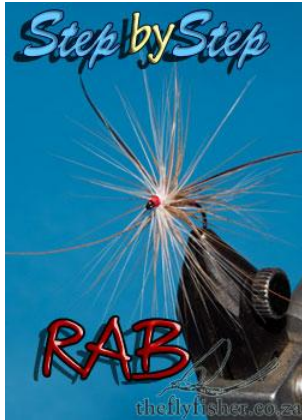


Tying the RAB – Step by Step



Although the fly is simple in design, as many of Tony Biggs' are, it is highly effective and if fished as it was intended, is one of the most effective patterns I have in my box.

Tony developed the fly while trying to find an effective pattern for fly fishing the crystal clear, freestone streams of the Western Cape. The extended hackles allow the fly to ride high through broken water and were developed from a Skater pattern he had seen. The overall red color is an example of his understanding of fish behavior, as it was later proven that in the late afternoon, most insects on the surface appear red. The white hackles in the front of the fly are for sighting the fly and the extended legs add movement.

There has been much debate about the naming of Tony's RAB. Some say it was named the Red Arsed Bastard. However, in a publication of the Cape Piscatorial Society's journal Piscator, it was referred to as the RAB, which at the time was an acronym for Rough and Buoyant. Tony, however, denies this. No matter where its name came from, the name RAB has stuck and is now used everywhere.

There are only four main things to remember when tying this pattern:

- Extend the tail two to four times the hook length, and the hackle two to four times the hook gape.
- Keep it simple.
- Keep it sparse.
- There is no need to keep it tidy.

Recipe

Hook: Tiemco TMC 100 or TMC 900BL #12 - #20, or similar

Thread: 6/0 Prewaxed, Red

Tail: White hackle fibers

Body: Red thread and feather fibers from an Egyptian goose flight feather

Hackle: Ginger and White

Legs: Feather fibers from an Egyptian goose flight feather

Step 1



Dress the bare hook with a few turns of thread. There is no need to cover the entire shank of the hook and just a few turns will give sufficient purchase for the materials. Add six to 12 white hackle fibers for the tail, keeping them at least two to four times the shank length. Start the body with the red thread, beginning above the barb and covering approximately one fifth of the hook shank.

Step 2



Tie in four feather fibers from the flight feather of an Egyptian goose and twist them into a thin rope. The fibres must be tied in at their bases and not their tips. Try and judge the length of the hackles so that once they have been wound around the shank a few times, the remaining tips will be five to six times length of the hook gape.

Step 3



Wind the feather fibers forward to about half way along the hook shank and tie them off. Then splay the feather fibers so each is pointing away from the hook at 90 degrees and pointing in a different direction.

Step 4



Tie in the ginger neck hackle with the concave side pointing out (towards you). Wind the hackle around the hook shank two to four times, leaving enough space to repeat the procedure with the white hackle.

Step 5



Tie in the white hackle with the concave side facing out (towards you).

Step 6



Wind the hackle around the hook shank two to four times and tie off. Finish the fly with a few half hitches, or preferably with a four turn Whip Finish. There is no need to add head cement, as this will only weigh the fly down.

Soak it in Hydrostop overnight and allow it to dry.

Place the fly in the palm of your hand and gently blow on it. If it quivers, you have tied a good RAB. If not, give it to a mate and try again.