

Revised double-tapered leaders for ultra-light rods

Stanton Hector



Stanton Hector using a Sage SPL '000' fly rod on a typical Western Cape trout stream

I first heard about double-tapered leaders from Leonard Flemming during the winter of 2007 after he was asked by Ed Herbst to test a number of convex leader formulae. After a lengthy discussion on the virtues of these convex leaders I walked away rather invigorated and filled with new ideas. Even though the idea of convex leaders was not entirely new, at the time it was completely foreign to me.

Surprised by the unorthodox construction of these leaders, the slightly esoteric aspect made it very appealing. Using the Internet as a resource, the next few days and weeks were spent tying and testing a variety of leader formulas.



The benefits of combining convex leaders and light-line fly rods

With the new season in full swing, on stream tests, the convex leaders were nothing short of a revelation. Having spent years fishing with George Harvey and Joe Humphreys' style tapered leaders, I vowed never go back again.

However, despite their sterling performance, I always felt that there was something lacking in the internet-derived convex leaders.

This enigma was finally solved a few months down the line after returning from a midweek session on the Elandspad. The stream was terribly low and, on the day, a howling downstream wind didn't exactly improve conditions either. Leonard and I were both fishing

convex leaders and it would be polite to say that we battled against the elements. Our leaders gave excellent turnover in the windy conditions while sight fishing to educated trout sitting in the ankle-deep water. However, our stealthy presentations were either simply ignored or saw fish scattering at the mere sight of our descending leaders. During the aftermath of this rather humbling fishing day, I read an article Ed wrote on the shortcomings of modern leaders, particularly with respect to triple ought leader design. In the article, he cautions against the use of large-diameter monofilament sections used in the middle of conventional convex leader construction due to the impact on the water surface of the heavy midsection mono in convex leaders used on four-to-five weight rods - i.e. the thicker the diameter of the nylon the harder the impact.

In essence, marrying thicker nylon (which consequently creates stiffer monofilament leaders) to light weight fly lines becomes completely counterproductive.



The ultra-light Sage Click reel and SPL rod reduce fatigue in the heat of the canyon streams near Cape Town

Like a light bulb going on in my head, it dawned on me that convex leaders have the thickest monofilament section roughly located in the middle. All of a sudden, it all made perfect sense. The reason our presentations sent fish scurrying for cover was the section carrying the heaviest part of the leader was being cast to the sighted trout upon presentation. This, in combination with the existing low water conditions, probably created even more of a disturbance on the water surface.



The Sage SPL 'Triple Ought' and 'Click' reel favoured by the author

Armed with this new-found information, I revised the leader formulae I was using by scaling down and streamlining the monofilament diameters I was using. Two versions of the new leader formulae emerged, a long version for use on 2 – 3wt rods as well as a shorter version for use on 000 - 1wt rods.

The shorter version can, however, also be used on 2 – 3wt rods in windy conditions when easier turnover is required. Both these leaders were developed with specifically-constructed tippet sections, designed to provide the best turnover in windy situations. under the prevailing conditions. However, alterations could be made to better suit the angler.

Similarly, the tippet sections also come in a long and a short version, which are interchangeable depending on fishing conditions. So, what you're looking at is basically a mix-n-match system for various fishing conditions. The Maxima leaders are also boiled as per MC

Coetzer's recommendation (One to two minutes depending on how supple you want your leader to be). The leader formulae are as follows:

*Leaders are all tied with Maxima Ultra Green monofilament

Short version (000 – 1wt):

20cm 0.22mm

35cm 0.30mm

15cm 0.25mm

20cm 0.22mm (end with a perfection loop)

Long version (2 – 3wt):

25cm 0.22mm

45cm 0.30mm

20cm 0.25mm

30cm 0.22mm (end with a perfection loop)

Tapered tippets:

The tapered tippet sections were constructed prior to fishing to obtain more accurate measurements of tippet sections. These tippet sections are as follows:

Long version (for quiet and slightly windy conditions):

3X 50cm

4X 40cm

5X 50cm (to which lengths of 5, 6 and 7X can be added)

Short version (for windy conditions):

3X 35cm

4X 25cm

5X 35cm (to which lengths of 5, 6 and 7X can be added)