

2026Q2

The Quarter Pole



Quarterly Newsletter of the Derby City Fly Fishers

INTRODUCTION

A Summertime Guide to Fishing Knots

Each issue of *The Quarter Pole* will have a (1) **seasonal** and (2) **topic** focus. The topic for this edition is all about **Fishing Knots**. While fishing knots are not seasonal, this guide is just in time for the busy **Summer** fishing season. We hope it helps you develop or expand your arsenal of tried-and-true fishing knots.

Check out all past issues at the **DCFF Website Newsletter Archives** link [HERE](#) to access prior editions. Also, let us know if you like the newsletter focus and format, or if you have some suggestions to improve the publication. We want to hear from you!

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THE QUARTER POLE HOT TIP

Four Keys to Selecting the Best Fishing Knot

A fishing knot that does not match the task at hand is a mistake in the making. When selecting an appropriate fishing knot -- start your selection process with the connection, not the knot. What you are trying to accomplish with the knot is the most important criteria in knot selection. Consider these four questions before selecting a knot:

1.) What are you connecting?

Are you connecting similar or different line types and/or sizes together, or are you securing line to a reel spool or to a fly? Each connection has different requirements.

2.) What line are you using?

Backing, fly line, and leader/tippet material all have different characteristics (stretch, grip, and diameter). These unique line qualities can enhance or detract from performance based on the knot utilized.

3.) Will the knot pass through your line guides?

A thin knot with a smooth taper will help line pass through your guides without snagging or damaging the knot.

4.) Can you tie the knot correctly?

A simple knot tied correctly is always preferable to a complex knot tied poorly. The best knot for the task is worthless if you miss a step, cross the wraps, or fail to seat it correctly.

Closing Thoughts:

On the water we often experience cold fingers, poor lighting, wind, or wave and current motion. Get proficient at tying a few knots well under all conditions before adding more specialized knots to your arsenal. A knot is only as good as you can tie it -- so be able to tie it well under any and all conditions.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A 2026 Halftime Report

Summer is here and I want to thank each of you for the energy, generosity, and enthusiasm you continue to bring to our club. Our spring events were some of the best ever. Attendance at workshops grew, new members joined our ranks, and our first few club fishing trips were well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Stories of big browns, stubborn smallmouth, and a few surprise catches will no doubt be told, retold, and exaggerated at our upcoming club events.

Looking ahead, we have a full lineup of summer outings and skill building sessions scheduled. Whether you are a seasoned angler or just getting started, I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. One of the highlights of the season for me has always been the club's transition from indoor winter meetings to the great outdoor meetings at The Parklands of Floyds Fork -- an expansive city park with plenty of wide-open space and opportunity for anglers to test their skills on the waters of Floyds Fork Creek. When the weather cooperates, this is the perfect setting for casting lessons and monthly barbecue dinners that highlight our club meetings from May through September.

Casting a fly rod can be intimidating and frustrating and is often the primary reason new anglers leave our sport. The club has committed to a heavy focus on casting instructions this year at every outdoor meeting. Take some time today to check out the DCFF webpage calendar of events for all our summer meeting dates and make plans to attend and participate. You will be happy you did.

Our summer schedule of club sponsored fishing trips is now in full swing. Every trip offers unique experiences for many different skill levels. Many new and exciting wading trips have been added to this year's calendar. Please sign up early for any trip that matches your skill level because many fill up quickly. Please email me or the trip leader with any questions you may have regarding any particular trip or to recommend a new trip destination for future years.

Although we are still months away from our 2027 Kentuckiana Fly Fishing Show, planning is well underway now for that event. I am happy to announce the club has already added three (3) new speakers for our January 2027 show. As our membership expands, so does



their interest in new and exciting places to fish. Steve Kuric, the Fly Show Director, has also secured commitments from some well-known industry experts that are sure to appeal to a wider audience. We are also planning to introduce specific topic workshops on Friday before the show. Small group presentations, clinics, and hands-on instruction are on the horizon for the 2027 show -- so please stay tuned for more details.

It is shaping up to be another fantastic year of growth and expansion for Derby City Fly Fishers. Membership is up in 2026, four (4) new club trips have been added to our calendar, and preparations for a revamped Fly Show are just a few of the many items your club is involved with this year. Stay connected, stay engaged, and stay excited so you do not miss out. We are almost half-way through the year -- so there is no better time than now to attend a club meeting, take a fly-tying class, or sign up for a club fishing trip.

Thank you all for being part of what makes Derby City Fly Fishers such a strong and welcoming community. May you have smooth water, good company, and find fish that actually cooperate. I look forward to seeing you on the water and sharing another memorable season together as we close out 2026.

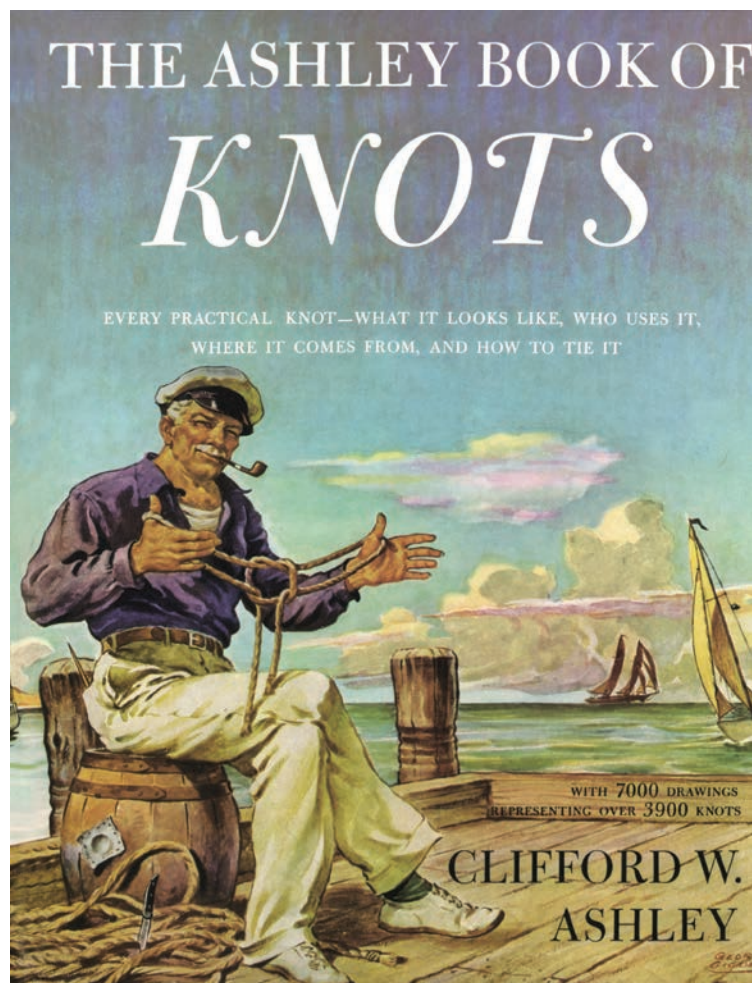
Michael Broome
DCFF President

FEATURE ARTICLES

An Introduction to Knots

Why Knots Matter

When we hook into a fish, our gear is only as good as the weakest link in the equipment chain. Knots form a critical series of potential points-of-failure in our connection chain -- from the reel spool all the way out to the fly. These small structures of twisted and interlocked line form important individual links in a long chain that connects our reel, backing, fly line, leader, tippet and fly. That connection chain requires at least a handful of knots and potentially double that if you build your own leaders. Once a fish is hooked, no single component in that chain matters more than the integrity of the weakest of many connecting points in our line we simply call "knots"!



The common fishing knots we know and use on the water today are only a narrow branch of a much larger subject matter. Knots have been studied, categorized, tested, and refined for centuries in

fields ranging from sailing and climbing to medicine and mathematics. Classic reference works such as *The Ashley Book of Knots* catalog thousands of distinct knots and demonstrate their applications across dozens of disciplines.

To gain a better appreciation for how and why the common fishing knots we use daily came to be so widely accepted, we might need to briefly delve into the broader world of knots. We can start by:

- Explaining some essential knot definitions, classifications, and terminology.
- Introduce different knot properties.
- Briefly review some basic knot theory.

After all that, we can detail a complete chain of connections used in most standard fly-fishing system -- from the reel arbor out to the fly. Later articles in this issue will examine each knot (as well as some alternatives) in detail -- including how to tie them and when to use them.

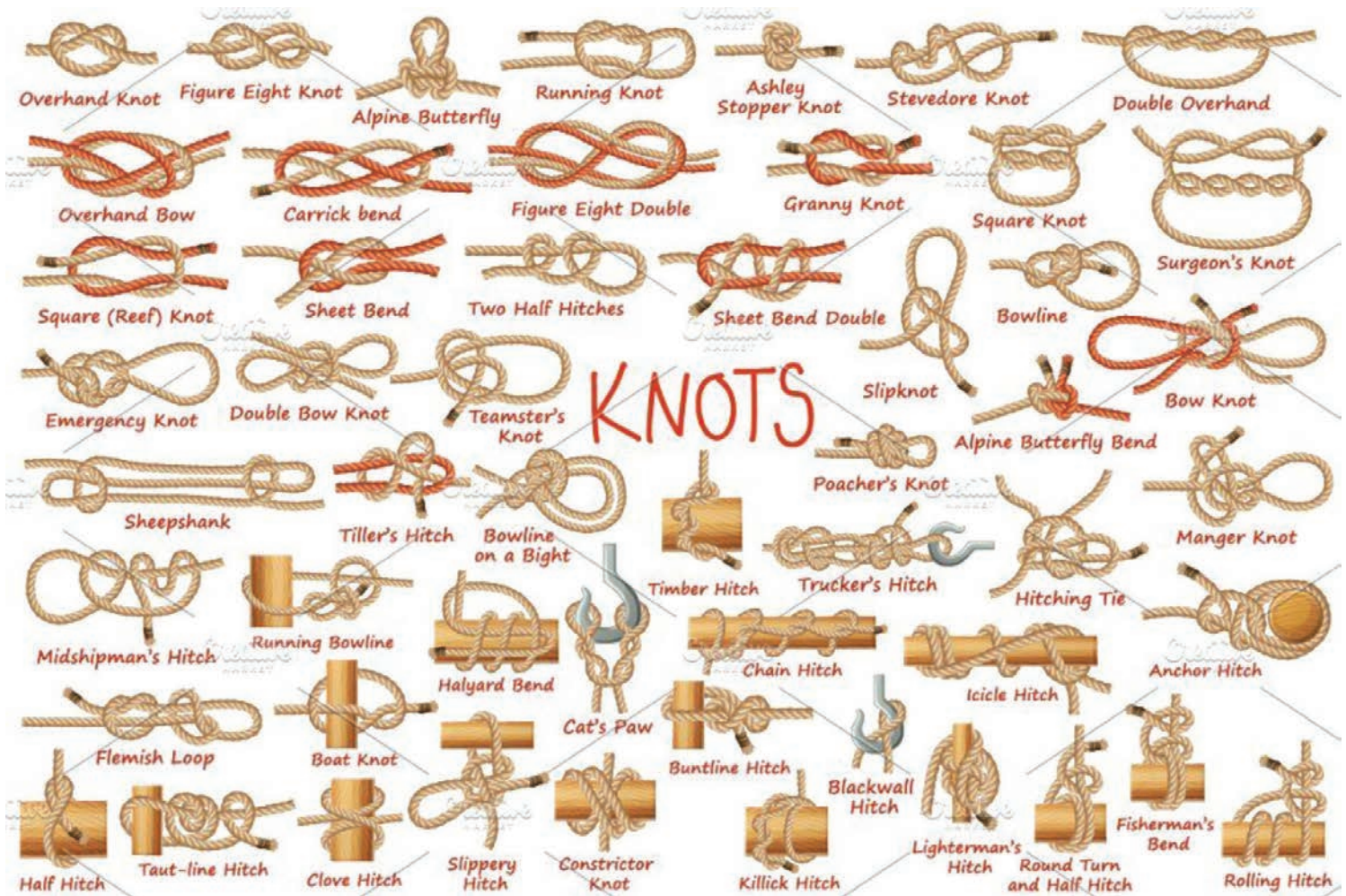
Understanding Knots

1.) Knot Definitions:

In the most precise sense, a knot is defined as a self-contained entanglement of a cord or line that holds its structure without external support. In everyday usage, however, (especially among anglers) the term "knot" is used more broadly to include several distinct but related structures.

- Knots: Self-supporting structures within a single line (e.g., overhand knot, figure-eight).
- Hitches: Knots that depend on an object (like a post or hook) for their structure.
- Bends: Knots used to join two lines together.

Fishing knots draw from all three of these knot structures (or categories).



2.) Major Knot Classifications:

Knots are often categorized by function across different disciplines. The same framework applies naturally to fly fishing specific knots.

- **Line-to-line knots:** Join two pieces of line.
 - Surgeon's Knot
 - Blood Knot
 - Nail Knot
- **Loop knots:** Create fixed or sliding loops.
 - Perfection Loop
 - Surgeon's Loop
- **Terminal knots:** Attach line to a hook or fly.
 - Jack's Knot
 - Clinch Knot
 - Orvis Knot
- **Anchoring knots:** Secure line to a fixed object.
 - Arbor Knot

These categories align directly with the needs of a fly-fishing system, where every component must be joined with a purpose-built connection.

3.) Basic Knot Terminology:

To understand knots, a few unique terms are essential:

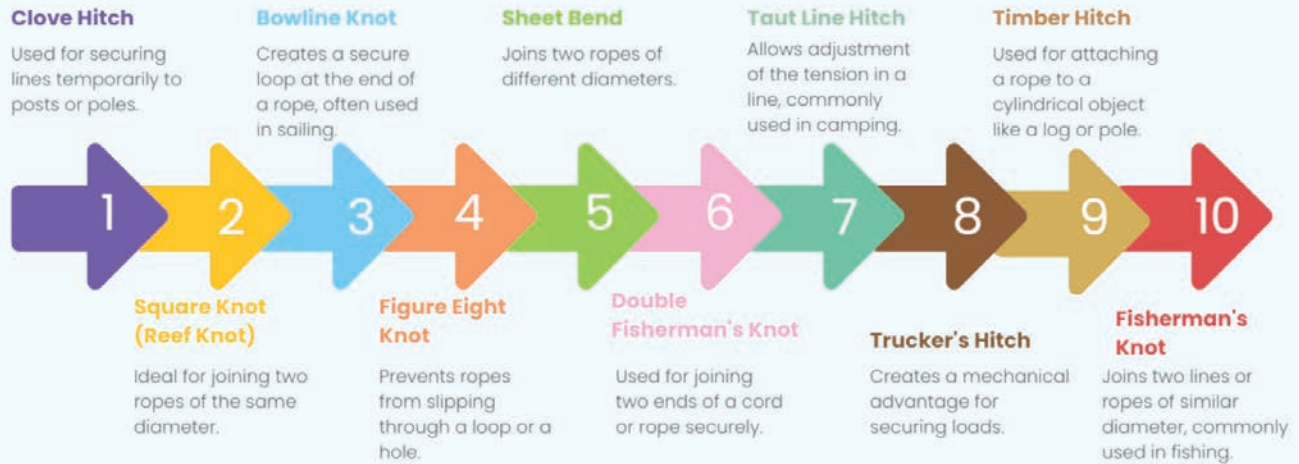
- **Standing line:** The main length of line under tension.
- **Tag end:** The free end used to tie the knot.
- **Turn or wrap:** A loop made around another part of the line.
- **Loop:** A circular formation in the line.
- **Bight:** A bend without crossing ends.

These building block terms appear repeatedly across knot designs and are key to understanding how knots function.

4.) A Brief Summary of Knot Theory:

Knots have practical uses, but they are also widely studied theoretically. The theoretical study of knots utilizes a branch of mathematics defined as Topology. Topology is a branch of mathematical studies that focus on the properties of a

TYPES OF KNOT



geometric object that are preserved under continuous deformations such as stretching, twisting, crumpling, and bending without closing holes, opening holes, tearing, gluing, or passing through itself. Knot Theory is a distinct subset of Topology that explores how loops can be arranged in three-dimensional space and how they can be transformed without cutting. While largely theoretical, Knot Theory underscores the idea that even simple knots can have complex properties.

For the angler, the takeaway is less complex. Small variations in knot structure can produce dramatically different strength, reliability, and behavior under load!

Fishing Knots as a Specialized Subset

Fishing knots represent a highly specialized subset of all knots, adapted for specific materials and conditions:

- Thin and flexible monofilament or fluorocarbon line.
- Slick braided line and main fly line.
- Unequal diameters between connected lines.
- Repeated casting and abrasion through guides.
- Efficient energy transfer through the connection knots.

Because of these constraints, fly fishing relies on a sequence of specialized knots. Each specific knot is optimized for a particular connection in the system chain. Unlike other forms of fishing, where a few knots may suffice, fly fishing typically uses more and different knots for each junction. Keep reading to develop or refine your own arsenal of "go to" knots for any basic fly-fishing setup.

Editor's Note: For more information, the online reference links below are a great place to start.

- [Wikipedia](#) :: Detailed academic discussion of the historical development of knots, knot classifications, knot properties, knot components, knot categories, and even knot theory.
- [The Ashley Book of Knots](#) :: The definitive reference source first published in 1944 with more than 3800 different knots and approximately 7000 illustrations.
- [How Fishing Knots Work](#) :: Detailed article about fishing knot structure and function.
- [Fishing Knot Terms](#) :: Catalog of knot terms and definitions.
- [Avoid Fishing Knot Failure](#) :: Article on why knots fail and how to tie stronger knots.

Adopt A Fly-Fishing Knot System

From the reel arbor out to the fly, a standard fly-fishing setup includes multiple connections. Each connection requires a specific knot type, depending on what function that knot is being asked to perform. These multiple connections form a continuous knot chain:

Reel → Backing → Fly Line → Leader → Tippet → Fly

Each of the junctions in this chain have different mechanical requirements, such as:

- Strength,
- Flexibility,
- Smoothness,
- Energy transfer, and
- Ease of replacement

Different and varied mechanical requirements usually call for a different knot at each junction of the chain.

This article details a complete system of useful knots, including simple (but effective) knots to start with as well as more advanced knots and also some good alternative knots to consider for each connection.

Specific knots, important information about each, as well as links to useful online videos or graphics for reference are presented separately in a different article.

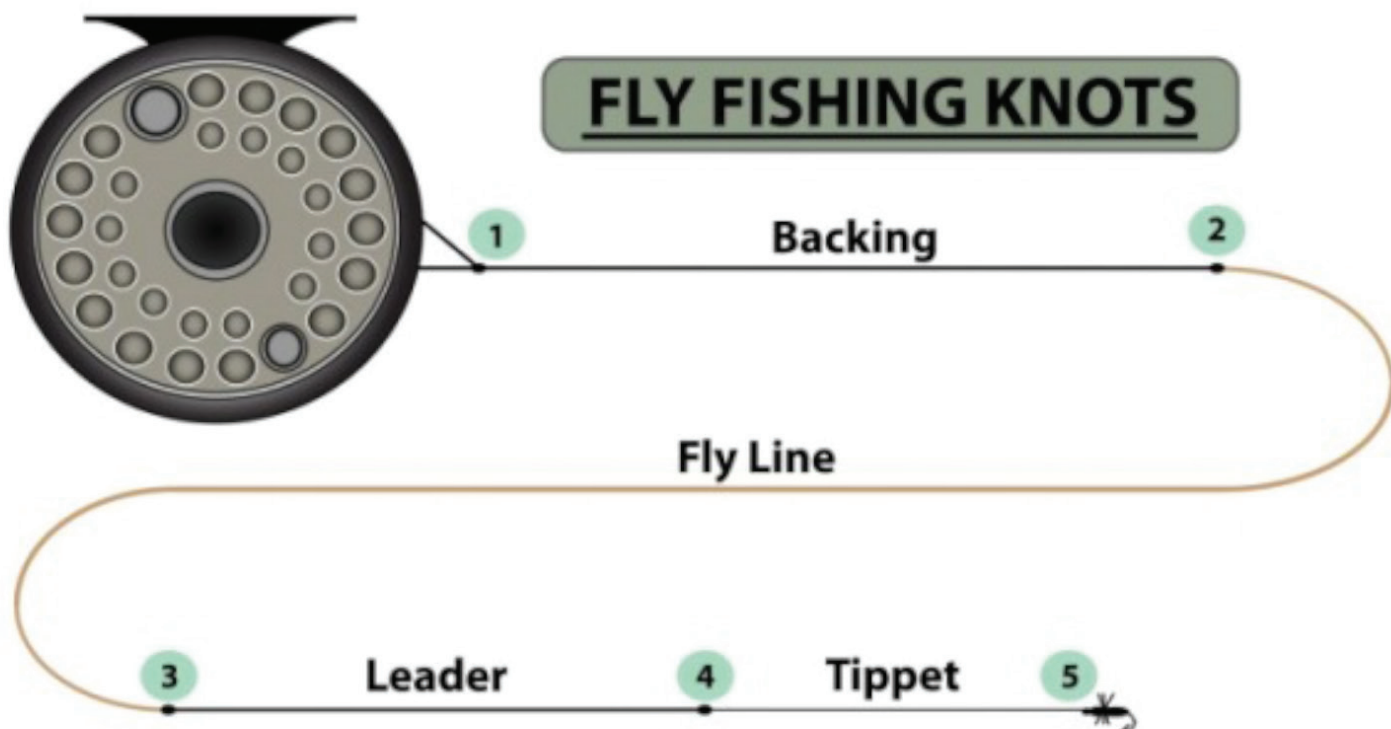
1. Reel-to-Backing

Purpose: Secure backing line to the reel spool (or arbor).

- Primary: Arbor Knot
- Advanced: Uni Knot
- Alternative: 100% Arbor Knot

Key Considerations: Strength is less critical than security at the reel spool connection. You really need a knot that will not slip or allow the backing to spin on the reel while under tension. Seldom (if ever) will this connection come under direct tension, so the strength of the knot is unlikely to be fully tested. Most backing is slightly tacky in texture to help prevent line slippage, but looping the backing line around the reel spool at least a couple times before tying the connection knot will also help prevent it from slipping on the arbor.

Notes: The Arbor Knot (also often referred to as an Overhand Spool Knot or a Canadian Jam Knot) is widely used because it is simple and effective for attaching line to





much quicker and more convenient with a loop connection rather than a fixed knot between the backing and the fly line. A knot, however, is slim and strong.

Notes: Most fly lines have a welded loop at the butt end to facilitate a Loop-to-Loop connection to the backing line. A Loop-to-Loop connection is quick and easy. It also makes swapping fly lines on the same reel more convenient. If you start with this connection option, you may never find the need to even consider the alternatives.

the spool. Some may find the Uni Knot a better alternative for attaching to polished arbor surfaces or if using a backing that may be smooth or slick. The 100% Arbor Knot variation is really only a necessary consideration if you might get "spooled" by a large fish and fear breaking off at the reel rather than at the leader or tippet.

If your fly line does not have a welded loop, several different techniques are available to build, attach, or tie a loop at the butt end of the fly line. Most anglers, however, will opt for a Nail Knot connection when their fly line does not come with a welded loop. In fact, many "old school" anglers will actually cut off any welded loop so they can use the thinner and stronger Nail Knot connection.

2. Backing-to-Fly Line

Purpose: Join thin backing to thicker fly line.

- Primary: Loop-to-Loop Connection
- Advanced: Nail Knot
- Alternative: Albright Knot

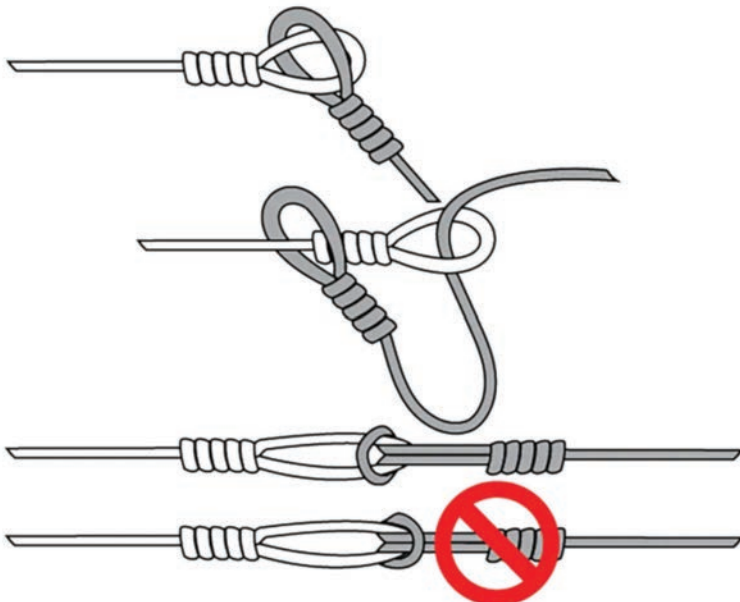
Key Considerations: This connection is not likely to pass through the rod guides often, so convenience is often why many anglers opt for a Loop-to-Loop connection. Swapping fly lines on the same reel is

The Nail Knot is valued as a smooth, low-profile connection. A nail, wire, toothpick, or simple knot tool are not absolutely required -- but they certainly make tying the Nail Knot easier. You can always opt for the Albright Knot if you don't have a knot tool. The Albright may be stronger than the Nail Knot -- but it is also a thicker profile knot because the thick fly line is doubled over itself.

3. Fly Line-to-Leader

Purpose: Connect thick fly line to the butt end of a tapered or straight-line monofilament or fluorocarbon leader.

- Primary: Loop-to-Loop Connection
- Advanced: Nail Knot
- Alternative: Needle Knot, Albright Knot
- Supporting Knots: Perfection Loop, Surgeons Loop



Key Considerations: The best connection here is a tradeoff between flexibility or efficiency. There is no single perfect solution for everyone, so you may need to experiment with all the different options here to determine what works best for you depending on your particular setup and priorities.

Notes: Your particular priorities will determine what connection works best for you here, and it may well change for different equipment setups. You are likely to change out your leader far more often than your fly line, so a quick and easy connection between your fly line and the butt end of your leader may be a priority. The Loop-to-Loop connection option here is, once again, the easiest and most flexible option.



Most packaged leaders will come with a connection loop, but if you need to create a loop at the butt end of your leader, the Perfection Loop is the most common solution. A Surgeons Loop is also an option. You could always start with the Loop-to-Loop connection to see if it works for you. If so, you may never need to try a different connection -- but you probably should, just to compare the differences.

This connection will slide through the guides more than any other knot in the fly line chain of connections. If you don't need the ease and convenience of a Loop-to-Loop connection here, then there are some distinctly better connection options.

A smooth knot with a low profile and good energy transfer are your top priorities for this connection. Traditionalists prefer the Nail Knot for a less bulky connection and more efficient energy transfer from the fly line to the leader. A step up from the Nail Knot in terms of complexity and performance is the Needle Knot.

The Needle Knot is a specialized knot you will never likely tie on the water. It produces the lowest profile knot with the best energy transfer by threading the leader through the core of the fly line. The Albright Knot is also an option (especially out on the water) if you don't have a knot tool. The Albright Knot is strong, but more bulky and not as smooth as either the Nail or Needle Knots.

4. Leader-to-Leader/Tippet

Purpose: Connect sections of fluorocarbon and/or monofilament line to adjust the line length and thickness from the end of the fly line out to the terminal connection at the fly.

- Primary: Surgeon's Knot (or Triple Surgeon's Knot)
- Advanced: Blood Knot
- Alternative: Double Uni Knot, Orvis Tippet Knot

Key Consideration: These knots are appropriate for use on different sections of leader, if you build your own leaders, or for directly connecting tippet to leader. If you choose to use a tippet ring or micro swivel between leader and tippet, use a good terminal knot at both line connections to the ring or swivel.



Notes: For simplicity, the easiest knot to start with is a Surgeon Knot. The term Double Surgeon's Knot is redundant, but you will see it used often. One turn of the doubled lines is just a simple Overhand Knot, two turns is a Surgeon's Knot, and three turns would be a Triple Surgeon's Knot.

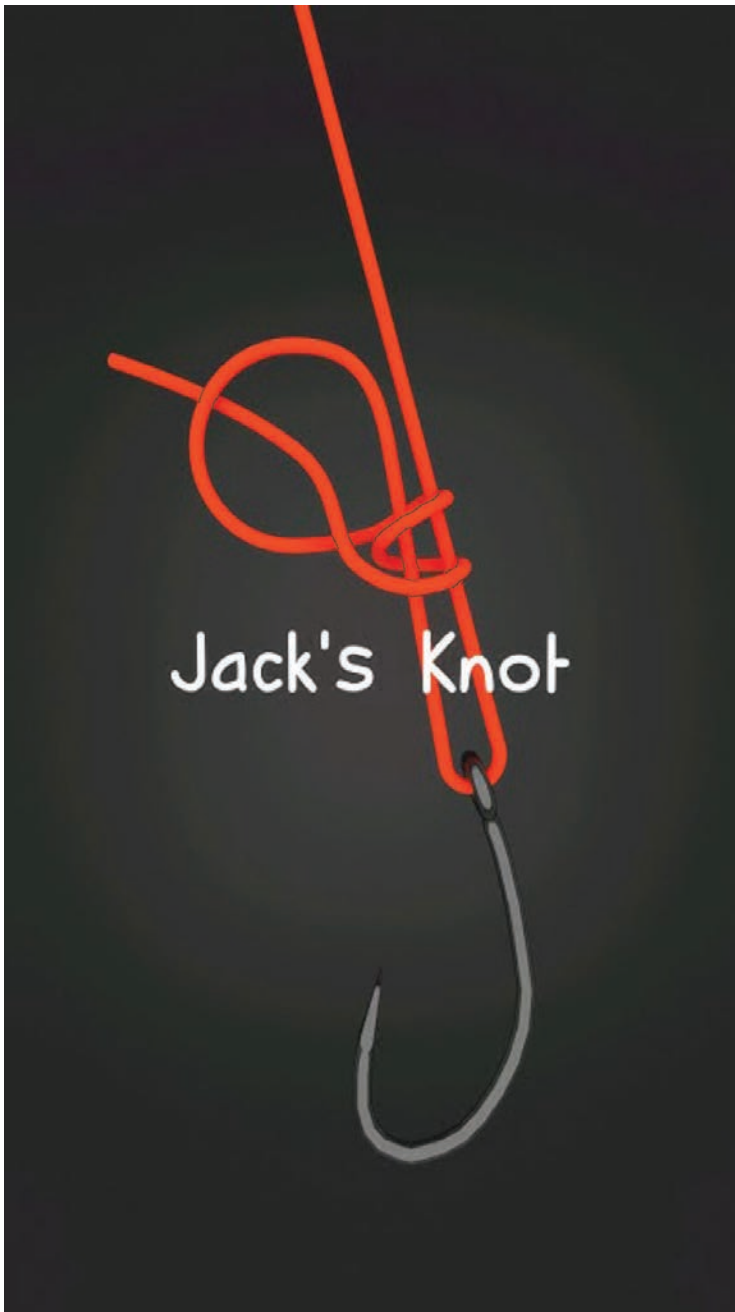
The Surgeon's Knot works best with smaller diameter lines (say 3X or thinner) and for joining two lines of nearly similar thickness. The Blood Knot is favored for neatness and strength. It is also the better option for thicker diameter lines but maybe not the best choice for joining lines of significantly different diameters. The Blood Knot tag ends can also be trimmed a little longer for use as drift sighters. An extended tag end can also be utilized as a dropper line.

Some anglers find the Double Uni Knot easier to tie than the Blood Knot, and it is a good alternative to the Blood Knot with similar knot strength and bulk. Another alternative knot that is quickly gaining popularity is the Orvis Tippet Knot which is strong and almost as easy to tie as the Surgeon's Knot, but creates less line bend at the knot.

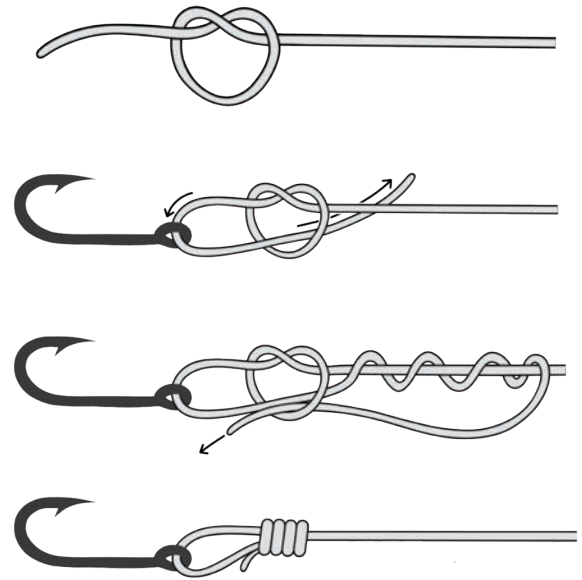
5. Tippet-to-Fly

Purpose: Attach the fly securely (also called a Terminal Connection).

- Primary Knot: Jack's Knot
- Advanced: A Loop Knot
- Alternative: Clinch Knot, Improved Clinch Knot, Orvis Knot, Davy Knot, Palomar Knot



Notes: Jack's Knot is the clear favorite among the **Derby City Fly Fishers** membership for many reasons. A full article in this issue is dedicated to Jack's Knot, if you are not already familiar with it. The (Improved) Clinch Knot, however, remains one of the most widely used connections outside the club. The Orvis Knot and Davy Knot have both started to become fishing guide favorites, and for good reason. Finally, the Palomar Knot is a widely utilized terminal connection in the conventional angling world, but still works well in fly fishing.



A good Loop Knot should be used when free movement of the fly is desired, such as when stripping streamers. You can use the Perfection Loop as a terminal connection knot, but better options might be the Kreh Loop Knot, the Rapala Loop Knot, or Jack's Loop Knot. Pick a good Loop Knot to use in conjunction with Jack's Knot, and you have two terminal connection knots that will work for you 99% of the time.

Bringing It All Together

Fly fishing is different from other forms of angling primarily because of the unique equipment and casting techniques, but it also requires the systematic use of different knots that are each tailored to a specific task. In short, effective fly fishing demands a unique system of purpose-built knots that other forms of angling do not require.

#	Connection:	Start With:	Progress To:	Alternatives:
1	Reel-to-Backing	Arbor Knot	Uni Knot	100% Arbor Knot
2	Backing-to-Fly Line	Loop-to-Loop	Nail Knot	Albright Knot
3	Fly Line-to-Leader	Loop-to-Loop	Nail Knot	Needle Knot Albright Knot
4	Leader-to-Leader or Leader-to-Tippet	Surgeon's Knot Triple Surgeon's Knot	Blood Knot	Double Uni Knot Orvis Tippet Knot
5	Tippet-to-Fly	Jack's Knot	Loop Knot	Clinch Knot Improved Clinch Knot Orvis Knot Davy Knot Palomar Knot

From the arbor knot anchoring backing to the reel, to the delicate terminal knot presenting a fly to a fish, each connection plays a unique role in:

- Maintaining line strength,
- Enabling smooth casting,
- Transferring energy efficiently,
- Allowing modular equipment changes, and
- Preserving natural fly presentation.

A typical fly-fishing setup relies on at least five key connections, each with its own optimal knot choices. Knots are often overlooked by beginners, yet they are among the most critical skills in fly fishing. A poorly chosen or poorly tied knot can negate the benefits of the finest rod, reel, or fly.

The good news is that mastery does not require learning hundreds of knots. Instead, success comes from understanding the system and becoming proficient with only a handful of reliable knots. Every cast, drift, and hook-set depends on the strength of a few inches of twisted line -- so twist your line well!

Editor's Note: The online reference links below all contain great general information focused on fishing knots, how to tie them, and why you would select a knot for a specific application.

- [NetKnots](#) :: Extensive knot library with over 60 useful fishing knots each described in great detail with great animated tying instructions and step-by-step illustrations.
- [Orvis Fly Fishing Learning Center](#) :: Library of useful fly-fishing knots categorized by knot name with animation and video links for each.
- [Animated Knots website](#) :: Another library of useful fishing knots categorized by name with links to knot tying animations and discussion of the use and advantages of each.
- [HMY Yachts](#) :: Quick reference guide of useful fishing knots categorized by function with detailed step-by-step tying illustrations.

YouTube Channels with great Fishing Knot Videos:

[Orvis](#)
[Trident Fly Fishing](#)
[New Fly Fisher](#)

[Mad River Outfitters](#)
[Rio Products](#)
[In the Riffle](#)

Jack's Knot

NOTE: This article was originally published in the August 2024 edition of the Derby City Fly Fishers Newsletter.

If you are looking for a terminal fishing knot that is easy to learn, simple to tie, strong, and small in profile -- you may want to investigate Jack's Knot. Even if you are not currently looking for a new "go-to" terminal fishing knot, you may still want to investigate Jack's Knot simply to compare and contrast it against whatever knot you are currently using most often.

Jack's Knot is named for and attributed to our very own talented fly tier and fly fisherman -- DCFF club member, Jack Miller. Jack first presented the knot for use as a terminal fishing knot in a letter to *Fly Fisherman* magazine in the summer of 2012 from a hand-drawn sketch with notes he put together in November of 2011. Jack Miller's knot has since been adopted by, tinkered with, and updated by fly fishermen across the globe.

Sometime after the knot's public introduction, a similar knot pattern was found documented in *The Ashley Book of Knots* (published in 1944) as knot #1118 with a notation as being an "excellent knot for snares" -- so a knot for rope or twine rather than a terminal fishing knot. I may be missing something with my untrained eyes, but the knot depicted as #1118 is not the same as Jack's Knot (you tell me if you see it differently).

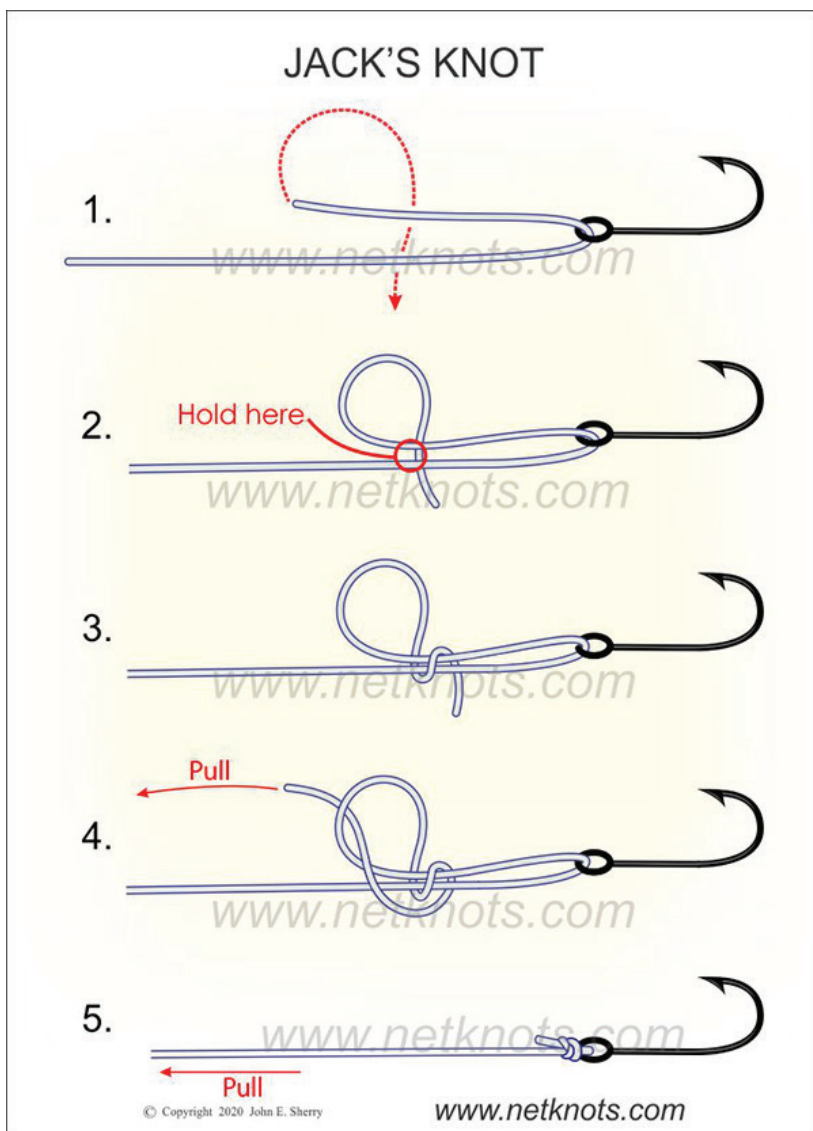
While others may dispute the claim, I think it is safe to say Jack Miller invented Jack's Knot. Someone decades or centuries ago may have twisted and turned a strand of rope or twine into the same (or a similar) pattern -- but Jack Miller documented and presented his knot specifically for use in fishing as outline above. Jack's Knot is truly Jack Miller's baby!

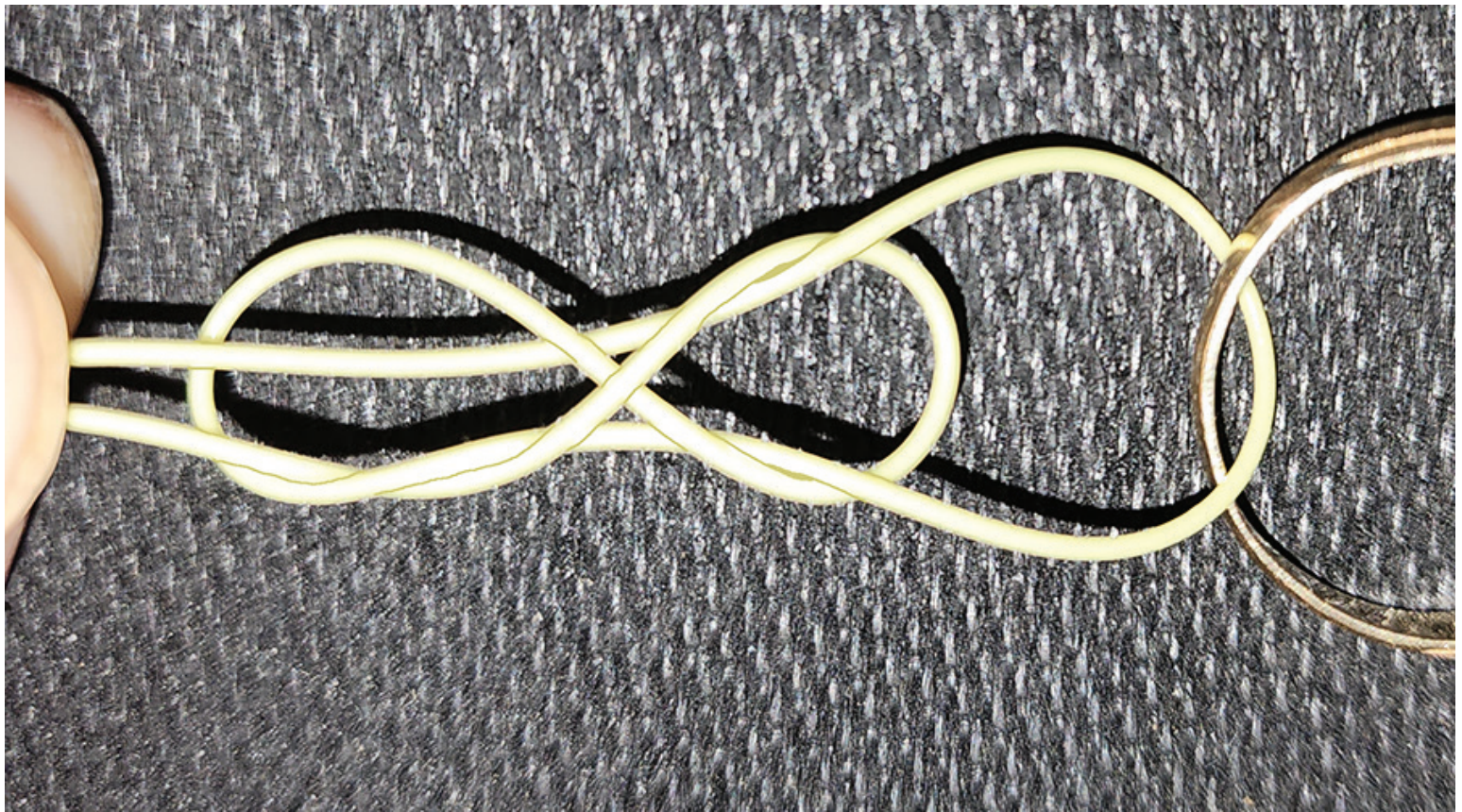
What makes Jack's Knot a great terminal fishing knot? The list is long, but here are the three main advantages of Jack's Knot:

1.) STRONG: A 100% knot is defined as a knot that will break only at or above the rated breaking strength of the line it is tied with. If Jack's Knot is not a 100% strength knot, then it is damned close and much stronger than many other popular terminal tackle fishing knots.

2.) SMALL: Typical strong terminal tackle knots (such as the San Diego Jam, Palomar, or even the Improved Clinch) are large profile knots when tied correctly with the line coiling over itself multiple times. Jack's Knot, on the other hand, provides similar knot strength in a much slimmer "figure-8" finished knot profile.

3.) SIMPLE: Once you incorporate all of Jack Miller's tips and tricks for tying the knot, it is one you will be able to tie correctly without even looking (or by feel only). The simplicity of Jack's Knot makes it easy to tie correctly every time.





Other advantages only become apparent once you start using Jack's Knot. You can tie the knot quickly, so you will waste less time on the water changing fly patterns. Tied correctly, the knot has a very short tag end to cut off, so your tippet will last longer. Jack's Knot works equally well with monofilament or fluorocarbon line. It can also be tied "in the air" or without a hook, so it can quickly and easily be used as a dropper knot. Jack has also tinkered with variations on the knot that you may find useful in different situations.

You can find step-by-step instructions for tying Jack's Knot with photos and diagrams on any number of helpful web sites. You can also find many videos on YouTube (and other media sites). Be advised, however, some of the material

readily available on the internet profiling Jack's Knot contain errors or depict the knot being tied incorrectly. Much of the online media may be a good introduction to the pattern and layout, but watching Jack Miller tie the knot with tips and hints is a much better method.

You can find an excellent video from Jack at the YouTube link: [HERE](#)

Even better, ask Jack to demonstrate the knot for you at the next DCFF club meeting. Pay close attention to how he manipulates the line with his fingers and try your best to mimic that same technique. Jack Miller is a true gentleman, and a very patient instructor. We are all privileged to have Jack as a DCFF club member!

Editor's Note: The enhanced photo above is that of the figure-8 pattern you should see before cinching the knot tight. When learning to tie Jack's Knot, if you do not see the figure-8 pattern depicted in the photo -- you have not tied the knot correctly, so start over!

Reference Links:

- [Fly Fisherman Magazine](#) :: Jack's article submission notes and original sketch.
- [The Ashley Book of Knots](#) :: Knot #1118 some claim is the same as Jack's Knot.
- [YouTube Video #1](#) :: How to Tie Jack's Knot.
- [YouTube Video #2](#) :: Jack's Knot Variations.
- [NetKnots](#) :: Animation for tying Jack's Knot.
- [Orvis](#) :: Jack's Knot article and "how to" video links.

Fly Fishing Knot Quick Reference Guide

Connection #1: Reel-to-Backing

Primary: Arbor Knot

Standard loop with a stopper knot that cinches onto the spool. Start with this knot. You will likely never need a different knot for this connection.

Advantages:

- Very simple and fast to tie.
- Reliable and widely used.
- Relatively low profile on the spool.

Disadvantages:

- Not the strongest knot (but designed as the weakest link in case you get spooled).
- Can slip with braided backing on smooth spools (tape spool or use tacky backing to solve this issue).

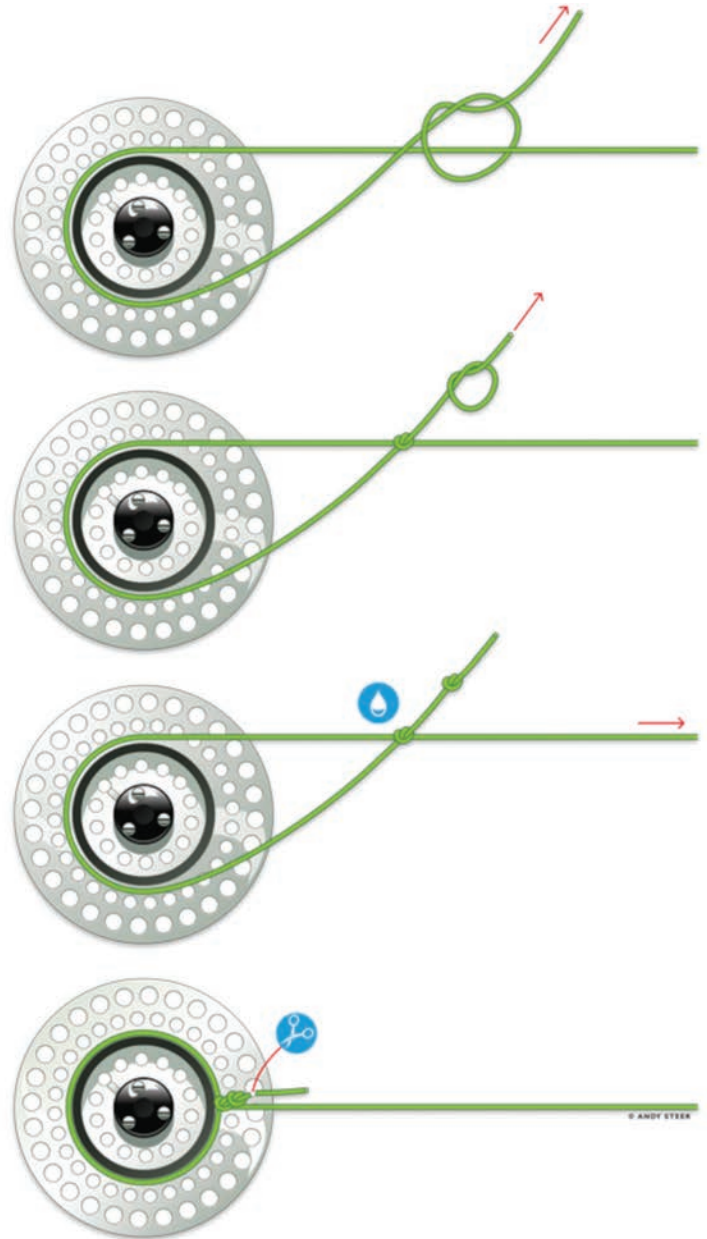
Reference:

- [YouTube](#) (New Fly Fisher Channel)
- [YouTube](#) (Rio Products Channel)
- [NetKnots](#)
- [Orvis](#)
- [Animated Knots](#)

Secondary: Uni Knot

The Uni Knot is better for attaching slick or smooth backing or if trying to attach to a very smooth or polished reel spool. It is a stronger knot with a slim profile that will cinch down on the reel spool as line tension is increased.

- [Uni Knot](#)



Alternative Knots:

- [100% Arbor Knot](#)

Connection Summary: Reel-to-Backing

	Knot:	Ease:	Strength:	Profile:	Best Use:
Primary	Arbor Knot	Simple	Adequate	Moderate	Effective everyday default option.
Secondary	Uni Knot	Moderate	Excellent	Small	Slick backing or very smooth reel spool.
Alternative	100% Arbor Knot	Complex	Near 100%	Bulky	Saltwater or maximum knot strength.

Connection #2: Backing-to-Fly Line

Primary: Loop-to-Loop Connection

Most fly lines today come with a welded loop at both ends of the line to facilitate the use of loop-to-loop connections. This connection option is recommended because it is convenient and versatile.

Advantages:

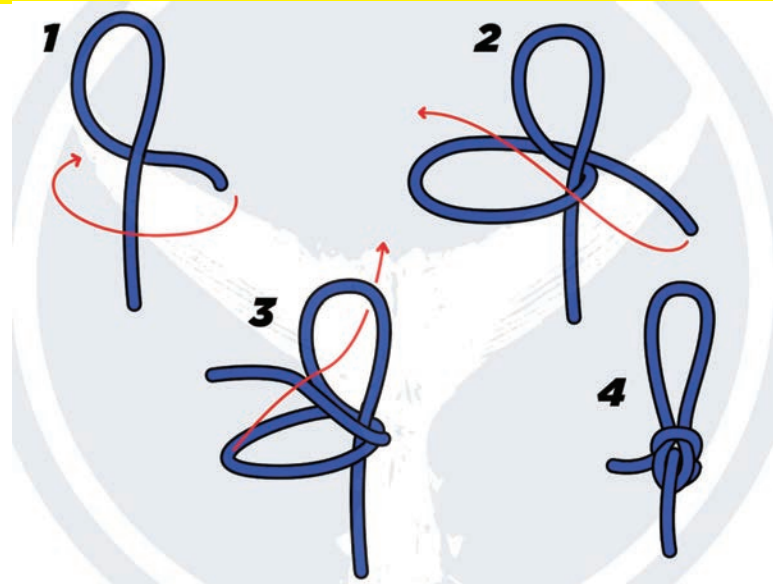
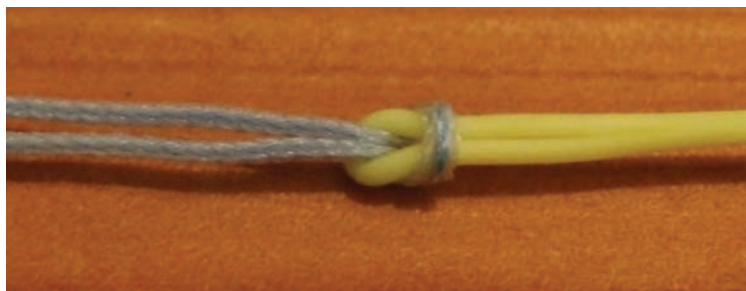
- Very simple and quick.
- Enables quick fly line change without needing to cut the line.
- Reliable connection.

Disadvantages:

- Thick connection at the loop hinge.
- May get hung in rod guides.
- Only as strong as the quality of the loops.

Reference:

- [YouTube](#) (PurOceanTV Channel)
- [YouTube](#) (Red's Fly Shop Channel)
- [NetKnots](#)
- [Knots.Fish](#)



Supporting Loop Knots:

The fly line may come with a welded loop, but a loop knot of some type must be created with the backing. There are options (beyond the scope of this summary) to add a loop to any fly line that does not come with a welded loop or if the existing loop is worn or damaged. Two simple supporting loop knots include:

- [Surgeon's Loop](#)
- [Perfection Loop](#)

Secondary: Nail Knot

A Nail Knot provides a slim and smooth profile that is strong, but may require equipment of some sort to tie properly (a nail, thin tube, or knot tool).

- [Nail Knot](#)

Alternative Knots:

- [Albright Knot](#)

Connection Summary: Backing-to-Fly Line

	Connection:	Ease:	Strength:	Profile:	Best Use:
Primary	Loop-to-Loop	Simple	Good	Bulky	Simple, convenient, and versatile default option.
Secondary	Nail Knot	Moderate	Very Good	Very Slim	Permanent, strong, low profile knot.
Alternative	Albright Knot	Advanced	Excellent	Slim	Maximum knot strength for mixed line types.

Connection #3: Fly Line-to-Leader

Primary: Loop-to-Loop Connection

As already detailed in the previous segment, most fly lines today come with a welded loop at both ends of the line to facilitate the use of loop-to-loop connections. This connection option is recommended again because it is convenient and versatile. You likely swap out leaders on the water far more often than fly line, so the convenience factor of using the loop-to-loop option at this connection point is even greater than at the backing-to-fly line connection.

The pros and cons will look very similar to the same summary for the backing-to-fly line connection segment. The exception is that this connection is far more likely to pass through the rod guides, so a smaller profile and smooth knot is preferred. Likewise, the energy transfer characteristics of the connection between fly line and leader becomes much more important.

Advantages:

- Very simple and quick.
- Enables quick leader change without needing to cut the line.
- Reliable connection.

Disadvantages:

- Thick connection at the loop hinge.
- May get hung in rod guides.
- Only as strong as the quality of the loops.
- Poor energy transfer characteristics.

Supporting Loop Knots:

Most fly lines and leaders today are already set-up for a loop-to-loop connection. If the leader does not already have a loop, a loop knot of some type must be created at the butt end of the leader. The two simple supporting loop knots remain the same as for the backing-to-fly line summary:

- [Surgeon's Loop](#)
- [Perfection Loop](#)

Reference:

- [YouTube](#) (Mad River Outfitters)
- [YouTube](#) (Orvis Channel)
- [Orvis](#)

Secondary: Nail Knot

A Nail Knot provides a slimmer and smoother profile that will slide through the rod guides better than the loop-to-loop connection. An additional positive is that the Nail Knot will transfer energy from the fly line to and through the leader much more efficiently than a loop-to-loop connection. The Nail Knot is strong, but may require equipment of some sort to tie properly (a nail, thin tube, or knot tool).

- [Nail Knot](#)

Alternative Knots:

- [Needle Knot](#)
- [Albright Knot](#)

More Information:

- [Fly Line to Leader Connections](#)
- [Leader to Fly Line Options](#)
- [Nail Knot Variations](#)

Connection Summary: Fly Line-to-Leader					
	Connection:	Ease:	Strength:	Profile:	Best Use:
Primary	Loop-to-Loop	Simple	Good	Bulky	Simple, convenient, and versatile default option.
Secondary	Nail Knot	Moderate	Very Good	Very Slim	Permanent, strong, low profile knot.
Alternative	Needle Knot	Difficult	Excellent	Ultra-Slim	Smoothest knot with best energy transfer.
	Albright Knot	Advanced	Excellent	Slim	Maximum knot strength for mixed line types.

Connection #4: Leader-to-Leader & Leader-to-Tippet

Primary: **Surgeon's Knots**

These knots are all useful for direct line to line connections. If you are connecting segments of leader or tippet with a tippet ring or micro swivel, use good terminal knots at each end of the connection instead of these line-to-line knots.

The quick and easy option to start with is always a Surgeon's Knot (or a Triple Surgeon's Knot if more knot strength is needed). The Surgeon's Knots both perform best with thinner diameter lines (say 3X or lighter). They also both work well for joining lines of significantly differing line diameter. The major downside of a Surgeon's Knot is the kink in the line the knot structure creates. The line kink is even more pronounced with the Triple Surgeon's Knot or when using thicker diameter lines.

Advantages:

- Very simple and quick.
- Works well connecting different line diameters.
- Reliable connection strong enough for most situations.

Disadvantages:

- Knot structure creates a kink in the line (more pronounced with the Triple Surgeon's Knot).
- Does not work as well with thicker diameter lines.
- Must be cinched down evenly to seat correctly.

Reference:

- [YouTube](#) (Surgeon's Knot)
- [YouTube](#) (Triple Surgeon's Knot)
- [NetKnots](#)
- [Orvis](#)
- [Animated Knots](#)

Secondary: **Blood Knot**

Anglers that build their own tapered leaders will find the Blood Knot useful. The Blood Knot is slimmer, smoother, and stronger than the Surgeon's Knot. The knot structure also eliminates any knot kink. The tag end comes straight out of the knot in the same direction as the standing line when tied correctly. It is more difficult to tie, but the video link below demonstrates a quick and efficient tying method.

- [Blood Knot](#)

Alternative Knots:

- [Double Uni Knot](#)
- [Orvis Tippet Knot](#)

More Information:

- [Surgeon's vs Blood Knot](#)
- [Blood Knot for Leaders](#)
- [Fishing Line Joining Knots Guide](#)

Connection Summary: Leader-to-Leader & Leader-to-Tippet

	Knot:	Ease:	Strength:	Profile:	Best Use:
Primary	Surgeon's Knot	Simple	Good	Moderate	Quick and easy default connection option.
	Triple Surgeon's	Simple	Very Good	Bulky	Surgeon Knot with better strength.
Secondary	Blood Knot	Advanced	Excellent	Slim	Best low-profile and strength combination.
Alternative	Double Uni Knot	Moderate	Excellent	Moderate	Best option for joining mixed line diameters.
	Orvis Tippet Knot	Moderate	Excellent	Moderate	Easier to tie than Double Uni (with some practice).

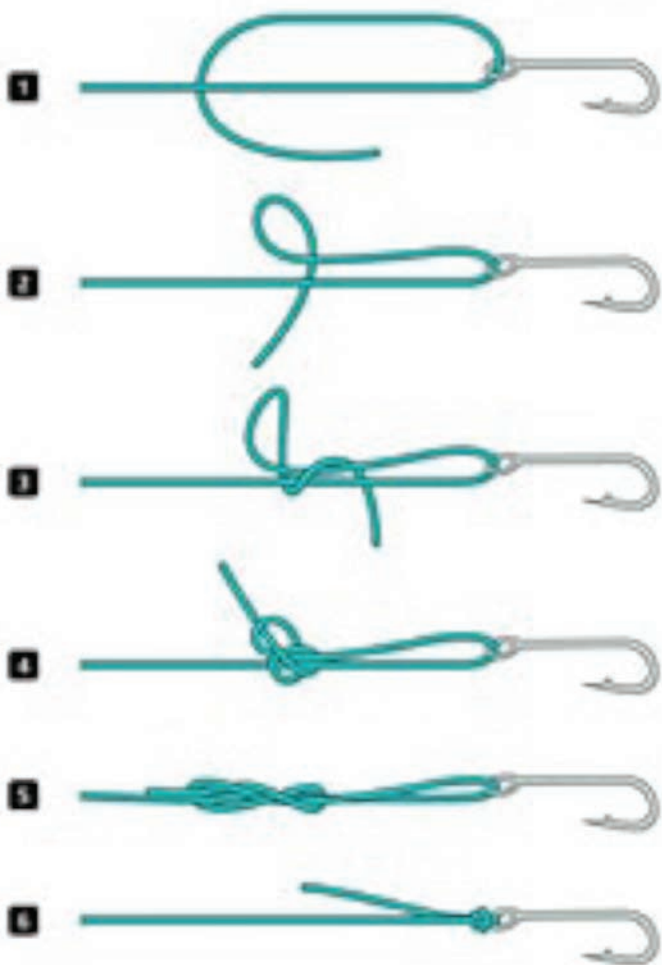
Connection #5: Tippet-to-Fly (Terminal Knots)

Primary: Jack's Knot

You have other good terminal knot connection options, but this is likely to become your personal "go-to" favorite once you try it. We already detailed why this knot is a DCFE favorite with a full article earlier in this Newsletter (Link: [HERE](#)), so we won't repeat why this should be your primary terminal fly-fishing knot.

Reference:

- [YouTube](#) (Jack's Knot)
- [YouTube](#) (Jack's Knot Variations)
- [Orvis](#)
- [NetKnots](#)
- [USAngler](#)



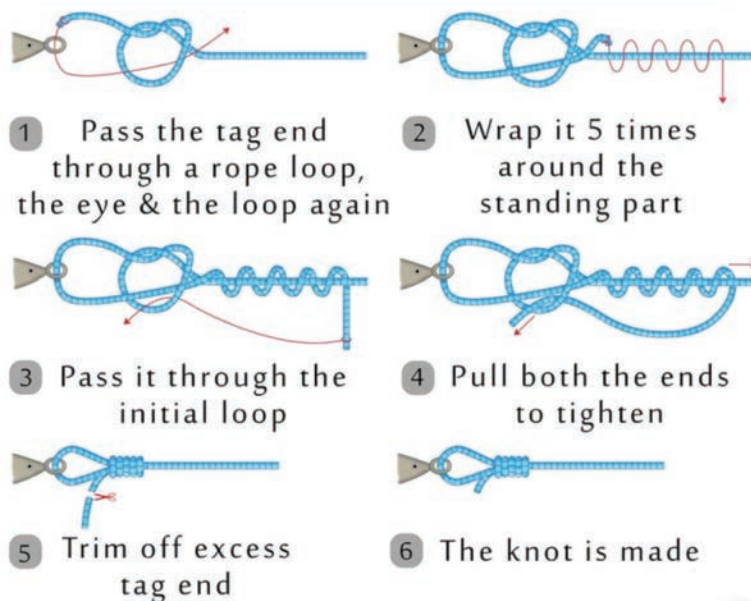
Secondary: A Loop Knot (Pick One)

Jack's Knot is normally seated tightly onto the eye of the hook. You need to add a good Loop Knot to your arsenal when the fly you are presenting needs to swing

freely at the connection point for the most lifelike presentation. Stripping big streamers or floating very small dry fly patterns are two good situations where a Loop Knot works well.

Some club members cinch down Jack's Knot onto a toothpick or nail spacer to create a small loop allowing the hook eye free movement when the spacer is removed. This works, but the knot will cinch down on the hook eye if you get snagged or hook into a fish -- so retying the knot often is required. A good Loop Knot solves that problem.

Non-Slip Loop Knot Instructions



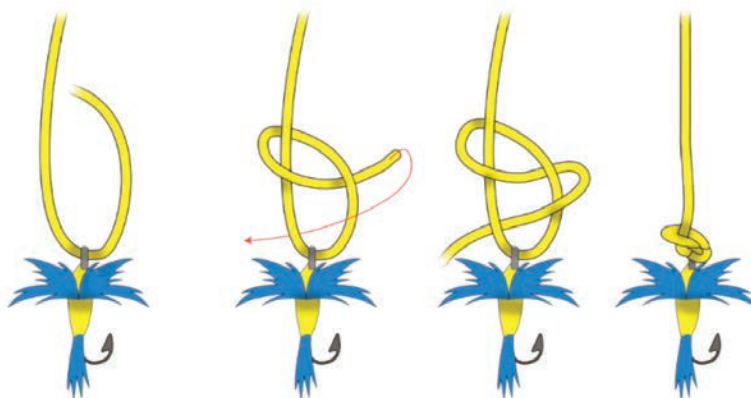
Three Loop Knot variations come highly recommended for fly fishing, but you don't need to learn all three -- just pick one, and then get good at tying it. Many anglers opt for the Kreh Loop (also referred to as a Non-Slip Loop Knot). It was invented by fly fishing legend Lefty Kreh and is valued for a balanced combination of strength, reliability, and fly action. The Rapala Loop is favored by anglers that fish large streamer patterns aggressively. Jack's Loop (also invented by Jack Miller) is valued for simplicity and versatility on medium to light tackle.

- [Kreh Loop](#)
- [Rapala Loop](#)
- [Jack's Loop](#)

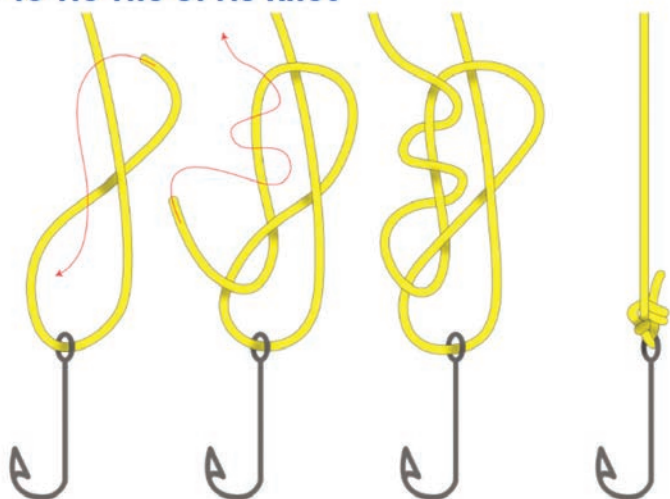
How To Tie The Davy Knot

Alternative Knots:

- [Clinch Knot](#)
- [Improved Clinch Knot](#)
- [Orvis Knot](#)
- [Davy Knot](#)
- [Palomar Knot](#)



How To Tie The Orvis Knot



More Information:

- [Analyzing Seven Terminal Knots](#)
- [Loop Knots Overview](#)
- [Fluoro Loop Knot Shootout](#)
- [3 Knots in 5 Minutes](#)

Connection Summary: Tippet-to-Fly (Terminal Knots)

	Knot:	Ease:	Strength:	Profile:	Best Use:
Primary	Jack's Knot	Simple	Excellent	Very Small	DCFF's "Go-To" choice.
Secondary (Loop Knot) Pick One	Kreh Loop	Moderate	Very Good	Medium	Good all-purpose Loop Knot for most situations.
	Rapala Loop	Moderate	Good	Medium	Great with big streamers.
	Jack's Loop	Easy	Very Good	Very Small	Best light tackle option.
Alternative	Clinch Knot	Simple	Adequate	Small	Many anglers' typical default knot.
	Improved Clinch	Easy	Good	Medium	A Clinch Knot with more knot strength.
	Orvis Knot	Moderate	Very Good	Small	Gaining in popularity.
	Davy Knot	Simple	Adequate	Very Small	Works well for very small flies (Size 18-22).
	Palomar Knot	Easy	Very Good	Bulky	A common "old standby" for many applications.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

Knot Tying Gear

Why would you need any equipment just to tie fishing knots? If you can get away without any extra tools -- great! Some of us, however, are getting old. Getting old can often come with lapses of memory, failing eyesight, and even limited manual dexterity or arthritic pain in the fingers and knuckles. Getting old isn't for wimps!

Waterproof Knot Reference:

Did you ever forget a key step in tying a knot you may not have tied in a while? If so, a small waterproof reference card can be all you need to "kick start" that recollection needed to get all the knot tying steps correct.

Quick Access Cheaters:

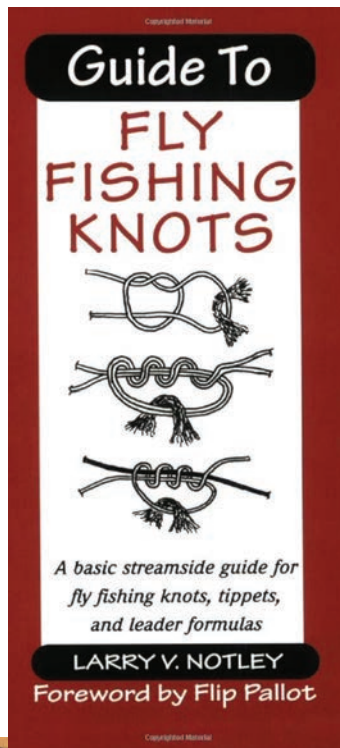
If you remember how to tie a knot, but can't see the tag end to grasp or maneuver it correctly -- can you actually tie the knot? A pair of cheap, fixed magnification glasses (often called "cheaters") may be all you need to actually tie that size-24 fly on 7X tippet.

Knot Tying Tools:

I've seen young anglers in their prime struggle to tie a knot with very thin line. As we get older, arthritis and limited tactile feel and dexterity in our hands and fingers can make any knot tying a chore. Knot tools can help, but pick your tool carefully. Some tools are designed to do everything mediocre while others do only one thing great -- and everything in-between. Get a tool that helps you tie the knots you actually use, not the ones you will never tie. Even a very simple knot tool with limited applicability can be the difference between creating a useless wad of fishing line or a good fishing knot.

Knot Tying Tools Reviews:

- [Cast & Spear Review](#)
- [Stacked Jacked Review](#)
- [Hafun Fishing Review](#)
- [OneClearWinner Review](#)



DCFF MEMBER PROFILE

Jack Miller

By: **John Froehlich**
DCFF Education Director

education@derbycityflyfishers.com

Jack Miller grew up on a farm in Southern Indiana where he learned to fish in his father's 50+ acre lake using a spinning rod and an old-fashioned heavy spinning reel without a bail. In 1958 at age 12, Jack graduated to fly fishing when he bought his first fly rod in a Western Auto Store. The rod was a 3-piece, 8 ½ foot, bamboo fly rod paired with South Bend automatic reel. He had to go with bamboo because the new-fangled fiberglass rods were all too expensive! How things change with time.

A mail order catalogue was Jack's first source for the ten poppers he purchased for 99 cents. As his interest in fishing with a fly rod grew, he built his first rod in 1962 from a kit ordered from a Herter's sporting goods mail order catalogue. He then ventured into tying his own flies. Jack's first fly tying vice was actually a shop vice in his father's tool shed, and he used fly tying supplies he ordered from Herter's.

As inevitably happens, maturity finally catches up with all of us. The life of the lake fishing farm boy gave way to a Master's Degree in Education from Indiana University and a marriage to his wife Glenda. Jack and Glenda have been happily married for 54 years. Jack also taught history, social studies and geography from 1969 to 2002.

The family farm was eventually sold and the lake built by his father, Tom, became a Private Membership Lake called Tom Miller Lake. A portion of the lake was on his brother's farm and Jack frequently fished there. Around 1990 while fishing in his brother's portion of the lake, Jack was chastised by a man and his fishing partner (a beautiful Irish Setter) for trespassing on the private member only lake. Jack



pointed out that they were on his brother's portion of the lake and "you sir are the trespasser". This brief encounter began his long-time friendship with Van Vance.

In 2004 Jack attended a gathering at Long Run Park and joined the Derby City Fly Fishing Club. Over the years he has contributed to the club in various ways, serving as Program Director, teaching the fly-tying classes, and (in his capacity as a FFI Certified Casting Instructor) he has shared his casting expertise with many club members over the years.

Jack joined the Bass Pro Shops team in Clarksville, Indiana while the building was still under construction in 2005. As a new-hire wearing a hard hat, Jack worked in various departments -- but primarily he helped establish the fly shop. His interest

in knots was also a way to fill the slack time while toiling in the fly shop. Tinkering with knots, he determined that there must be a quick and easy terminal connection knot that would not necessarily have to be the strongest of knots. Jack investigated many different new knot structures that prioritized simplicity over strength -- and then he stumbled upon a simple knot that was also very strong. The knot he discovered is the knot we call Jack's Knot today?

Jack is an innovator, always looking for a better way to catch fish with a fly rod. He developed a simple leader system and asked DCFF's own "Fish Magnet", George Tipker, to test it. George loved it! Instead of a tapered leader with tippet, Jack's system used a 6-pound test straight-line leader with a section of 4-pound test as a tippet. He attached a strike indicator to the leader with some tacky backing line utilizing a Uni Knot. The beauty of this simple leader system is the strike indicator can be easily adjusted to varying depths in seconds by simply sliding the Uni Knot up or down the level leader line. Genius – and simple!



Derby City Fly Fishing Club is fortunate to have Jack Miller as a member.

SOUNDING BOARD

Words from the DCFF Board of Directors

Jeff Moore

DCFF Newsletter Director

newsletter@derbycityflyfishers.com

We will continue with the dual seasonal and topic focus in the next quarterly edition of the Newsletter. The focus for the next Newsletter is still open for suggestions -- but we need to start putting it together soon, so we are not so late getting it published. Let us know what topics you would enjoy exploring in future editions.

If you have any feedback on the content or the format, please let me know. This is your club, and the Newsletter should provide information you want and need. Enjoy the upcoming Summer fishing season, and send us some of your photos!



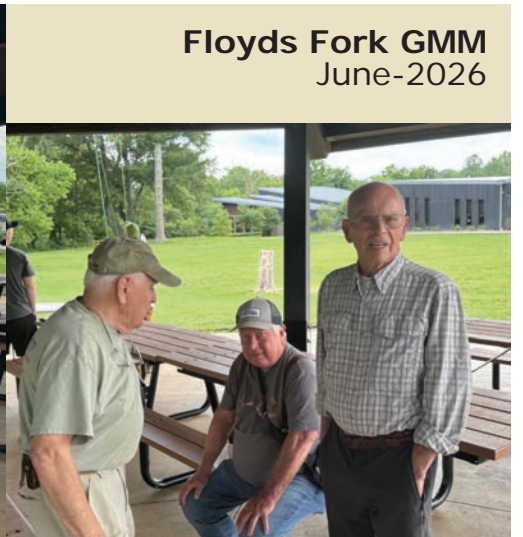
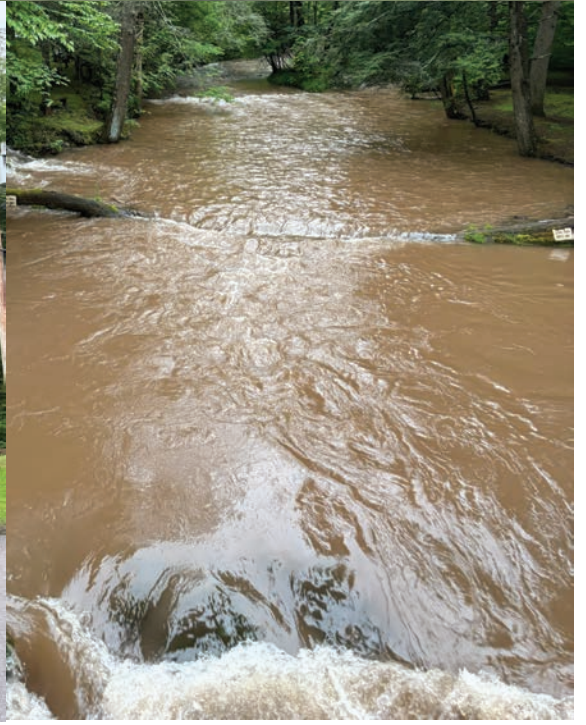
PHOTO FINISH

A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words

Fly Fishing 101
April-2026



Elk Springs, West Virginia
May-2026



Floyds Fork GMM
June-2026

**Proud to be an
Eating and Drinking Club ...**



... with a Serious Fly Fishing Problem !!!



The End