOST:** Alan Kuhre

**When:** Monday, January 16, 2017, at 7:00 AM

**Where:** Boats and kayaks can launch for a fee at the Collier Boating Park in Goodland. Kayak can launch for free at the foot of the Goodland bridge on the East side of SR 92.

**What:** Low tide is at 9:16 (-0.26') am. If you are looking for a kayak outfitter willing to deliver a kayak or paddle board to Goodland, try Glen at Paddle Marco. His nor-

mal 1/2 day rate is \$60 for a single/ \$70 for a tandem. Group rates are available. For more info please contact Glen at (239) 777-5423 or WWW.PADDLEMARCO.COM.

**LUNCH:** 12:45, at the Little Bar in Goodland.

There will be a signup sheet and additional info for both outings at the next BFF meeting. Hope to see you there!

Questions or Concerns: Alan Kuhre (Host) @ 239 777-2497. Sign up at the November 8th Meeting.

**All outings are intended for members only and are one of the benefits of membership.**

## FISHING PROSPECTS FOR JANUARY

Winter and cold weather are here, cold by southwest Florida standards that is. The key in January will be water temperature. As the water temperature drops snook, tarpon, and redfish will disappear or stop feeding. Other fish such as seatrout, pompano, and sheepshead will become more active. The colder temperatures should cause the water to clear up and that will make for great sight fishing. An early start will not be necessary, in fact working dark bottom areas on a sunny afternoon may be quite rewarding.

The bait fish will disappear as the water temperature drops. This will cause the fish to switch to feeding on shrimp and crabs. Therefore fly patterns imitating crustaceans will out produce baitfish patterns. Try small clousers or one of the many shrimp or crab patterns.

Besides the water temperature tides will also have a significant influence on the fishing. Fishing should be better during the spring tides at mid month and at month end.

### **SNOOK**

Catch and release of snook during the closed season is permitted so minimize the handling of any snook caught and return them to the water as quickly as possible.

If the water temperature drops into the 60s the snook will be hard to find. Those snook that are encountered will be smaller on average and difficult to catch. In the colder water accurate placement of the fly will be critical as the snook will not move far to grab a bite to eat.

### **REDFISH**

The reds are somewhat more tolerant of the cold than the snook and may be found in the holes around the oyster bars. In the afternoon if the sun warms the water enough the reds will move into the shallow grassy areas.

### **TROUT**

With colder water temperatures trout will become more active and should be a primary target fish for the month. The trout will be over the grass or around islands in 4 to 6 feet of water.

### **TARPON**

With the onset of the cold weather the tarpon will be gone from our area.

### **POMPANO**

Look for pompano in the passes. Try working a shrimp or small crab pattern right on the bottom.

### **OTHERS**

Sheepshead will be encountered more as the water temperature drops. Look for them in the holes and around the docks. As the fishing slows down because of the cooler water temperature jacks and ladyfish may save the day. They may not be glamorous but they are a lot of fun to catch.

der or casting with your non-dominant hand will allow you to fish to both sides of a skiff while avoiding having to cast 'through the boat' which can be dangerous to boat mates and the guide. Practice these techniques well before you get on the water and encounter the wind. For a wind at your back, keep the back cast short and use the wind to shoot more on the forward cast. Keep your back cast low and your forward cast higher. For a head wind, aim the cast lower in front and slightly higher in back and extra line speed. Ideally, the line will unroll just above the surface and not be blown back. Practice in all wind directions.

## Controlling Slack

If you are not casting, the rod tip should be in the water or very near the surface to help keep a straight path between the fly and the anchor point of the line pinched against the cork. Strike detection is greatly aided by keeping slack out of the system.

## Setting the hook

A standard trout hook-set, by lifting the rod, provides enough force to set a small, thin-wired hook in the soft mouth of a cold-water trout. In saltwater hooks are larger and made with thicker wire and some fish have tough mouths. It's best to use a strip-strike on saltwater species. The strip-strike provides two important advantages – first, by adequately setting the thicker-wired hooks in tough mouths and secondly, if the fish is missed on the initial hook set, the fly is still in the water in front of the fish and you may get a second opportunity. Also, in trout fishing, especially dry fly fishing, we try to set the hook the instant we see the fish take the fly, otherwise he could spit the fly quickly. In saltwater fishing sometimes the fish misses the fly on his first attempt. It's best to wait to feel the fish rather than setting the hook based on visual clues. With the rod pointed directly down the line to the fly, when you feel the fish take the fly, very quickly strip strike - pulling line back with the line hand, keeping the rod pointed directly at the fish. If there is any significant angle between the line and the rod shaft, the rod tip will bend, absorbing the strike. Keep the rod and line in-line. Practice by having someone stand on your line or hold the leader with a gloved hand as you strip line in simulating a retrieve. When you feel the line come tight, strip strike and only when you are certain the set is solid, use the rod to fight the fish.

## Be Quiet, Observant, and Ready

Shallow water fish are nervous and alert to anything that is out of the ordinary. You'll do best if you are stealthy - keeping quiet, low and avoiding unnecessary movements.

Casting low to the water with side-arm casts helps keep the line from reflecting the sun's glare and spooking fish and using stealthy clear lines can help as well. Also, opportunities are fleeting. It seems to happen frequently; you pull up to an area to fish, begin to get your rod out of the holder and suddenly the fish are there. You are not ready and an opportunity is lost. Get ready quickly and quietly when you get to your next spot.

## What Are You Throwing?



Here's a **redfish fly** that has been successful for me in the glades. The reds here are not spooky. You need a fly that makes a splash when it hits the water then sinks quickly to the bottom. For this I use large/heavy dumbbell eyes. This fly is also good for Permit/Black Drum/Small Grouper.

### Pattern...

**Hook** : GMK -B10S #2

**Thread** : Dark Brown

**Body** : Root Beer Estaz

**Wing** : Finnish Raccoon - Tan or Brown

**Legs** : Orange / Black Silli-legs

**Weight** : Heavy Dumbbell

*Capt John Hand*

*Mobile-239-842-7778*

What are you throwing? Send me a picture and recipe for your favorite fly for use in an upcoming edition of BFF Fly Lines.

**Send to: [craigw601@me.com](mailto:craigw601@me.com)**

## Know the clock system

While many anglers know that the bow of the boat is 12 o'clock, and the stern is 6 o'clock, if not practiced beforehand, confusion is almost guaranteed. Practice by calling out the number, pointing your rod where you are looking so the person on the poling platform can direct you to the correct location. Don't cast until you see the fish. If you do, you'll most likely cast to the wrong spot and spoil the opportunity. Communicate with your boat mate or guide - they don't know unless you tell 'em - when you spot the fish, announce it - if you can't see the fish, announce it.

Some serious yard practice before your trip can make all the difference in what kind of day you will have on the water. So grab a tape measure, a few targets, and start working to cast above the "Mendoza Line".

# Casting Classes

All casting classes are held at Pelican Bay Community Park, Naples, from 9am to Noon unless otherwise indicated.

### Friday, January 13, 2017-

Kayak Fishing by Alan Kuhre

Accuracy/Saltwater Prep by Capt. John Hand

### Friday, January 20, 2017-

Change of Direction Casts by Capt. John Hand and Jim Schneider

### Friday, February 17, 2017-

Casting Heavy Lines/Flies & Casting Big Rods by Lou Minginelli & Mike Haines

Tarpon Tips (Pending)

### Friday, February 24, 2017-

"Elementary to Advanced: Casting Drills That Will Make You a Better Caster"

By Mike Santangelo and Jim Schneider

### Friday, March 17, 2017

Casting Games by Ed Tamson and Jim Schneider

### Friday, March 24, 2017-

Guest Caster Presentation (Pending)

### Friday, April 7, 2017

Slack Line Casting and Trout Fishing by Mike Santangelo & Mike Carpenter



Check out the BFF Channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRqeRI5zYAhhQ59ZnhZ\\_PuA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRqeRI5zYAhhQ59ZnhZ_PuA)

## Help Wanted

We're looking for someone to organize and host at least one Dinner/Film night between now and the end of April. You will set the date and plan the menu with a local restaurant, (we've used Buca di Beppo successfully in the past) and follow the event through to the end. Someone else can be responsible for the video equipment and showing the movie. Please contact Craig Winter at [Craigw601@me.com](mailto:Craigw601@me.com) or 630 639-7675 if you'd like to get involved.

## BFF is now on Instagram

You can now find Backcountry Fly Fishers on the popular photo and short video sharing service, Instagram. Download the app, search for and follow BackcountryFlyFishers to see images of Southwest Florida fly fishing experiences.

If you have pictures from your adventures that you'd like share send them to me at [craigw601@me.com](mailto:craigw601@me.com).

## Membership Renewal Time

Annual memberships are for the calendar year and are due now. Please bring a check to the next meeting or see <http://www.flyfishingnaples.com/membership/> for a form to send via snail mail.

- Annual Family Membership \$60.

## Member Announcements

If you have fishing equipment you would like to sell send the necessary information to [bffinfo@flyfishingnaples.com](mailto:bffinfo@flyfishingnaples.com) and it will be posted on the website and added to future monthly announcements until you inform us via the same email address to cease publication.

Go to the club website...

**<http://www.flyfishingnaples.com> for:**

**Educational Programs** found on the Events & Program Page under the Programs tab.

**Gallery Page** can always use new photos. If you have any pictures you would like to share send them to me at the email address below. I am sensitive to the FWC current position about taking pictures of tarpon and proper handling of fish. Therefore, pictures of tarpon in the boat or pictures of fish held vertically will not be posted on the website.

**Guide/Outfitter Page** provides information about local and not so local guides. Do you know a guide that gives great service? Send me their contact information, preferably email, website, and phone number, and I will add them.

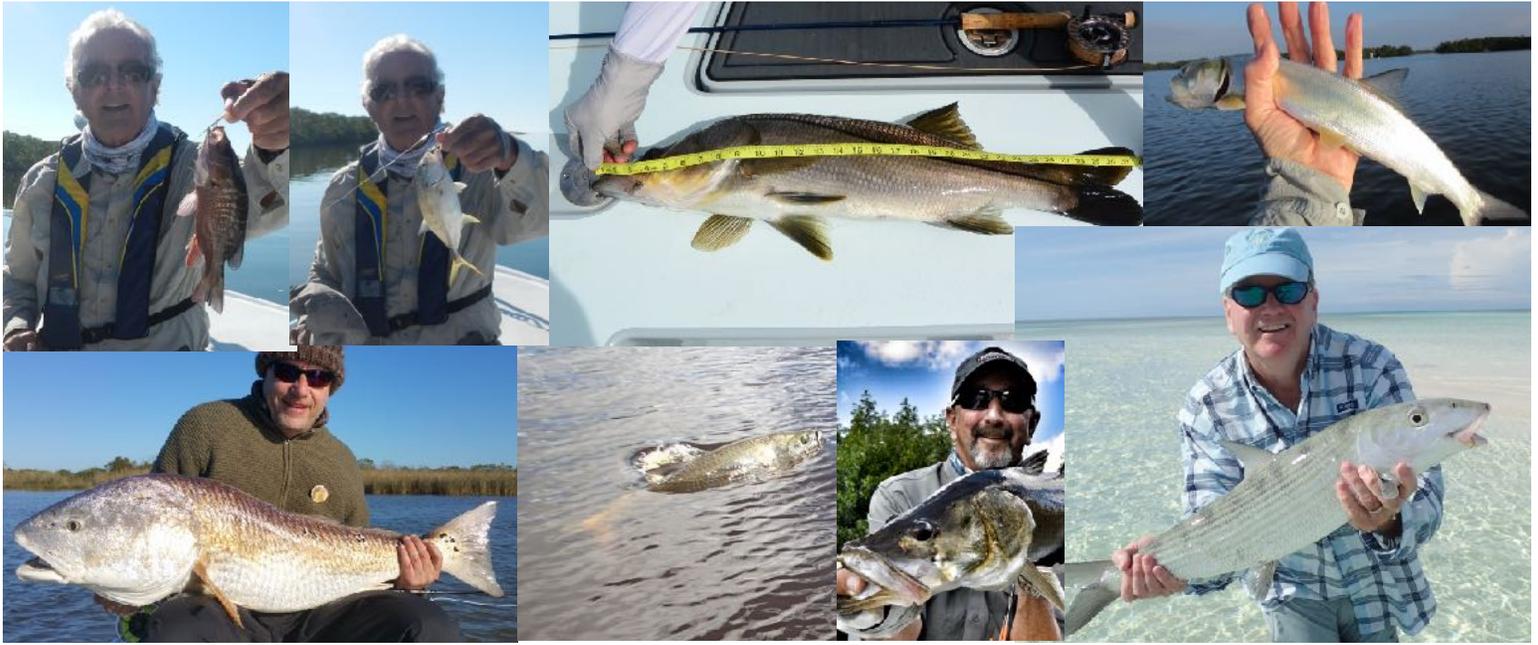
If you have any suggestions regarding the email newsletter please let me know.

Tight Lines,

**Craig Winter, BFF newsletter Editor**

**630 639-7675 cell • [craigw601@me.com](mailto:craigw601@me.com)**





## Current BFF Tournament Standings

Place	Angler	Species	Date	Length	Geographic Location	Rod	Fly
*** 10/10/16 through 3/31/17 ***							
*** Anglers can only receive one place winning per division ***							
<b>TARPON - UNGUIDED - FLORIDA</b>							
1	Buddy Ferber	Tarpon	12/27/16	130#	10,000 Islands		
2	Alan Kuhre	Tarpon	10/17/16	33	Collier Seminole SP	8	Redfish Candy Shrimp
3	Carl Knobloch	Tarpon	10/13/16	20	10,000 Islands	7	Pink Fly
	Alan Kuhre	Tarpon	10/13/16	28	CR 92 Canal	9	Redfish Candy Shrimp
	Alan Kuhre	Tarpon	10/13/16	15	CR 92 Canal	9	Gurgler
<b>TARPON - GUIDED - FLORIDA</b>							
1	Scott Silver	Tarpon	12/1/16	44	Everglades N.P.	8	Black Baitfish
<b>SNOOK - UNGUIDED - FLORIDA</b>							
1	Alan Kuhre	Snook	10/17/16	29	Collier Seminole SP	8	Redfish Candy Shrimp
2	Mike Santangelo	Snook	10/30/16	22	Capt Bill Faulkner		
3	Zach Rose	Snook	10/17/16	21	Naples area docks	8	Glass Minnow
	Zach Rose	Snook	10/17/16	20	Naples area docks	8	Glass Minnow
	Jim Snyder	Snook	1/2/17	18			
<b>SNOOK - GUIDED - FLORIDA</b>							
1	Scott Silver	Snook	11/3/16	32	Capt Bill Faulkner		
2	Craig Winter	Snook	12/16/16	29	Capt Bill Faulkner	8	White & Chartreuse BF
3	Mike Santangelo	Snook	11/13/16	24	Capt Bill Faulkner		
	Scott Silver	Snook	12/12/16	26	Capt Kevin Mihailoff	8	Black baitfish pattern
<b>REDFISH - UNGUIDED - FLORIDA</b>							
1	Alan Kuhre	Redfish	12/15/16	28	Isle of Capri		Brown Mangrove Crab
2	Mike Haines	Redfish	11/25/16	26	10,000 Islands		
3 tie	John Dowd	Redfish	10/29/16	22	10,000 Islands	8	DT
3 tie	Mike Santangelo	Redfish	10/13/16	22			
	Alan Kuhre	Redfish	12/17/16	26	Johnson Bay		Brown Mangrove Crab
	Alan Kuhre	Redfish	10/15/16	24	Goodland	7	Black/Purple Gurgler
<b>REDFISH - GUIDED - FLORIDA</b>							
1	Mike Santangelo	Redfish	11/13/16	24			



## Current BFF Tournament Standings *contd*

REDFISH - GUIDED - OUTSIDE OF FLORIDA							
1	Lou Minghinelli	Redfish	12/11/16	44	Venice, Louisiana		
2	Kevin Becker	Redfish	11/17/16	43.5	Venice, Louisiana	10	Black/Purple Streamer
3 Tie	Craig Winter	Redfish	10/30/16	41	Venice, Louisiana	10	
3 Tie	Jim Worden	Redfish	11/2/16	41	Port Sulphur, Louisiana	10	
	Dick Shafner	Redfish	10/28/16	38	Venice, Louisiana	10	
	Scott Silver	Redfish	10/31/16	38	Venice, Louisiana	10	
	Ralph Pike	Redfish	10/1/39	33	Venice, Louisiana	10	Yellow baitfish
OPEN - UNGUIDED - FLORIDA							
1	Zach Rose	Jack Crevelle	12/26/16	28	Tampa Bay	8	
2	Mike Santangelo	Tripletail	11/25/16	26	Gulf of Mexico		
3	Steve Patton	Spotted Seatrout	11/15/16	20	Rookery Bay		Soft body green popper
	Mike Santangelo	Barracuda	12/2/16	18			
	Ralph Pike	Ladyfish	12/15/16	17	Isle of Capri	8	White baitfish
	Mike Santangelo	Snapper	12/2/16	10			
	Craig Winter	Barracuda	11/7/16	9	Marco Island	9	Tan, white, chartreuse baitfish
	John Dowd	Jack Crevelle	12/29/16		Everglades NP		
	John Dowd	Ladyfish	12/29/16		Everglades NP		
	John Dowd	Mangrove Snapper	12/29/16		Everglades NP		
	John Dowd	Yellow Jack	12/29/16		Everglades NP		
	Manfred Schillinger	Jack Crevelle	12/29/16		Everglades NP		
	Manfred Schillinger	Horse-eye Jack	12/29/16		Everglades NP		
	Manfred Schillinger	Mangrove Snapper	12/29/16		Everglades NP		
OPEN - GUIDED - FLORIDA							
1 tie	Scott Silver	Bluefish	11/17/16	19.5	Cape Romano Capt.Drew Naeckel	9	Baitfish pattern
1 tie	Craig Winter	Bluefish	11/17/16	19.5	Cape Romano Capt.Drew Naeckel	9	Baitfish pattern
OPEN - UNGUIDED - OUTSIDE OF FLORIDA							
1	Kevin Becker	Bonefish	12/27/16	23.5	Grand Bahama Island	9	#4 Gotcha
OPEN - GUIDED - OUTSIDE OF FLORIDA							
1	Craig Winter	Alligator Gar	10/30/16	42	Venice, Louisiana	10	
2	Kevin Becker	Bonefish	12/21/16	28	Grand Bahama Island	10	#1/0 Tan Permit Crab

