

CASTING TO THE HORIZON

BRUNO MÉDOU

Bruno Médou is a friend of ubercaster Mehdi Daho, who, over the years, has built up an enviable reputation for his superb casting ability. Here, Bruno passes on tips and tactics from Mehdi that will help all budding casters.

Mehdi Daho won the Korda long-casting competition at the CarpFest in 2007, and over the years he's become one of the most respected long-range anglers in Europe. But Mehdi is not only a renowned long-range caster, he was the French champion at hammer and discus throwing in 1994/1995. As such, Mehdi's performances are not random, but down to practice over many years.

Mehdi is a very sensitive guy, even if he is built like a lumberjack. I have spent hours in his company, practising casting in the fields with rods and leads, and long periods measuring his performance. His casting capability is beyond belief – for example, one day Mehdi cast 150 metres with my 10ft rod and a .35mm diameter line with his first cast! In a word, the guy is very special. He is strongly built, but he also has the right technique and he masters it perfectly. I must admit I myself don't fancy long-casting very much because I don't really think it is useful for my fishing, but I can't deny that it's a real plus out on the bank. My long-range casting is around 100 metres, and if for some this doesn't sound far, it is quite enough for me because I like to be extremely accurate. I'd rather fish at 100 metres and be able to bait up, than fish 150 metres without being able to spod out there or bait up using my stick. I don't say there's no need to fish long distances, I just say that psychologically I find it difficult. Mehdi can't only cast long distances, he can also bait up at long range!

Here are 10 tips to improve your range, based on Mehdi's advice.



1 Casting Needs Good Tackle

Obviously, all rods and reels won't cast very long distances. Some tackle has been specifically manufactured for this purpose. It is advisable to use reels with long, conic spools so that the line runs out nicely. Reels such as the Shimano 10000XT, the one Mehdi uses, have excellent line lay and don't overlap. This dramatically helps casting.

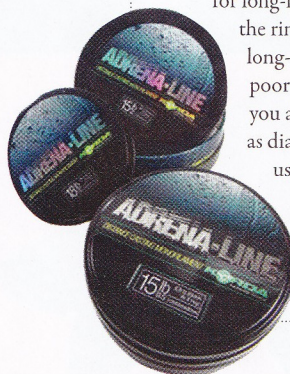
As for rods, some blanks, like the ones on the Daiwa Infinity or the Hi-S range from Free Spirit, are famous among long-casters. So do you go for 12ft or 13ft? Some would say that a 13ft is always more powerful than a 12ft, but the tests we did didn't really prove this. Yet, theoretically, the longer the rod, the further it should cast. This is, above all, a question of physics. If an angler could cast using an 18ft or 20ft rod with the same explosive force he can with a 12 or 13ft rod, the results would be amazing. However, not everyone is built like a giant. The same sort of thinking goes for the rings of the rods. The difference between a 40mm ring and a 50mm is very slight, but Mehdi prefers a 50mm ring because he feels the line runs through it better and more smoothly, and with less friction. To top it all, a rod with a 50mm ring which ends with a 16mm at its tip (contrary to a 40mm with a 12mm) makes the job easier and enables any knots to pass through the rings more easily. Using his technique and 50mm rings, Mehdi gains another 3-5 metres on a 180-metre cast.

TOP When you put this much effort into casting, you need to be very sure of your equipment.

LEFT Mehdi won the Korda CarpFest distance championship in 2007.

2 Make Sure You Use the Right Line

It is obvious that all monofilament doesn't work the same and some are better for the job when long-range casting is needed. Sufix Synergy, Sufix Siege, and most particularly, Korda Adrena-Line, are Mehdi's favourites. These lines have been specifically developed for long-range casting and slide perfectly through the rings. You really need a good line when long-range casting. The difference between a poor line and a good one is incredible when you are trying for that extra few metres. As far as diameter is concerned, the best is .26mm; using a thinner line would be risky. If you have to reel back a fish at 150m distance with a thinner line, you will have to be very patient and calm if the fish heads towards snags.



Mehdi's stance: left leg straight, right leg bent, left heel on the ground.

3 Arms and Legs Need to be Positioned Properly

The position of arms and legs is important and will enable you to improve your posture. Mehdi starts with his body bent backwards and most of the weight of his body lies on his back leg, which is bent. His left leg stays straight. The tip of his foot is raised and his heel is on the ground. He looks directly towards his target. The bent leg is used as a spring and transfers the weight to the front leg, and then his arms come into action. The body is balanced and all the movements have to be co-ordinated. To achieve this, you need to practise, of course.

"The body is balanced and all the movements have to be co-ordinated"



The Chod Rig. Easy to adapt, very tangle-free and streamlined.

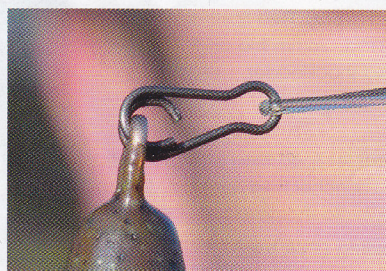
4 You Will Need the Right Rig

One rig is ideal for the job. It doesn't tangle, and doesn't slow the lead once in the air – I am talking about the Chod Rig. Like the Helicopter Rig, it enables the lead to actually drag the rest of the rig behind it. The rig turns around the leader, thanks to the ring swivel. It is almost tangle-free and very aerodynamic. Mehdi has always used this setup for his tests. He also uses Korda Tournament casting leads. The perfect weight ranges between 100-110g (4oz), whatever the power of the rod.



ABOVE Cutting the swivel off the lead will aid distance and avoid tangles.

BELOW Replace the swivel with a quick-release clip so you can change leads if required.



5 You Will Need the Right Knot

Mehdi has a preference for braid because it has zero elasticity. It avoids the elastic effect nylon has and, as such, avoids absorbing power. Braid can make you gain 10-20 metres when casting very hard. A nylon/braid knot of .26mm or .28mm is also thinner than a high-diameter line knot and will slide through the rings more easily. To bind the two materials, a Grinner Knot is also advised because it is conic and will slide through the rings better. However, if you'd rather use a high-diameter nylon because you don't like braid, or simply because braid is prohibited, I would advise you to tie a Mahin Knot or an Albright Knot. The latter is better for high-diameter nylon.

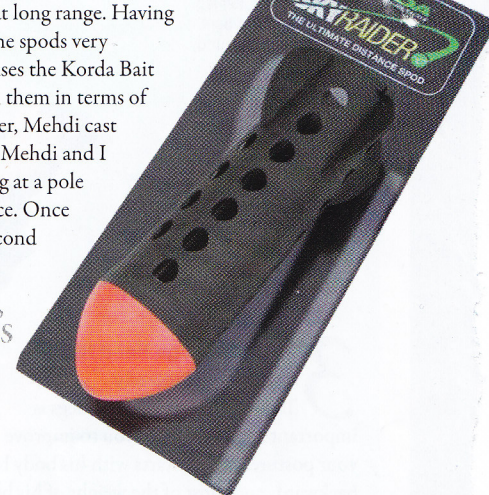
Learn to tie a neat knot. This is the Double Grinner Knot and it's very reliable.



6 Be Confident Using the appropriate tackle will add to your confidence and you will put more power in your casting with no extra effort. You need confidence in your casting, just as you do in your rigs, your bait, or your approach when fishing. You will fish better and more efficiently. If psychologically you are worried, you will snap your line or your rod and you won't cast very far.

It is also possible to bait up accurately at long range. Having fished at Mehdi's side, I can guarantee he spods very accurately at 150m range! To achieve this he uses the Korda Bait Rocket range. He has had the best results with them in terms of distances and stability. In 2009, using a Skyliner, Mehdi cast 200yds (183 metres). During one of our tests, Mehdi and I had a friendly competition on accuracy, aiming at a pole 90 metres away in a field. Mehdi only cast twice. Once he landed 8ins away from the post, and the second time 12ins away. Practise makes perfect!

"Having fished at Mehdi's side, I can guarantee he spods very accurately at 150m range!"



8 Protect Your Fingers When using braid it is very important not to cut through your finger. Use a finger protection stall. There are quite a few on the market, but Mehdi has a preference for the Chub range. Lots of brands offer them, and the ones from Reuben Heaton are quite good too.

RIGHT A fingerstall is a vital piece of equipment, otherwise you will badly cut your fingers.

9 Take Some Safety Measures

Prior to casting, make sure your rod is set up properly, and make sure the clutch is open. This may sound obvious, but how often have we forgotten these details? Also, make sure the line hasn't twisted round a ring. If this is the case, you will break your rod and be faced with expense. You can also lubricate your rings, which will help the smooth flow of line.

10 Leave the Right Length of Line When Casting

If your rod is fairly supple, make sure you don't leave too much drop on the line. On the other hand, if your rod is stiffer, leave between 1.40 metres and 1.70 metres. Mehdi says casting works like a catapult.

Mehdi's Records

Casting (lead only)

200.5m (218.55y) using a 100g lead (3.5oz), Free Spirit Hi-S 200 rod, .26mm line and braid shockleader.

Spodding

183m (199.47y) using a Korda Skyraider Spod filled with spod mix, Big Launcher Free Spirit rod, .26mm line, braid shockleader.

Casting (PVA bag)

170m (185.30y) using .26mm line with braid shockleader and Free Spirit Hi-S 200 rod.

Throwing stick

141m (153.69y) using 20mm bolilies.

In a nutshell, I think that if you add up lots of little details and practise, you will soon be able to cast as well as anybody else. Be confident and practise, because, as in any other sport, practice makes perfect. **BM**

RIGHT The smile says it all. Distance casting can be very productive.

