

# Zach W

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fly, fishing, steelhead, guiding, fly fishing, cast, fish, talk, clearwater, casting, magazine, angler, rod, swing, river, people, line, big, tips, swinging

## SPEAKERS

Dave S, Zach



Zach 00:01

If I had one steak fasting tip it would be to keep your eye on your anchor I'd, I'd call it the anchor, the golf ball or the baseball so where your line is anchored to the water if you watch that, it'll tell you everything you need to know about the cast from the timing to the direction to anything else. So don't watch your target or anything Keep your eye on the line that's on the water there.



Dave S 00:29

That was Zach Williams sharing his best tip for spey casting. One of the best in Spain today on the wet fly swing fly fishing show. Welcome to the wet fly swing fly fishing show where you discover tips, tricks and tools from the leading names in fly fishing. Today, we'll help you on your fly fishing journey with classic stories covering steelhead fishing, fly tying and much more. Hey, how's it going everyone thanks for stopping by the fly fishing show. Zach Williams, the editor of swinging the fly magazine is on to share some of his best Tips on spray and the Clearwater River. We find out about some of the misnomers in Spain talk about who the Michael Jordan of spray is right now and discuss the best rods and lines for the long game. Please share this episode if you get a chance with one other person today if it's providing any value for you. Before we get started, let's hear from our sponsors. Since 1977, the fly fishing and tying journal has long been considered the anglers magazine with original how tos and technical articles written by the best trout and steelhead anglers in the West. They are committed to sharing exceptionally written essays,

fiction, poetry and in depth guides to fly tying and fly fishing. f TJ is one of my go to magazines and if you haven't checked it out recently, you can get started today by calling 1-800-541-9498 or heading over to the web at FT. j angler.com. Got fishing comm is your trusted source of information with access to the world's best fishing trips. You'll never pay a dime extra for the trip you book and you In many cases less than advertised, find out where got fishing could take you by heading over to gut fishing.com today, that's g o t fishing.com. Or reach them by phone at 208-630-3373 got fishing COMM The easiest place to start your next fishing adventure. Here's Zach Williams from swing the fly.com How's it going, Zack?



Zach 02:25

Good. Thanks for having me, dad.



Dave S 02:26

Yeah, yeah, thanks for coming on. You know, it's been it's been a seems like a while a long while coming here because, you know, as I connect to more people out there, you know, swing the fly, wet fly swing, there's a few. There's a few brands out there that have the swing in the name. So it's good to connect with you here and talk about swinging. But yeah, maybe before we get into the magazine and all that can just talk about how you first got into fly fishing and then maybe you could bring it up to how the magazine started.



Zach 02:54

Yeah, sure. Um, try not to be too long winded with it. Um, I I was lucky I grew up in Michigan. So Great Lakes fishing and I was just fortunate to have a father who loved to fish and took me everywhere with them. So, I started started fly fishing, both fly and conventional, really young I've got a picture of myself in diapers with a fly rod with my dad kind of going through the motions casting with me so but, you know, when I was I, my first memory of fly fishing was, I think I was like five fish in a little neighborhood pond for bluegill. And when I was about eight, I decided I wanted to catch a trout on a fly and flailed away for a whole summer before accomplishing that, but did catch one and man I You know through all that I was gear fishing to primarily we had a small mouth river five minutes from the house and we would go just cast crankbaits for small mouth and stuff like that but when I was about oh 12 ish I decided that I wanted to catch a steelhead on a fly rod and so I got a seven wait for Christmas and got really into it and then started you know, fishing the small mouth with the fly as well and all of that kept kept conventional

fishing as well. on up through that but just became more and more of a passion and all through there so all through high school



Dave S 04:48

or college. Did you ever take any breaks along the way in between that 12 year old and now



Zach 04:57

I'm not a lot no Yeah No I you know I played I played basketball and golf in high school and that certainly took took up some of the time and but ended up quitting those before my senior year because I wanted to fish more and yeah. And then through college kept fishing a lot you know got got into all the stuff that college kids do and you know hanging out with friends and drinking and stuff but you know still fished quite a bit still managed to get out there and was regularly fishing and by then I bought a spay rod and was doing that as well. So



Dave S 05:50

nice. So the the basketball thing that's something we have in common I was basketball is one of my one of my big sport in high school. It's interesting you, you quit your junior year. I want to touch on that just briefly. What? Because I think of myself It would have been crazy for me to think of quitting basketball and then kind of fishing but what was that like and why did you quit hoops? Why do you Why do you feel you had to quit basketball for fishing?



Zach 06:15

It's a big regret of mine actually, you know, but I quit after my sophomore year. So, you know, I was playing JV we were a really good team and my junior year Honestly, I probably wouldn't have made the varsity team. When I think we finished third in the state we lost like on a buzzer beater in the semis to go state championship in fairly big school, you know, division and everything. What was the high school



Dave S 06:48

that you went to?



Zach 06:49

We're still central in ADA, Michigan, but a bunch of the kids from that team went on to play even the one basketball and professional in Europe and But one of my teammates went on and played at Wake Forest with Chris Paul and stuff. Like really good team. So anyways, I I didn't try out I'd started working in a little fishing and outdoor store, Gander mountain Eastern chain. I think it's since out of business or changed but I didn't want to I didn't want to lose my job in the fishing department like that. I didn't try out junior year. And then senior year I tried out and the coach was kind of like, well, we could probably offer you a spot on the team, but you wouldn't play a lot and yeah, I was like, I was like, You know what, you should give it to a junior, who will get the experience for your team next year and I'll just keep doing my thing. So there you go. There you go. faded out from it, but I miss basketball you know,



Dave S 07:57

do you still do you still play at all?



Zach 08:01

Um, yeah, I haven't played, we moved last year. And I have a lot since I moved. I was living before this. I'm in Missoula now, but I was living in Pullman, Washington, where Washington State University is and me and a buddy were gone and playing with the college kids, which was fine, you know? Certainly to keep in shape and stuff. So we would go to the Rec Center and play against them being old guys. So that was fun.



Dave S 08:33

Yeah, you're bringing back some memories of myself back at the college days. Yeah, I was I was out playing with it was funny because I was out just this weekend playing with some kids on our in our neighborhood, right. These kids are you know, they're like the neighbor kids there. I don't know how the other probably. I don't even know maybe High School, maybe sophomores. You know, it's funny. Obviously, you got the band strength so the kids can't come close to you, but man, I'll tell you What the quickest thing right? That's the one thing that that's tough because oh yeah, you know, I mean, you always had that quick as but when you get to you know, I'm, I'm in my 40s now so it's like, oh man, I don't have they can beat me right on the quick thing. It's tough.



Zach 09:15

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's different. You know, I enjoy that. You know, being being older now you I think you have a better grasp on the mental side and yeah, the strength, typically, but I like trying to beat them with the mental game now. You know, you're gonna last athletically.



Dave S 09:36

That's right. That's right. Cool. Well, we definitely could shout out basketball you know, the whole thing here but people would get bad if I did they get a little more on, you know, the swinging and some of that stuff. But um, yeah, so how so? You've been? I mean, fly fishing has been your life. How did how did you come up to the magazine? How did that start?



Zach 09:54

I yeah, I mean, I guess there's a you know, 2000 When I moved from Michigan to Washington chasing steelhead and started guiding shortly after, so, I'm just following the steelhead fly fishing as a life and I got a I got an idea for the magazine somewhere I don't know 2011 2012 and it was really the the motivation was just seen and knowing a bunch of really neat people in the steelhead fly fishing world and knowing that they had a lot of stories to tell and a lot of knowledge to share. And, you know, Facebook was kind of getting big, but the people at the time and like, there's a lot of like just beautiful photos and stories being shared on social media or on some obscure your blog and then last forever and I was like, somebody's got to put this on paper or in a longer lasting form. So So it started with seeing, seeing a lot of the work from a lot of these people and just wanting to share it. So



Dave S 11:20

that's a Go ahead. Oh, I was just gonna save. So in 2012 you know, you have the idea for the magazine. What were the other big magazines that are out there? I guess that's the first question. What were the other big magazines that were out there then? And also why magazine versus say writing a book or starting a podcast or anything else you could have done?



Zach 11:42

I don't know. lack of a better idea at the time. Yeah. You know, I was as a kid, getting into steelhead fly fishing. There was a couple of things that were really influential for me and

one was Trey combs. You'll head fly fishing and the other was Tom peros wild salmon and steelhead magazine. And after that went away I know myself and a lot of other people really missed it and so you know, that was a big influence on wanting to start something and Tom was credibly helpful in getting it off the ground. And so that's Yeah, that was that was it? Yeah,



Dave S 12:32

that's it. That's a Yeah. You mentioned to people I've interviewed both of them I'll put links to the show notes Tom pero. And, and Trey so there you go. So there's there's two pretty big mentors for you. I mean, anybody else I guess you know, right now you're a huge mentor for a lot of people I talked to a number of people before we did this episode and they said you're the go to resource for them when it comes to spay and you know, I guess right? The voice of spay right? I mean Can you talk about that maybe First of all, who are a few of your other mentors or who influenced you in the magazine and then talk about, you know, how you think of yourself as a mentor?



Zach 13:12

All about the latter part, but the, the former, you know, there were so many people who started who got this thing off the ground just with their generosity, Marty and me and Shepard were huge. And at RIT acoustics in the Great Lakes. When I started it, I wanted to make sure I had it wasn't just Northwest focused. And so I reached out to Rick and he's been with me since star Marty and Mia. I mean, it never would have got off the ground without them. And, oh, there's too many to list. JOHN Barlow. Up in BC his photography and very first issue I interviewed steelhead fly fishing legend Mike Kenny. He's been a huge help as well. And as an angler, he was certainly one of the most influential on how I looked at steelhead fly fishing other than Trey. And Mike's in Trey's book as well. So just to me, he took the steelhead fly fishing and the knowledge game to a whole new level to me. So it's a guy that I think doesn't get as much credit as he's due for that. So yeah, and his photography. I don't know if you've seen it is unworldly. It's more a lot of landscape and wildlife these days as opposed to fishing but his photography is incredible.



Dave S 14:51

Cool. Cool. Yeah, I'll try to look up something to maybe put a link to some of his stuff in the show notes. Well, it lets you know the magazine itself, maybe you can just start Off describing, you know, kind of for somebody who hasn't read it or you know, seen it what it's all about.



Zach 15:07

Yeah, it's all about swinging flies primarily with the two hand rod but certainly includes some single hander stuff as well, but it's, you know, the history, the art, but also technique and there's a lot of fly tying and try to cover a wide geographic area as well. So I have kind of a core team these days. That includes Rick who stitch in the Great Lake. Really well known Atlantic salmon, guy tow for Brown. Sean Dahlquist up in northwest Washington on the Olympic Peninsula. Really Well known for his flight time. And Steve bird who I know you had on the show.



16:08

Yeah, so I'm



Zach 16:11

got and then I've got Travis Johnson doing casting advice. Short cast in column. So nice, you know, you'll be one of the top couple spellcasters in the world doing that. So they form kind of my core team and then have other content from people all over the place. A lot of other regulars and some that come in for just an issue or two and try to mix things up, do things a little different, you know, I do a lot of a lot of big spread photography and try to let the imagery speak to people which is something you probably don't see in a lot of magazines and it's all printed on recycled paper with Which is something that's been a challenge, but I'm proud of, you know, when 100% recycled papers, pretty hard to come by, but when I first kind of had this idea for the magazine, you know, I, then I guide out on the Olympic Peninsula and, you know, as you know, it's easy to see the the detriments of logging to steelhead. And I, it's, it's not that I don't use non recycled paper for anything, but I felt kinda like it would be a bit of a hypocrisy to be talking about the effects of logging on steelhead populations and stuff like that in a magazine that was potentially coming from rice cutting on the banks of struggling steelhead rivers. So, so we tried to do it a little differently with that and yeah, so yeah,



Dave S 18:00

There you go. So I, so I've had a number of editors of, you know, different magazines and things like that, you know, over the years and I know you, you talk about, you know, you as the editor, maybe that's one of your things you're not, you know, that's not what you've your career hasn't been set around, you know, editing. Can you talk about, you know, maybe your style as editor and how you, you know, because I know, like John Hsu, he was on way back and he noted that, you know, sometimes you get some stuff that's really you

know, you can get stuff that's not great, right. And the editor is the person who brings it maybe fixes it brings it to life. How do you deal with that and what's your take on it?



Zach 18:41

Yeah, you know, I I'm a work in progress myself, is only hinted at a little bit, but I started the magazine with just the idea that somebody needed to do it and I'm not a professionally trained editor. So I think It's been a work in progress and learning along the way. And, you know, I, as an editor, I I try not to change people's voice. So I probably at times have not been even as heavy handed as I should be. I want I want to let you know, let people come through authentically rather than it being what they want to say, but in my words, yeah, so, and part of that too, is, you know, just a lack of my own ability, especially in the beginning. So I'd like to think I'm a lot better at it now than I was then but it's still still a work in progress. I'll be honest, it's always been a struggle as well just in that it's, you know, the the money to make swing the fly go is tight. So, um, there's a lot you know, there's not a lot of eyes on them. product as opposed to when you look at a big publication So, so that makes it difficult as well but we do the best we can and just try to portray the sport in a positive manner. And hopefully if I screw up from time to time as an editor, people will forgive me for that.



Dave S 20:23

How much time if you look at it on a weekly basis or a month however you want to do it does it take you to put it all together?



Zach 20:30

Oh, in the beginning, it was very much a full time job. As as it went down the road I I've actually I've taken a full time job as an editor for another publication now so swinging the flies comm more part time and in the last year in particular, so in the beginning, I blended it with guiding But I was never a year round guide I guide ball steelhead on the Clearwater in the grand Ron and do the Olympic Peninsula for a while and then it was swinging the fly all the time in between out now that I've stepped away from guiding and taking a full time job, you know, it gets hard to find the hours to to put the product out there and continue to keep the quality up but doing the best I can.



Dave S 21:30

And it come Is it a quarterly magazine?



21:33

Yeah, yeah, sure.



Dave S 21:35

So quarterly so you pretty much you might have a time where you're getting it ready or you know, or maybe you could talk about that the process just quickly, you know how that works.



Zach 21:43

Yeah. Yeah, I mean, everything's condensed the bit of the the full time job but it's always been like, you know, there, there's a lot of upkeep and really what sacrificed now that I have another job is You know, the maintenance of the websites like that, honestly, but the magazine itself you know, there's there's a lot of coordinating and back and forth and arranging content in the in between months and then there's usually there's about a month of crunch on it where copy editing, gathering, all the imagery, stuff like that and then building it into the layout, reviewing that. So, three, four weeks of pretty intensive work on that part.



22:44

So, yep, gotcha.



Zach 22:46

Oh, yeah. Little breaks in there, but now is it's pretty consuming.



Dave S 22:50

So perfect. Well, I want to get into a few, maybe some of the, you know, the articles, tips and things like that. It's like I just had one more thought on that. You know, you mentioned Tom impero in the magazine that he had that's gone away. I mean, do you see yourself? I mean, now I guess it's early on. But do you see this magazine? going on for a long time? Or do you see maybe and in its lifecycle like you saw a tom toms magazine?



Zach 23:15

I'd like to think that, that it'll continue for as long as the reader wants it. And that, you know, the readers and the writers that the writers still seem interested and the readers still seem interested right now, so it continues. It's very possible that the format will continue to evolve and change as the industry does. So we'll see where it goes from here, but I don't see swing the fly like disappearing completely or anything like that anytime soon. Yep. But it is it's it's a tough, tough business. You know, magazines are a tough go.



24:02

So,



Dave S 24:03

right now, yeah, that's why it seems like there's only a few out there where the editors are. I don't know if there's, yeah, who the full time people are. But you know, just like Tom by and yeah, you know, I mean, some of the big magazines. I mean, those guys are doing stuff on the site as well. It seems like there's not I mean, are there any magazines where the editors are kind of full time?



Zach 24:24

Well, yeah, you just mentioned Tom. I would I would think Tom was but I'm not really sure. Yeah, the I'm not sure but you know, I mean, that certainly it was my hope at one point in time with spring apply. It's just not really feasible. At this time, especially, you know, the swung fly niche of our fly fishing dash is is so small, is it?



Dave S 24:53

How small is it? What if you just had to get like percentage wise to make a guess?



Zach 24:58

Overall senate Fly Fishing that swing a fly.



Dave S 25:02

You say in North America say it's a north of Yeah.



Zach 25:05

Yeah, I don't know one person. Oh, really?



Dave S 25:08

Do you think it's that small? So it's not like 20%



Zach 25:11

Yeah, I don't know. What do you What's your guess?



Dave S 25:14

You know, I would Yeah, I mean, it's definitely small but yeah, because swing I mean, you got it you got dries you got swinging you got I mean, because you kind of have the, you know, streamers which is getting bigger and you can kind of throw swinging into some of that too, I guess. And I, you know, I might guess, more like 10% you know, five or 10% but I mean, it is kind of an older school thing that maybe feels like it's getting more traction again.



Zach 25:40

Yeah, no, and I definitely agree with that. You know, when I say 1% you look at fly fishing as a whole. So many of the people are who who would be included in the entire fly fishing statistic. I think our One trip a year, you know, they out here to Montana and have a guy or three or four days or a week and that's their fly fishing trip of the year. And so, so if you if you think that I don't know 70% of fly fisherman would be in that category 30% are regulars and avid that's where I would then say you know, only 1% swing a fly if you look at a really truly avid fly fisherman these days who are getting out there weekly or more. I think that's one fly percentage would increase in is growing. You know that long avid anglers it's certainly seems to be growing and interest and with the trout, trout, spey rods now you know, I mean, obviously the swung wet flies very traditional old school tactic but the spey casting things probably brought a little bit of new life into into that, actually with trout. And so yeah, no, I think I think it's growing in that regard. And



Dave S 27:17

Yep, yep. Now you've Yes, it's interesting. We've talked, I have another podcast that's

focused on more a little bit more of the online marketing side of things. And I've had some guests on there that have talked about niching down and the importance of niching down, right, when you're starting out in your thing, and you're an older I've we've talked about this too, right, the ultra niche, I mean, you are in swing, you're in a super tiny niche, which makes sense why it would be a little bit harder to you know, to build a full time thing out of it, because it's a tiny niche. But yeah, I mean, I you know, I guess you know, that's one of those things, is that your camera where you are, I mean, do you see the thing that the magazine, evolving out of You know, I think of myself right wet fly swing that came to me because this was more of that was I love the traditional style and it was a throwback to that, but now I'm broadened out into all the fly fishing, right? Yeah. Do you see the magazine evolving out of the from where it is?



Zach 28:15

Now? Yeah, no, I mean it was I started it as a tribute to this edge and so, no, it'll it'll always be be this one fly niche. You know, I mean, we publish the article that's kind of borderline what we traditionally think of what's the order?



Dave S 28:37

What's the article that maybe what comes to mind you've published it's kind of maybe not quite



Zach 28:42

well, you know, we've I've done some short pieces like tarpan on a two hander you know, stuff like that. You're not your traditional swung fly per se. But and I like including that stuff, but beyond that, it stays in that realm. And I'll you know, steenberg like it the upcoming issue, his article is about a fishing trip, but it's not really a fishing trip. And so I like having the creativity in there too. Gotcha.



Dave S 29:13

So, how do you balance some, and we're gonna get it. Like I said, we're gonna get some tips and stuff in a bit. But, you know, these are interesting questions for me, because they've come up on this podcast before with some guests, you know, but, like, the politics, I don't want to get into a politics, you know, episode or anything like that. But I'm curious how you balanced the politics and like Steve bird, you know, I've had him on we didn't talk a lot about politics, but I've had, I actually had I was on a, you know, a trip with somebody

who knew Steve and he mentioned that Steve, you know, it was pretty political on his, you know, on his side or whatever, and to a point where, you know, rubbed them the wrong way. I think they were maybe a little more conservative, but what what's your take on politics and how do you balance that in the magazine that comes up?

Z

Zach 29:57

politics for me is where swing flies up. wild fish you know i mean i'm not gonna get outside of the the fishing realm with the politics in swing fly but you know we're we're a pro wild fish magazine and we've done a lot of work with native fish society wild steelhead coalition wild steelheaders united Atlantic salmon Federation so you know we're we're gonna align with them on the issues and try to speak speak for wild fish so you know I've been with swing the fly it is it's a unique position for me as the editor and publisher in that there's not really any check on me so honestly, I can I can, you know, write what I want politically or include whatever else politically but you know, we, to me it's a it's not that controversial Among our niche, I mean, if you're a steelhead angler right now, and you're not concerned about wild fish, you probably should be questioning why you're fishing. And if you should be fishing, because we have a lot of things to be concerned about these days, so I think I think my politics on it is it it's not okay to not care. We can differ in opinion, but you better care about wild fish. Yep. So,



Dave S 31:29

yep. And do you guys have typically a conservation piece or a writer who touches on that?

Z

Zach 31:37

I'm typically I work with those organizations and give them the space to share issues they're working on. Yeah. So so that that's how we include a strong conservation element in it is, I just I give them the space to talk about what they need to talk about. About and spread the word.



Dave S 32:02

Perfect. Perfect. So, so maybe you could talk I know you know, the Clearwater you've covered and you've been all over the Northwest and the Midwest. But what is your home river if you think of swinging flies, if you just had to say and I know you've moved recently, but But what is your home river right now?



Zach 32:20

I'd probably I call the Clearwater river my home River. It's still the closest river to me. I'm now in Missoula, but yeah, the clear water was where I really made my stay guiding and although I'm not guiding there anymore and fisheries and a lot of trouble it's it's my home place. Yeah,



Dave S 32:40

yeah, it's Clearwater okay. And is that mainly is that just for trout are you also are sorry just for steelhead. But are you also swinging for others, you know, species trout or whatever.



Zach 32:52

The clear water was, was a steelhead fishery to me there's a there's small stretches small mouth bass. in there and the tributaries are world class cutthroat rivers, which I've spent a lot of time on, but the clear water itself, the Middle Fork and main stem are or steelhead rivers.



Dave S 33:15

That's it. And that's mainly because I know I've heard you're kind of more of a you've been kind of a big fish guy, right? You like go for the big fish. How is that? You know, with Montana now are you sounds like maybe you're doing some swinging there to the trout space stuff is it? How does it compare? To steelheading in some of the Think of your greatest moments, steelhead fishing versus your greatest moments swinging flies in Montana.



Zach 33:39

Oh, yeah, yeah. You know, like, I I love swinging a fly for trout. For one I you can still find some solitude doing Yeah. But yeah, I don't I mean, I don't know if the like pure excitement Equals out on a fish by fish basis but you can you know, get a lot more action in a day typically and have some really nice time on the water. So I love that the trout spay I've been fortunate to swing the fly for a lot of steelhead for quite a few years between the Great Lakes and out here so it a time for me to give the fish a break more than anything. Yeah, see, you know, seeing seeing a steelhead come up to a dry fly in particular there's there's a few things like that. You know, grabbing onto the tail of a Olympic Peninsula, steelhead with sea lice hanging off it you know, I can't You can't say that 18 inch trout is

the same as right now. You remember this the steelhead for a lot longer I'd say.



Dave S 34:57

Yeah, yeah, there you go. There you go. You got Yeah, it sounds like Yeah, there's just no comparison for this and that I think a lot of the steelheaders you know, I don't know exactly it's hard to pinpoint one thing, but I think a lot of us have the same feeling you know, when it comes to that it's hard to compare anything else and you know, I haven't been around you know, I haven't fished for everything but I mean you when you compare it to some of the other species, is that kind of how you feel to



Zach 35:23

uh, yeah, you know, I haven't done a lot of saltwater I've I've covered most things here in freshwater, but uh huh. saltwater certainly intrigues me a lot but yes, you'll had Atlantic Sam and I think the little bit of I've done it that those fish and the freshwater are are the apex to me. But there's a lot of I mean, the cool thing about fly fishing is each fish species is you know, the experience is so different. So, you know, the the fish, the steelhead, Doing Atlantic salmon and that individual fish, there might be no match for that. But you know, going out and catching bass on top water or, you know, swinging a mouse fly at night and the Great Lakes for big brown trout. I mean, there's cool things that the excitement is different but really awesome. Not to be discounted either. So that's cool. Yeah, it's it's a cool thing and fly fishing. If you get tired of one fish or doing one thing, you can change it up a little bit and go do something else and still fly fishing, but it's so different that the things you enjoy about it are completely fresh and new.



Dave S 36:44

So Exactly. Yeah, that's a good, that's good take I Well, I want to start us off with a few of the questions here. You know, and I want to start off with Tim who I know you know, Tim, rollin flying speed jet. I told him I was gonna give him a shout out on here. All right. Because he's Oh, yeah, he's the van. I loved him. I asked him a question. Yeah, you know, tell me, where did you first connect with? Have you known Tim a little while?



Zach 37:10

Hmm, only a couple years I think in person. Oh, I forget, I think it was just that he showed up at the Clearwater spray clay, the red shed spray clay years ago, and we got chatting him myself Bruce crack about cast and, you know, I'm just, I'm a casting nerd too. And just

love the intricacies of this big cast and Tim's enthusiasm for it is infectious. So yeah, he's uh, he's just he's cool, dude. So



Dave S 37:49

and now a quick word from our sponsors. Got fishing calm a boutique booking agency for fishing adventures around the world. Golf fishing is unique, working with a small hand selected group of people. fitters from around the world that are known for providing an experience that is second to none. Golf fishing can be your trusted source of information with access to the world's best fishing trips. Their sole purpose is to help you plan the most authentic fishing venture while making sure it fits within your budget. The beauty is that everything they do is 100% free, you will never pay a dime extra for your trip and in many cases less than advertised. I can attest personally to the service that God fishing provides as they have been working with me closely to set my first trip to the Yucatan for saltwater. They have taken care of all the important details and allowed me to avoid worrying about any of the complications. I know Brian and the crew have you covered a golf fishing. Whether you need a fishing consultant, travel consultant gear pro or the like they have you covered with top of the line Outfitters they represent around the world. They are confident they have just the right trip for you. You can give them a call at 208-630-3373 are head over to God fishing calm to get started today. Let God fishing help you plan the fishing trip. You Dreaming. I forget that in the center are rivers and fish unspoken, for that there are valleys the strata of which we lower into perhaps in the hollow between breaths, and the tiny pause between the rise of summer and his departure. I nearly forget the long sleeve of winter the absence the fractional glimpses of light, dear one, I will go without speaking, ablaze keep me until I disappear. That was a poem by Molly dam in the summer edition of the fly fishing and tying journal on top of some great poetry as you as you hear here, FDJ is jam packed with another round of great articles in diverse departments. Joseph Rosano is back again provides another classic steelhead lesson for everyone. We hear from Garrett Lesko in a stacking deer hair frenzy find out about striped bass from Angelo Palazzo and hear from David C. McNeese on Seeing the blues the material dying. Lots of additional articles in the summer edition, including an editor's interview with yours truly about how I became a fly fishing podcaster Craig did a really good job with this one. So I'm pretty proud to be in this edition. I believe I have found the perfect sponsor for the show I would be it would be really great if you can support FTD by heading over to F TJ angler.com and subscribing so you don't miss any of the tips, tricks and stories in the next issue. That's f TJ angler.com to get started today and tell them tell Craig the crew out there you heard about the magazine from the podcast and I'll find a way to put something extra special together for you. Okay, back to the show. What would be what would be a more interesting topic for you to talk about. If we had, you know, another 30 minutes here, kind of you know, the casting the spray cast tips on talking about that or

more of swing To fly tips on swinging to fly.



Zach 41:04

And, you know, I'd like both of them a lot. I can geek out on either one. Okay,



Dave S 41:10

okay, good. I was struggling with that I struggle with that. Try to come up with kind of an arc or a headlight for you I try to focus it a little bit just because I think it helps guide the conversation and so I think I gotta land on space because it's been such a struggle for me, you know, like I think a lot of people over the years and I guess maybe let me start off first again with another question for you. Did you teach yourself Did you ever have any lessons you ever pay anybody for the casting lesson? What what's that all like?



Zach 41:39

I never paid anybody for a casting lesson. I've been fortunate to get some help. I would highly recommend paying for a casting lesson. Don't follow the way I did it. It was it was a long process. You know, I I started out when I was like, six 16 years old, I bought my first spare rod and it was a long process to even achieve like basic proficiency. What was it?



Dave S 42:11

What was the rod?



Zach 42:14

It was a St. Croix Imperial. Oh, yeah. I mentioned earlier in the conversation, but as we're working in this little sporting goods store called Gander mountain, and we're a St. Croix dealer, St. Croix based in the Midwest, and there weren't even in 2000 You know, there weren't a lot of rods on the market. Sage was obviously doing it and some other ones but St. Croix came out with this Imperial and the retail cost was 250 bucks. And we got a pro deal so I paid \$92 for my first pair odd brand new. So, um, but I had, all I had was this. It was a VHS recorded from Saturday morning fly fish America episode and they were The guy I think his name was Mike and you Maybe you remember his last name who was the host, but he was on the schedule with Trey combs and Scott O'Donnell. And they were spake SDN. And they had, there's like one clip of Scott doing a double spray. And I mean, I rewound that little, like seven seconds, I don't know 1000 times to figure out how to do this

double spray and you know, got where I could get the line out there. But yeah, it was it was a long process when whenever it was that a Simon God's worse reo, multi depth DVD came out huge at like, I mean, that brought me leaps and bounds within a few days of having that DVD. And then beyond that, it was just, you know, it was it was a process and When I became a guide, I had had this just kind of one of my childhood friends. Dad's nothing to do with fishing and non angler anything. But out of college I started working for him and he knew I wasn't going to stick around and work for long. And he just gave me the advice one day he said kind of fatherly said whatever you choose to do in life just tried to be the best at it sounds obvious and stuff but he's like and if you can't be the best be the second best and you know, so when I became a guide, I decided with spey casting that you know, I'm going to try to be the best I can be as a caster and a guide. Just because I wanted, I wanted to be good at what I chose to do in life, so I put a lot of time into a casting. You did and just a lot a lot of rubbish. petition including just practicing not fishing. So, you know, I think your average angler probably doesn't wrap this aside from their fishing they show up at the river and go fishing. And I put a lot of time into just casting.



Dave S 45:15

That's it. So that's, that's actually a great tip for anybody listening that's probably struggling is that you need to you need to practice like guinea pig on the guiding thing. So I'm not sure how long you guided but you know, guiding and I've had lots of guides on here. People that have done it their whole lives, people that haven't Why didn't you stick with guiding?



Zach 45:40

Long? Well, several reasons, I guess. One continued to see the fisheries that I was working on struggling and I no longer felt good about what I felt was you know, taking from that resource for my own benefit and continuing to watch them struggle. So that was probably the biggest reason. But secondary was a, you know, my I'm married, my, my wife was in a job that was really stressful and stuff guiding is a tough way to really support a family. And it was time to step up and Yep, so I made the decision to make a change, you know, get it, get a career that maybe even involves some health insurance and stuff like that. So that's where we're at now there's there's plenty of things I miss about guiding being on the water every day is something that's hard to match and outside rowing a boat, I never would have thought I'd just miss like the act of rowing a boat so much. And then the friendships you develop over the years of guiding you know so many of my clients I'd been guiding for quite a few years and are good friends. So Miss Miss doing that, but there's pros and cons to it all. So for sure,



Dave S 47:26

for sure. Well, let's get back to Tim. Tim had a couple of questions here for you. And one of them was he was curious about myths with spey casting on the technique. Can you talk are there what what myths are out there that are I don't know anything you could speak of there when people were, you know, try to become a proficient speak caster.



Zach 47:46

Yeah, you know, the, I mean, my my biggest thing I've preached when I write about a cast in or talk at events has been the concept of the anchor anchoring the flyline on the water. In a spray cast, and I've always talked about how that is the most critical component of the cast. So I guess you know, I've been fairly critical at times of spey casting instruction being too focused on body mechanics and you have to do it my way like you have to move your arms in this way or that way. My goal has always been to get to what the essence of what makes the cast go and I've talked about golf a lot and you know, being that you like other sports as well, you know, you look at golf, everybody swings a golf club in a different manner. Everybody shoot the basketball in a different manner. So, you know, to me the the idea that, you know, I've got to move my arms this way or that way. Just didn't hold up as the essence of what makes the spey cast works. So Gotcha. So that's, that's what I've always been. And Tim, and I guess if he wants to get more critical, or into more detail on this I, the there's a concept of the V loop that's been touted in spey casting like energizing this the flyline on your back cast, essentially. And to me, that's never held up. Never had had merit in the cast. So. So I've tried to dispel that a little bit.



Dave S 49:35

And you're talking about, you're talking about the like a V loop versus just a D loop.



49:40

Correct?



Dave S 49:41

Yeah. And the thought is that if you have more of a V shaped loop that you're going to have more power be able to cast further.



Zach 49:50

Yeah, yeah, exactly. And it's, it's never held up. It's probably easier to demonstrate and explain over the phone, but it's never held up to me. So you get people really like speeding up their whole casting stroke to try to achieve as if it was energize your D loop energize the flyline. So you start speeding up all this stuff and everything else falls apart. And so, my my casting philosophy has been to summarize very simply eliminate as many variables as possible. So you want to move the rod up in the same manner, at the same speed and tempo for as long as absolutely possible in the cast. And so when you start speeding up this trying to create this magical v loop, you have introduced a new variable that then needs to be adjusted for when you Go forward into a Ford cast. So, so you're just you're making consistency very difficult to achieve. Whereas I think if you when I was I mentioned, you know how much I practice casting when I would when I was doing this, I would practice like I break like the basic spay cast like a double spay into three steps, right? You first you set, you set the anchor, and I would practice that one step and try to get as consistent as possible with that. And when you're consistent with that you've eliminated variables, you know, if that line is landing in a different spot, every cast, that's a variable that then is going to affect the next step. And so, so I tried to get consistent with that step. And then I moved to the next step, and I tried to get consistent with that and, you know, it's a little methodical and maybe borderline boring to some people, but through Through getting consistent with each step, you're eliminating variables until you get down to the very last instant of the cast and everything is consistent over and over. And then on the forward path, forecast, you can create distance once you understand all those other things, you know, you you can give it a nice soft little forecast, just like you would do with a little trout rod. And a 20 foot cast with the dry fly, you know, the spray cast, you only want it to go 30 feet, you give it just a nice little fort asked and if you want it to go a little further, you're going to accelerate just a little bit more at the last instant. And so so just consistency has always been the goal with all it. And then you know, the distance part is something that's a whole nother topic, but I think as an angler. You know, as a space angler, if you want to be an effective angler, consistency is going to be far more important than the distance. And you need to be consistent, you need to be able to cast you need to cast off of each shoulder on each side of the river. So no matter the wind direction or obstacle, you always have a cast that'll work. And if you can cast them out 60 feet off of each shoulder each side of the river at a consistent angle and turn the fly over consistently. You're gonna do really well as an angler, whereas if you're if you're chasing all these, like magical things that are make the fly go farther, and one Cass works and the next three fail, you know, you're really going to struggle So



Dave S 53:53

yeah, those are great. Those are great points. What is uh, you know, when you talk about trying to fly over, you know, what is look like and what does it look like when you're not turning a flyover? Can you describe that or I'm not sure if that were in the stroke that comes from to make sure you get that right. But can you talk about that how to do that correctly?

Z

Zach 54:13

Uh, yeah, I mean turning the flyover means your your leader, your your sink, tip, whatever is all laid out nice and straight. Yep. And I mean, to me, that's, that's what identifies a good any fly cast single hander or double hand and spray cast is the fly line turns over and the flies the furthest out thing where it lands and the line lands relatively taut and obviously, certain presentations. We want some slack in there introduced purpose, but we won't get into that



Dave S 54:51

and how does that affect you? When you do a perfect spray cast, you know, it lays out there perfectly versus maybe somebody who casts and you know, they kind of pile it up or It's not great but then they do a big men to get it in before it's kind of in that zone. Is there a big difference to me obviously there's a big difference but as far as fishing wise,

Z

Zach 55:10

yeah, yeah, absolutely. You know, getting the fly turned out turning over nice and taut means it's fishing right away the fly we're in new line where to land in a pile. We don't really know what that flies doing. I mean, it might be three quarters of the way before your through your swing before the leaders actually come taught and is fishing with our chosen technique properly. So turning the flyover is just I mean, it's all about just like the casting you know, it's the swing fly method is eliminating variables. So we want the cast to turn over at a consistent angle across the river layout nice and straight, fish across and then we move down river and we want it to do the same. So when these things are changing, You're, you're missing spots out there. Like if one cast turns over taught and swings and then the next you move down river in the next cast lands in a pile. You've missed a chunk of the river in there. And you know, once or twice might be okay, but when that's happening consistently as you're fishing on over the course of a day or longer I you're missing too many spots and when a fish that's as rare as a steelhead, you know, you might miss the only fish that was in there and willing to bite. You missed it on that calf that didn't turn over. So



Dave S 56:40

yep. Your buddy, your buddy hooks hooks up with it behind you.



Zach 56:44

Yeah, exactly. So you're trying to cover as much water as effectively as possible.



Dave S 56:51

Yeah, that's perfect. What about can you describe it, you know that you've mentioned a little bit on the forum. So can you just describe a little more detail on doing that correctly, and How that starts and ends.



Zach 57:02

Sure. Yeah, the board cast on your spade cast with a two hand rod. To me You're, you're using both your hands, but your top hand is guiding the rod down your target line, which is shown by your anchor. So if you're looking at your anchor on the water, it should be pointing at your target. And your forecast should go down that line. And so your top hands going to guide the rod down that while your bottom hand is going to power it. So a smooth pole of the bottom hand, your top hand guiding the tip down that line. There's obviously a lot more you can add into it. That's the basics of it.



Dave S 57:47

Perfect. Perfect. So you've been in the the spirit ramaa you know, and I think you've been ranking pretty well. Can you talk a little about you know what that events Like and you know, maybe you know your experience there.



Zach 58:05

Oh, yeah, um yeah, it's it's the world championship is baitcasting it's hosted down at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Well, I'll tell you a little story. I think it was 2011 12 2012 was the first year I went down there and you know, I'd been practicing a lot. I thought I was pretty good at speaking. And I show up there you know, get off a plane and take a cab and pull up at this place and for the golfers they're listening. It's it's kind of like a gusta national to me. I mean, there's like the rhododendrons and like azaleas are flowering and April and we're there it's it's like the Masters it's it's just a surreal seeing

these huge loop, eucalyptus trees and this anglers lodge with all this like Lie history and the club's been there forever. And so it's a really neat setting and I show up my first year I'm feeling pretty good. I'm like, I can do this, you know, and you walk over this little hill pass the anglers lodge to the the casting ponds. And I mean, my jaw just dropped. It's funny, like the the timing of me doing this was pretty incredible. And that, by far the best spray caster, at least in recent times, if not ever Jared Downey from Ireland was in the pond casting and I just see these lines, just, you know, just shooting out over this pond and like you can hear them like the speed at which they're coming off the rod. And I just looked and I'm like, I am so outmatched being here. And so you know, once you get over that shock factor where you're like, oh, I shouldn't even step foot out there and try this, like, way out of my league. But the cool thing with spare Rama is that everybody is so welcoming. And everybody started like that, and people are helpful and nobody judges you if you're not on the level of Jared Downey because none of us are. So we, you know, I mean, I made it through that first year, being terrified of embarrassing myself and came back for more punishment, and over quite a few years got a little better at each year, and there was quite a few years of disappointment and finally started to achieve at least some of my goals for down there and, you know, it's gotten the events gotten a lot of like you'd read on internet forums and stuff like that at times, you know, why would anybody want to Do that it's casting and not fishing and stuff. No, nothing's ever taken my casting and a fishing situation further than competing and spare omma and you know, when you when you learn to cast 150 foot 100 foot or 120 foot becomes easy. And turning the flyover becomes easy and, you know so so the whole like idea of the event. I mean, it helped tremendously on the fishing standpoint as well. So I'm just a cool place. You know, I think last year, obviously this year didn't happen because of COVID. But last year, I want to say it was 14 different countries were represented there. So you just you meet a lot of neat people as well.



Dave S 61:50

Sounds like it's a pretty amazing thing. I mean, just you know, and Jared Downey he's a What is it? What is the thing with with him I mean, I always think of you use the golf analogy, which I think is great because I think Have you know a couple of things I think of like the golf the same boy right when you try to kill the ball it goes haywire and never goes well yeah same with casting but also when I think of golf I think of Tiger Woods for me just because when I was in the golf Tiger was this bigger than life right he was the path like oh, is Jared down the same thing like he just started when he was like one year old with a spay rod and that's why he's so good or why is it that that guy is dominates?



Zach 62:30

I do think he grew up I believe on the might have to fact check me but I believe it was the river boy in Ireland and I do believe he grew up on the river. Like the stretch this is a stretch for the fact wise but I want to say like his dad or somebody in his family was a ghillie and he was at that time but isn't now I don't believe gotcha. But yeah, the river Moya and Ira And I think is where he grew up. But I don't know what it is about that that made him so good other than what when he cast he, he looks the most effortless out of anybody and it goes far this so he's the smoothest you know he and it goes the farthest so he's he's like the Ernie ELLs golf swing. You know, it was like just just smooth never never looks like he's trying hard.



Dave S 63:29

That's right. That's right. And and what is the distance wise? Is there a record or what do you you know, at this parameter right now, I'm not sure how all the competition works. But is there like a certain record right now on longest cast?



Zach 63:44

Yeah, Travis Johnson has the longest single cast 198 feet. And Jared has the record for forecast. I want to say it's like 730 Two feet or something like that. So we measure forecasts you get, you get 12 cast, there's a you know you have a left shoulder cast and a right shoulder cast essentially simulating each side of the river. So what what everybody does is a left hand up and a right hand up single spray and then a left hand up and a right hand up, Snake roll. And you get you get three attempts at each one. And you take your longest of each one so the total of the forecast is what's measured. So jarrods got the record for the men's open 730 some feet, I think for the forecast. Whitney gold holds the women's record and I should know who hold Martin Keeley also of Ireland holds the Seniors record so there's three divisions men's open senior women, though.



Dave S 65:05

Cool, yeah. Sounds like an event that no matter who you are, if you could make it it would be a cool event to attend just to watch.



Zach 65:13

Yeah, yeah. awesome event to show up and watch. I mean, the Golden Gate. Have you been to the golden? No, I haven't. I haven't. No. I mean, you know, for anybody who's in

San Francisco for any reason, it's just regardless of if spare aamas happening, it's such a cool place to visit. I mean, the lodge is like a little angling museum and the ponds and everything. It's really neat. You can show up cast fly rods yet and upon any time of year cast single hander or get in with waders and cast a rod. So cool, really cool place with a lot of angling history. So



Dave S 65:51

nice. Well, maybe I can. Yeah, get a get a guest. I'm not sure who would be a good person but I could follow up with something there to dig more into the the cast club I know that that name. Obviously it's come up quite a few times over the years. But hey, let's dig back into you mentioned your home water is kind of talks to you about is kind of Clearwater and I know it's been struggling and I think it was even closed here the last couple years, but can you just take us there? Yeah. Well, it was. Can you take us to Clearwater and talk about, you know how you catch steelhead? They're just saying a typical year and I'm not sure if it's different from any other rivers.



Zach 66:25

Yeah, yeah, I think you know, it is. The clear water is essentially the clear water in the snake. Here are the biggest steelhead rivers in terms of volume and width that we have certainly in the lower 48. So in that these are summer steelhead coming up the snake and we're typically fishing for them in the fall. And so floating lines because of the size of the river, counter larger spaces rods than you typically find on other rivers. So while while you can certainly can and plenty of people do fish your typical 13 foot seven wait spay rod, the Clearwater you'll run into more 1516 and longer foot rods than anywhere else. That's and it's been a cool place for me to grow myself as an angler and a caster. It's a place where truly distance plays can play a role, you know, you can catch a fish 30 feet off shore, for sure, but there are many of these runs in particular with other anglers and stuff fishing them where you know, being able to reach out further plays a big role. So between that and spray aramas a neat, neat way to grow as a caster and then beyond that, The Clearwater fish are large and extremely surface oriented. So you're really you never need a sink tip on the Clearwater river if you don't want to, and you can catch them on a dry fly on a week dry fly. Or you know, your typical fly as a small smaller than average, drab little harrowing or classic steelhead fly. So smaller flies then are typical on a lot of places and



Dave S 68:32

yeah, like, like, just kind of say, like eight and 10 sort of thing.



Zach 68:38

Yeah, I mean, you can, you know, you can catch them on bigger fly size two or whatever, but, you know, I would say a six or an eight is your typical fly for typical conditions. And I always like to fly with less flash, you know, and I think like rivers like the Deschutes, and stuff like that. You'll see a little more flash in your flies than you would on the clear water? So,



Dave S 69:04

gotcha. Gotcha. And is it more kind of just morning, early mornings? evenings? Are you fishing all day long with the dry line? all day? Oh, you're all that's cool.



Zach 69:15

Yeah. Yeah, you know, and if you get into the differences with different rivers and stuff, the Clearwater, the sun is at the fish's back. Other than like, mid morning, the sun is at their back. So they're not looking into the sun. No. And so it's always been a river that fishes really well all day long. That's awesome. And even, I mean, some of the best fishing can be, you know, one in the afternoon and bright sun and heat. And, yeah, no need to go to the sink tip. You see people doing it, but I don't. You know, for people who fish there regularly, I think you'd be hard pressed to find somebody who felt they needed a sink tip.



Dave S 70:00

That's perfect. And it's a lot of like you said traditional and it's kind of funny I think Steve Steve a bird but even a bet you did but you know a lot of guys even wearing traditional like gear out there right the the tweet hat is there any?



Zach 70:14

I don't know. I might have to disagree. Okay on that. There you go. Yeah. So you can find somebody wearing anything if you want but no, okay. It's no i i mean, what's unique about the Clearwater i think is that is this distance casting scene. They pretty much everybody from the US and Canada who routinely competes. espei arama can be found on the Clearwater in the fall. So you'll see some of the best casting in the world driving up and down Highway 12. Gotcha. So, there's a cool scene that just like each you know, each of the famous steelhead rivers have their own unique scene and everything. clear waters got it gotcha



Dave S 71:03

gotcha yeah that's including like claws claws free more right he's been you've guided him on that river correct



Zach 71:11

a guided for him Oh guided for



Dave S 71:13

him oh right because



Zach 71:15

right I was on the permit Clearwater steelhead syndicate that I guided for you know up until my



71:23

that's my exit from



Zach 71:26

but yeah yeah and Klaus you know Klaus is unique being the hero in the bunch and the this Andy caster and stuff so not not the big long line long rod guy Klaus always stuck with his 13 foot rod and skandi line and Yep, courts did well for himself was a great angler and caster so



Dave S 71:51

yeah definitely definitely yeah we I had him on recently as well and we had a great conversation about that.



Zach 71:57

So okay, I listened to go to it. That was a good talk. I enjoyed it. Oh, cool. Cool.



Dave S 72:02

Yeah, definitely. There's some of that the, you know, the underhand casting and just a different take. But obviously, you know, loop is a huge company. I mean, what are the lions? So when you talk about you just described the you mentioned 15 foot and longer Can you talk about the rod and lines that you're typically using for those traditional You know, this the stuff you're doing there?



Zach 72:20

Oh, yeah, I mean, there's, there's a bunch of companies that make great man, you know, so I don't like to push people one way or another? What if somebody was just gonna,



Dave S 72:32

I mean, where would you direct them? So somebody you know, you know, you got the snap T and all this shorter stuff in the the PST right, all this stuff, but you know, if somebody wanted to, and it sounds like there is a little bit of an evolution right after in your spare life, I'm not quite there yet, you know, back to the old school, but if you were evolving back, where would you send somebody as far as you know, what, you know, gear to get for that?



Zach 72:55

Oh, sure. Um, well, I mean, You know, I like I like a couple of rod manufacturers that have been great to me like Mizer fly rods and Bruce and Walker fly rods Bruce and Walker's company that out of the UK that the competition gear right you've got a North American distributor Jean Oswald who's just a really really all time great person and so he's he's the guy on Bruce and Walker rods and in North America and they're just like the misers to you know, Bob miser just incredible human beings. So I like those guys, and they both make great fly rods. Um, and, you know, the cool thing about the spray in two hand world is we have these like, niche manufacturers and custom gear, you know, so you're talking with the guy who makes the flyer hard or, you know, designed it, like that, which is really neat. So for the long rods certainly I like that stuff. But you of course you don't have to spend as much money as a custom rod comes in there. There's so many great companies that have been good to me good to swing the flock. Yeah. You know, for for I've often said that if I were to quit working all together and just become a fish bum again in my life, I just sell everything and buy eco fly rods are really good. You know, like, that's everything from eco for and save a lot of money and be able to live cheap, too. So yeah, Love.



Dave S 74:38

Love. So do you have sponsors on on the magazine?



Zach 74:41

Yeah, the swing the fly hat has a you know, a fair number of companies who've been really good to me. So I mentioned them they're the miser the Bruce and Walker the Eco. They've been great in terms of customs burials, far less reels. I mean, those guys have been with me and supported it since the start.



Dave S 75:04

Yeah. What about lines? What about lines?



Zach 75:08

Yeah, I mean, you know the longer lines are more of a niche thing you know there's there's not a lot Gale Force flight Oh Jean has made I mean they they've made you know the top competition line for a long time and then you know, because of that their fishing lines are really good as well. Gotcha. ballistic fly lines is another one that comes from Davison who's also spare contributor. Yeah, and the shorter stuff airflow and scientific anglers had been great to me as well and I think make great lines. They're more shorter lines though. And I do everything in my own space chain. It's not just long line stuff. But certainly there are there's still more options out there for the short lines, but the long lines are more and more becoming available so Bruce and Walker gene Oswald, he's making a line now boss fly lines but those Gale Force I mean, it's really hard to go wrong with gale force for the longer stuff.



Dave S 76:15

Perfect. Perfect. Well, Zach, we're gonna we're gonna wrap this up pretty quick. I just had a couple more I wanted to ask you here and one comes from Ryan Christian who's a new kind of in the Facebook group in our Facebook group and he was asking about and this is one that's comes up right it's always a common question but you know finding finding fish and reading water so if we take it to the Clearwater You know, you're new I just run out there here this fall and I'm, you know, maybe I come up in a good year, right when there's some more fish but, you know, how are you reading the water there and finding fish if you're new to it?



Zach 76:47

That is a good question. Other than the obvious to look where other anglers are fish,



76:52

that's right. Yeah.



Zach 76:55

You know, I mean, you you look when you figure steelhead, I think it helps to think like A steelhead, I mean you're talking to migratory fish, you know, so they they like the path of least resistance. And then they need security from predators. So, you know if you can find softer current, which the clear water has in excess of it's a lower gradient river through a lot of it but softer water where the fish isn't expending too much energy and then security in the form of structure rocks, large rocks, ledges, stuff like that. The water I avoid is is water that's, you know, small cobble pea gravel, you have all the same uniform size, not a lot of variation and in bottom contour. So yeah, you find you find that darker water with some big boulders and the right speed of current and You'll probably find fish the clear waters a crazy River. I mean, it's a cool river in that it can take it. You couldn't fish it on a lifetime. And, you know, two runs can look equal and one can hold a lot more fish than another but steelhead, you can also you can find them anywhere at the right time. And so things will surprise you too. So, you know, as as a new steelhead angler, I would recommend covering as much water efficiently as possible so you're not rushing from spot to spot but you know, take a cast move on on a summer steelhead river with warm water I would refrain from the you know, moving as we always talk about moving to steps between cast I would make that four steps on the clear water and cover more pieces of water. If it were me and you know, so don't spend all day in one run and grow up. all your eggs in one basket, you know, the more the more runs you can cover in a day while still having fun and not racing around. Yeah, yeah.



Dave S 79:09

So so you're Yeah, so you're covering maybe an hour per run or something something like that more in that range?



Zach 79:17

Uh, yeah, I mean the Clearwater has huge runs. So some of them you can spend two three hours on and depending on your personality, you know, um, but covering covering more

small runs is is not a bad strategy.



Dave S 79:35

Or guys, is this more of a kind of drive to hop out fish more more drift boats, stuff like that. What what's that look like?



Zach 79:43

It is I mean, you can you can run a jet sled you can you can flow but it also has highway 12 bordering the entire thing with tons of pull outs, and, and a lot of other stretches a road on the other side of the river as well so there's there's a ton of walking Wade access Are there any sections where you can actually get completely away from roads and have access to good water there are there are really no the height the highway does the entire length. That's interesting. Yeah, yeah so so you know wilderness experience it is not per se you know although I think the scenery is great on the clear water and standing in that clear water is you can easily forget about the highway but it is there the whole way. So



Dave S 80:41

there you go. There you go. Yeah, it's



Zach 80:44

overnight multi day float river like the Deschutes the grand round or something.



Dave S 80:48

That's cool. Yeah. I had a frank Amato on in a while back and he was talking about, you know, the disputes. I talk obviously a lot about the disputes but he was saying how he was involved back in I think it was the 70s when they were planning on cutting a road through that lower 25 miles and you know, he was a big part back with you know, the stuff he was doing to help get the word out to protect it and you know now it's it's a roadless, right? I mean you know there's no cars down there and it definitely makes a difference it's interesting that you know, obviously all rivers are different but that's that's kind of cool.



Zach 81:21

Well and we owe a debt of gratitude to people like that who work to keep those places that way for us, you know, so



81:29

yeah, for sure.



Zach 81:31

Well, I love the clear water as much or more than any river I certainly appreciate the roadless wilderness stuff. So I always like to spend my time I'd guide on the grand round trips here. All you know in between the Clearwater and always appreciate the chance to get away from the roads and



Dave S 81:50

stuff like that. That's it. Yeah, I wish we had another hour to talk about the grad rod. But let's wrap, wrap it out here with the tutorials. It's just top to tips, flies and resources and if we keep it on the Clearwater Do you have a couple of nice can if we want to look up a couple of flies that you love using out there?



82:10

Uh, yeah,



Zach 82:11

yeah. I'll give you a couple I guess the the green and was always my favorite kind of sentimental thing as well but that's found in trade combs, steelhead fly fishing, the pattern can be found in there. It's just a simple little hair wing. And if I was going to just pick one other fly for there, it'd be some sort of dark harrowing. The night dancer was a frank moto fly or tray love so that that's not a bad choice. I've got a bunch of Clearwater fish on that fly as well but a darker harrowing but you know, yeah, a well rounded for the Clearwater would have some sort of dry fly October caddis type model or something. Maybe a lady Caroline in a little bigger size and you'd be set with three or four flies. You never have to change. I mean, if you were to pull out my guide box, pretty much those four flies there'd be you know, yep 30 of each of that woman, nothing else. There you go.



Dave S 83:16

Perfect. And what about tips if we're talking let's keep it on the spey casting any other feeling throughout a couple of tips?



Zach 83:25

Sure. If I had one spade casting tip it would be to keep your eye on your anchor, I'd, I'd call it the anchor, the golf ball or the baseball so where your line is anchored to the water if you watch that, it'll tell you everything you need to know about the cast from the timing to the direction to anything else. So don't watch your target or anything Keep your eye on the line that's on the water there.



Dave S 83:54

Perfect. And, and then so so you got that set up. So after you have the anchor in your head into the second part of the castle any other tips there as you're kind of going to that forward part of it



84:10

be smooth



Zach 84:12

keep the line keep the line moving and just be nice and smooth with it Don't try to hammer it yep, so yeah hit hitting it hard is not going to create better results in any circumstance.



84:29

Yeah, exactly.



Dave S 84:30

Yeah, then you know obviously swing the flies is a good resource any other couple of resources that maybe aren't your own stuff that people could you know, help them out with spay or swinging flies.



Zach 84:42

Oh, you know, when I when I was getting started, and spayed pages had so much nicer Oh, if I if I wanted to wanted one resource though, for all of this. I would buy Trank homes old steelhead fly in 1991 hardcover version from, from the history of the sport to the technique of swinging a fly to, you know, the classic flight patterns. I mean, you could learn everything you needed to know outside of there's not much on the cast in, but yeah, yeah, I think that's still relevant. And, you know, to me, it's certainly the best book. There's been some other good ones, but it's the book on the subject. Yeah. Yep. Yeah, I would, I wouldn't swing the fly wouldn't have it wouldn't exist, or, and I wouldn't be here doing this without that book. So



Dave S 85:35

that's cool. That's cool. Yeah, that's obviously Trey's huge, huge influence on all of us. Well, let's see. I guess that's that's about I definitely wanted to we didn't touch on the back country journal, which is another group. You know, I mean, where you're connected to I hear a lot about Yeah. Did you want to maybe we will hit that up I forget. Jada lied.



Zach 85:58

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah backcountry hunters and anglers, the nonprofit and back country journal is is the full time gig now so yeah, working on servation stuff which is rewarding,



Dave S 86:10

buddy There you go. So you're taking it i mean that's a good thing is there just quickly is there the connection between it seems like you know fly fishing the back country you know everything you got this seems like it's they're pretty closely well not aligned, but obviously conservation what's are there a lot of similarities between the two niches?



86:30

Um,



Zach 86:31

yeah, you know, I mean, between steelhead and stuff like that and bat country i don't

know i mean, wild places and wild creatures, you know, to me that Yeah, even though just talking about the Clearwater having a road along it a steelhead is the epitome of a wild creature when you look at its life and I don't know I've kind of centered my life around wild places and wild creatures. So I love you know, wilderness and roadless areas and stuff like that. And I love interacting with wild steelhead, but wild creatures like elk and deer and stuff like that, too. So I think that that's the connection for me personally is just being closer to nature.



Dave S 87:18

So did you ever know when you started say 2012? I can't remember where we were out there but it was back country. Was this ever even a thought in your mind as far as the job that you have now?



87:30

Oh,



Zach 87:32

no. I mean, when I when I started swinging the fly, I never would have known that my career path was going to lead to magazines and editing and stuff like that. And I probably became aware of that country hunters and anglers in like 2015 leading up to 2016 election when public lands where Oh, yeah, or front you know, a couple people started Wanting to sell off public lands and I saw this group, you know, working to organize against that and having impact on on preventing that from happening. And so I said, you know, these people are doing something that I really like. And so yeah, no, it's it's crazy though the twists and turns life takes, you know, I've never would have known I'd be here. No,



Dave S 88:29

no, that's awesome. All right, Zack, why I could talk to you for a few more hours. Well, I'll let you get out of here. I guess in the next few months or the rest of this year, obviously COVID crazy but anything from swing the fly what what's the next issue that's coming out.



Zach 88:46

next issue should be out towards the end of this month. Oh, cool. Yeah, yeah. Gotta have a really, really strong lineup by you know, I feel like swing the fly. Something I mean, my

goal has been to improve every issue, you know, but at times, I mean, I've just continually been impressed. The writers and them continuing to up their game, the writers, the photography, stuff like that. It's It's not my doing. They just they, they do a great job of being creative and coming up with neat new things. So



89:25

that's cool.



Zach 89:26

That's cool. Yeah, I got a new one coming out in a few weeks and then and then a fall issue to round out the year we'll be out. Valley end of October again, November.



Dave S 89:37

Perfect. Perfect. All right. If people want to support you and get the magazine, just swing the fly.com



Zach 89:43

Yep, swing the fly.com.



Dave S 89:45

Alright. Okay. Thanks for taking the time we've we've dug into a little bit, a little bit of everything. And that's how I like to roll here. So I appreciate you coming on and sharing. All the stories and tips are everything.



Zach 89:56

Yeah, I enjoyed chatting with you, Dave. Thanks for having me.



Dave S 89:58

Okay. We'll talk to you later. All right, sounds good. So there you go. If you want to find all of the show notes and all the links and stuff we talked about today, just head over to wet fly swing comm slash 151. I created this show for you. I'd love to hear how I'm doing. And if

there's a way I can make it better, if you head over to wet fly swing comm slash members, that's mem v r s, and sign up for our private mighty network. This is the group we have going where you can ask questions and take things a little bit further and it's a private group in there. So be great to connect with you. If you're in there. Just say Hi, this is a great place that we're all moving the conversation forward. Thanks again for stopping by checking out the show. Look forward to talking to you soon and maybe seeing you online or on the river.



90:49

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