

# WHY COMMON “CENTS” MAKES SENSE

by Tom Kirkman

Rod performance has become synonymous with casting distance. Nowhere is this more true than in the fly rod industry. If you were a rod manufacturer and were asked to submit a 5-weight rod for testing, you'd be out of your mind to submit a true 5-weight rod (if anyone could even agree upon what a true 5-weight rod actually is). You know full well that a rod designed to load with an AFTMA standard 5-weight line at 30 feet will be overloaded by the time you put 70 feet past the tip. So what you'd do is make a more powerful rod, something that we'd have called a 6 or 7 weight some years back, and label it as a 5-weight. While you'd have trouble getting it to load with a 5-weight line at 30 feet, it would be perfect for those 80 to 90 feet casts that seem so important nowadays and always seem to get the nod in the casting tests. So your rod would shine in the magazine test and fishermen would flock to buy it. Of course, they'd end up somewhat befuddled when it wouldn't cast a 5-weight rod at around 25 to 50 feet - the distance where most people usually fish. But at least they'd know they had bought "the best rod in the test," whether it performed well for them or not.

The truth is, until our industry has some agreed upon standards on which to base rod power and action, we can never really be sure we're comparing apples to apples. In fact the only thing we can be sure of, is that we're probably comparing apples to oranges every time we attempt to compare one company's blanks to those from another company.

If you've read this far, you've probably also noticed the large amount of room and publicity I've given to the Hanneman Common Cents System in this issue's earlier pages. I've done it with good reason - I believe it is one of the most important methods ever devised to provide us with relative comparisons between blanks and rods in terms of power and action. In fact, I believe it is the very

best method yet devised for making these comparisons.

Up until now, line and lure weight ratings have been hard to compare across the board between manufacturers. In terms of fly rods, one company's 5-weight rod is another company's 4-weight rod. The rod which one company aims at the 1/4 ounce spinnerbait crowd gets rated at 3/8 ounce by another. Action is broken down in terms of Fast, Medium and Slow. But the flex profile for one company's Fast action models is different than those from another. So our terms and ratings make little sense when one wishes to compare blanks or rods outside of a single maker's stable.

The rod industry has no "standards" to go by. Nobody is wrong and everybody is right when it comes to their own ratings. No big deal I suppose, but it wouldn't it be easier if everyone was on the same playing field and abiding by the same rules and measurements? I think we can agree that it would make things a lot easier on us rod builders. This is where Dr. Hanneman's approach makes sense. It puts everyone back at square one, with a constant set of weights and measurements to go by. With his system, you will know for sure what the correct casting

line or lure weight is going to be. You know how one rod compares to another in action, not by some term that encompasses a wide swath or range, but with a number that can be measured and compared.

If we can get the blank and rod manufacturers to adopt the Hanneman Common Cents System and list the Action Angle and true power of each rod or blank in their yearly catalogs, we will regain the ability to make accurate comparisons from blank to blank, and company to company. And the next time some magazine asks the rod companies to submit 5-weight rods for testing, they have a means of kicking out those that aren't actually 5-weight rods. Think about it - with this system we'd always be sure that we're comparing apples to apples. ✍️

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