

DDAS JUNIORS BASIC GUIDE TO POLE FISHING



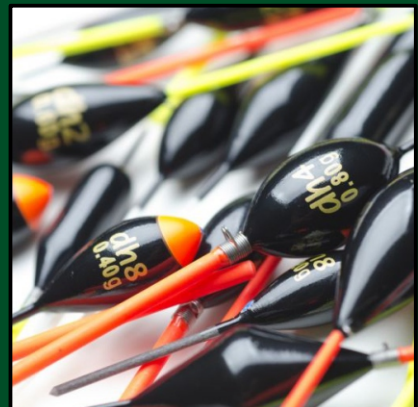
What to look for when buying a pole

Which Pole elastics to choose

Selecting the right Pole float

Making your own Pole rigs

Choosing the right accessories



WARNING

Carbon Fibre is extremely good at conducting electricity.

Do not fish near High Voltage Electricity lines, particularly in the rain.

Cattle fences will probably make you jump and be midly uncomfortable.

But the real threat is Lightning.

**If you are out fishing and a storm brews up,
Please, pack up and go home.**

So much fishing equipment is now made from carbon that you may be at risk from serious injury or worse.

Pack away and live to fish another day.

Pole Fishing

Pole fishing used to be reserved only for forward thinking match anglers, probably those that had been to Europe and seen anglers on the continent using these incredibly long Poles very effectively.

What they were seeing was probably anglers using long whips, or *Pole to hand*. 7, 8 or 9 metre Poles fished with long rigs so small fish can be swung in, straight to the waiting hand of the angler.

They were good at it too, and for many years, English anglers found it difficult to compete in international competition.

Pole fishing is not for everyone and many people do not get on with a Pole. But, in the right hands, they can be extremely accurate and a very efficient method of catching fishing.

Poles are made with a series of tubes that get increasingly thinner towards the tip. Some of the Pole sections will push into one another to build the Pole, others slide inside each other to extend like a telescope.

Modern Poles will almost certainly be made from carbon fibre and are available in many different lengths. From whips of 1 or 2 metres, right up to 16 metre Hyper Poles cost over £6000.

In this section of the booklet, we will cover what to look for when buying your first Pole and how to make it ready to fish with. What floats to buy, when to use them and what other accessories that you will need to use a Pole effectively.

As usual, the range of choice is mind blowing, but in the next few pages, we will try to make sense of it all.

WHY USE A POLE? -

Some will say, that is a very good question.

They can be long, awkward, feel clumsy, heavy and tiresome to use. So much so that many give up on a Pole before they learned how to use one properly.

Any long Pole will feel heavy in small hands. So, to start with, use a Pole that feels comfortable to you, at a length that you can manage easily. Poles are a bit like shoes, one size does not fit everyone. A pole that suits you perfectly, may be a complete nightmare for someone else and vice versa. You may need to try a few out to see which one feels better for you,

When you find one that you like, and you can afford it, then maybe you will have got it sorted. But you won't really know until you have lived with it for a while. Get as much advice as you can from people whose opinion you trust before you buy anything.

Now that's out of the way, what are the benefits of using a Pole?

You can plumb the depth and feed using a Pole with far greater accuracy than is possible with a rod and line, within the Poles reach that is. You can reach places that would be difficult, if not impossible, to reach with a rod and line. You can use much lighter tackle too, with thinner lines and smaller hooks.

WHICH POLE SHOULD YOU BUY AS YOUR FIRST POLE? -

I wish I could tell you EXACTLY which Pole you should buy, but there are so many variables that need to be considered. What I will say is that, you should look at buying a Pole that is well within your budget. Don't go buying a super Pole until you get some experience under your belt first. It WILL get damaged and you WILL break it at some stage. There is no sound worse than splintering carbon fibre.



You won't really go wrong by buying a *Margin Pole*. They are strong and pretty tough. They will be able to take a knock or two from novice hands. They are comparatively cheaper too, look to pay around £150 for a decent Margin Pole. You can pay more, but I wouldn't recommend it to begin with. Margin poles in this price range usually come with two top kits as standard, giving you an extra option for a different rig. The biggest companies will usually offer spare top kits for a decent Pole, two Top kits are good, three is better and four is probably best. More on that later.

ELASTICS -

Elastic is fitted inside the Pole to absorb the runs and lunges of a fish in a similar way to a rod. Massive range to choose from as usual, but we can split them into two categories.

SOLID -Solid elastics are much thinner and lighter than Hollow elastics. I tend to use solid elastics in the winter when the fishing is harder and I need to use lighter, more delicate tackle, or when the target species is smaller. Minimum size 5. Some people favour heavy solid elastics for aggressive margin work. Solid elastics *power up* much more quickly than hollows. This means that the solid elastic will reach it maximum stretch, known as '*Bottoming out*' quicker than a hollow elastic. So the stress is solely on the line, the bottomed out elastic and the Pole. If this happens, I am usually offering up a couple of prayers at this point, hoping that my pole doesn't break.

HOLLOW ELASTICS -

Hollows are much softer and can stretch much further than a solid elastic before it bottoms out. These are perfect for commercials where fish can be allowed to run around a bit, whilst keeping you in control. Because they are so stretchy, you will need to use a *Puller top kit* to play and land the fish. (More about this soon).

Hollows are available in a rating from 4 up to 22 at the heavy end. If you only have a limited number of top kits, then hollows in the 10 to 12 range are the most commonly used. You could swap out the 10 for a 14 in the summer.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #1

Keep your elastics healthy. Check them regularly for wear and tear. You can't always see the wear on your elastic, but give it a little stretch and rub it gently over your bottom lip. Your lip is very sensitive and you will be able to feel if the elastic is worn or damaged. If it feels a bit rough, you need to think about changing it. If you can see the damage, don't think about it, change it! Don't wish you had changed it after you've lost a good fish.

EIGHT STEPS TO FISHING WITH A POLE -

Fishing with a Pole, particularly one over 10 metres, can be quite tiresome sometimes. They are heavy and sometimes painful on your arms. But with some simple tips, using a Pole can be as enjoyable as any other method. You will need a seat box with a comfortable cushion, a footplate and adjustable legs to keep yourself level. It is very important to be comfortable and have everything to hand. You fish better when you are well organised so spend sometime to get everything just as you want it, and if it isn't right, fix it.



ORGANISATION

Holding a Pole is quite a handful, so you don't want to be over reaching for anything when you are Pole fishing. Have everything to hand, be tidy, be organised.

ROLLERS

It is vital to position your rollers carefully if you want to avoid damage to your precious Pole. Use the three largest sections together to get the distance from your box to the front (first) roller.

HIGH & LOW

If you are using two rollers, which you will need to do if you are using a long Pole, then to prevent your Pole from bouncing off, set your front roller slightly higher than your back roller so there is no 'step off'.

POLE SOCK & TULIP

I use my *tulip* to hold the thinner part of the Pole. I use the *sock* for larger sections of the pole. You must make sure the sections of the pole reach the first roller. If they don't you may damage your Pole.



ON YOUR LAP

When you are fishing with a Pole, position yourself on your box so that the pole is crossing your lap. The Pole is supported by your elbow so you pretty much have both hands free for feeding, etc.

THE RIGHT ANGLE

Adjust and position your seat box so that your legs are close to 90° as possible. A box or chair with a footplate really helps you get the angle that you need to get the Pole in the right position on your lap.

REVERSE PUSH

Long Poles get heavy and are difficult to ship out. In the picture you can see that my left arm is reversed and in contact with the Pole at all times. My right hand feeds the Pole forward until I reach the point that I want to fish at.

SPRAY BAR

A Spray Bar will really help new anglers handle longer Poles. An adjustable padded bar that is positioned in front of you that supports the pole and takes most of the weight off of the angler.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #2

Keep your elastics well lubricated with a purpose made silicone or PTFE lubricant that has been designed for the job. A couple of quick squirts or a couple of drops down the tip section of your Pole will prevent the elastic for sticking to the inside of the sections. Looking after them in this way will also help them to last a bit longer and make them perform much better than they would if they are used dry.

It's mostly all done for you these days, but make sure your Cupping Kit is the same length as your Top Kits. Pole fishing is so precise that the difference the length of your feeding and fishing kits can make all the difference.

If your Pole doesn't have a purpose made Cupping kit, then you might want to think about a Universal kit. You may have to cut to fit your pole, but they are worth the effort and the extra expense.

PULLER TOP KITS -

A system used to tighten Pole elastic so fish can be landed more easily.

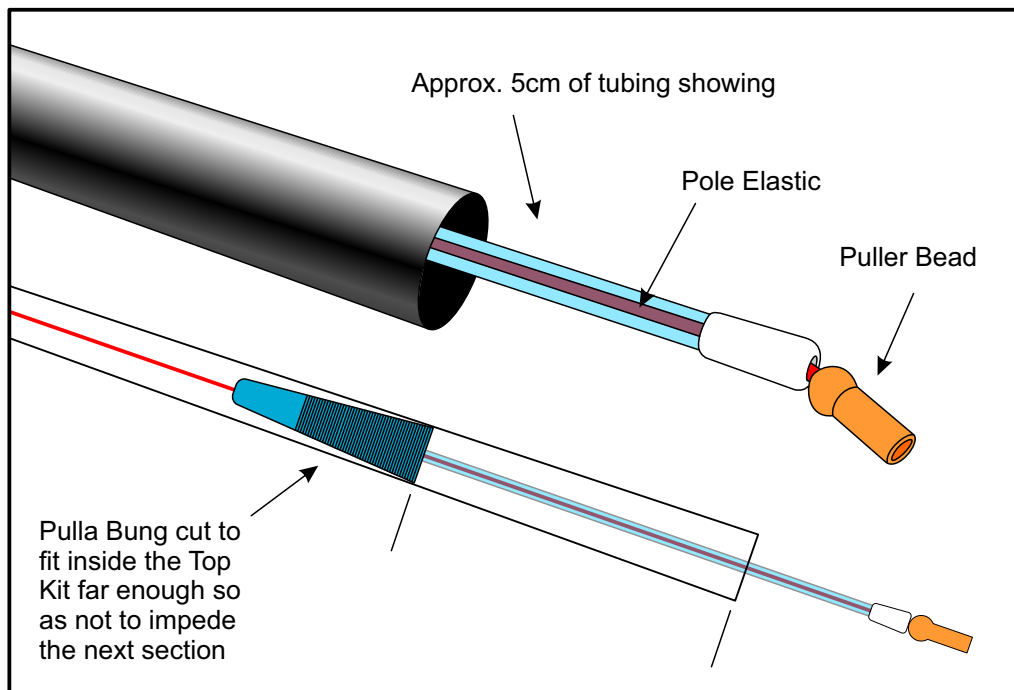
PULLA BUNG -

On Poles that do not have a reinforced section, we can fit a *Pulla Bung*, with a cone shaped, ribbed section and a tube running through it. The ribbed section is cut to fit inside your *Top Kit* (The top two sections of your Pole), so that only 5cm of the tube is sticking out from the end (See right).

When you hook a fish, probably a Carp, it will pull elastic from your Pole. As you slowly ship your Pole back over your rollers, the elastic will be doing all the work for you,

but keep an eye on where the fish so you stay in control. Once you reach your Top Kit, you will remove it, exposing the Pulla Bung at the end. Now you have a short Pole and lots of elastic. Holding the bead, pull some elastic out and give it to your finger and thumb on the hand that is holding the Pole. Repeat this as necessary until you have the right tension on the elastic. Be prepared to give some elastic back to the fish if it decides it doesn't like the look of you though. How much tension you need, I cannot tell you. That is the part you have to figure out for yourself. Too tight and you could break your line or even your Pole. Too loose and you won't be able to reach the fish with your landing net and the fish could be totally out of control too. It is a fine balance that only experience can help you with. Keep in mind that there is a living creature on your hook when you are tightening your elastic. Try not to be too aggressive or impatient.

It is worth noting the white bit at the end of the Pulla tube. This is called a *PTFE Bush*. P.T.F.E. stands for *Polytetrafluoroethylene*. Quite a mouthful! PTFE is one of the slipperiest materials that man can make. It is also *Hydrophobic*, meaning that water will not stick to it and it is extremely hard wearing too. Poles will have PTFE bushes fitted to them whenever the elastic comes into contact with the Pole to reduce *friction* and prevent it from getting damaged, allowing the elastic to run smooth and free.



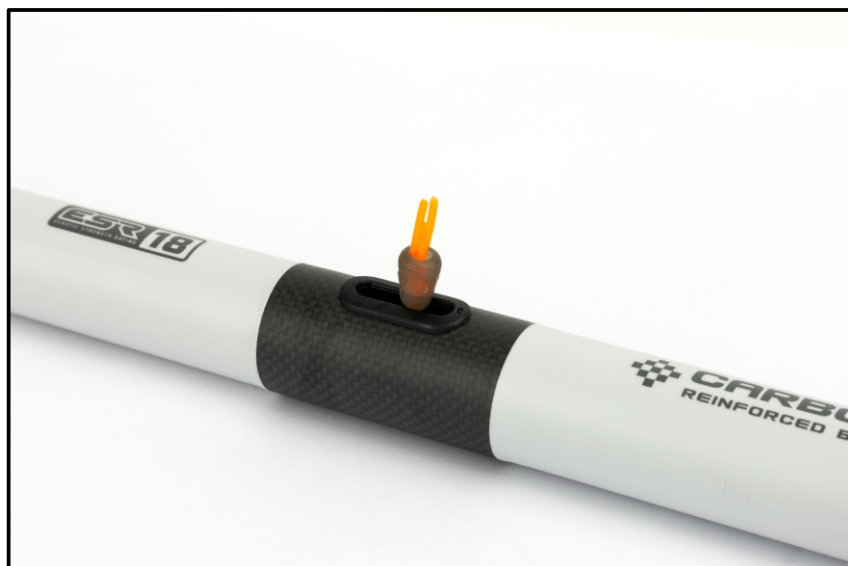
SIDE PULLER TOP KITS -

Most new Poles will come with all bushes and side pullers fitted as standard. But you may need or want to fit your own. This job is not for the faint hearted. Drilling big holes into your brand new pole tends to jangle the nerves a little. So if you are not sure, ask someone that has done it before. The picture shows a fitted side puller. Note the black reinforced section of carbon fibre on the Pole.

DO NOT TRY TO DRILL A POLE THAT HAS NOT BEEN REINFORCED FIRST! IT WILL BREAK...

A side puller works in exactly the same way as a Pulla Bung. Only the elastic exits the pole through the side and is much more convenient

to use because you do not have to 'give' the elastic to your other hand like you do with a Pulla Bung. Your hand is already there for you to use a 'pull and pinch' technique. Some side pullers are fitted with a PTFE bush or a specially designed 'window' through which the elastic exits. Some have a built in roller or even a bung with a roller on to increase smoothness.



MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #2

If you have to give any elastic to the fish or after you have landed it, don't just let go of the elastic from the puller. The bead could hit your Pole and damage it or, even worse, it could hit you in the face. Release it carefully.

Assuming that you have bought a Pole that has been *Pre-bushed*, That is a PTFE bush in the tip and side puller PTFE cut and fitted, there are a few accessories that you are going to need to make your pole usable. If you do have to fit your own bushes, it is better to ask someone to fit them for you. Ask them if you can watch while they do it so you can learn for yourself.

The first of those is a *connector*.

Connectors are used to join your line to your elastic or whip. For beginners, the easiest way is to use a type of connector known as a 'Stonfo'.



The connectors shown on above left are for elastic and if you're fussy (like me), you can colour match your connect to your elastic. The connector on above right is used for connecting your line to a whip and is glued on the end. Both have a sliding collar that traps a loop in your line into the hook on the connector.

Personally I use something a bit different, but for new starters to Pole fishing, these are ideal. The whip version I still use today.

DACRON CONNECTORS -

This type of connector is a firm favourite with many anglers. A bit more fiddley to fit than a Stonfo connector. The connectors shown below are supplied on a plastic tube, making it them much easier to fit. I will explain how they work a bit later on.



WET WALL ALIGNERS -

Whilst Wet Wall Aligners are not essential, I am going to recommend that they are fitted to your Pole if you can. They fit in the end of the *male section* of the middle joint in your Top Kit. They also have a PTFE bush so the elastic runs through them smoothly. They simply hold the elastic in the centre of your Pole to stop it from touching the inside walls of your Pole section. Wet elastic will stick to the inside of your Pole and prevent it from working properly.



NOSE CONES -

Nose cones are made from either a hard plastic, foam or from PTFE. If you use your Pole regularly, it will get a bit of wear and tear. Carbon against carbon will wear each other out over time and make the walls of the joints will become thin and weak. Also the ends of the sections will become chipped and damaged. Nose cones will help slow down this process. They will help guide the sections into each other when you are using them. Your joints will be swept as you push your sections together, cleaning any dirt or grit away for you. They have too many benefits to be ignore in my opinion.



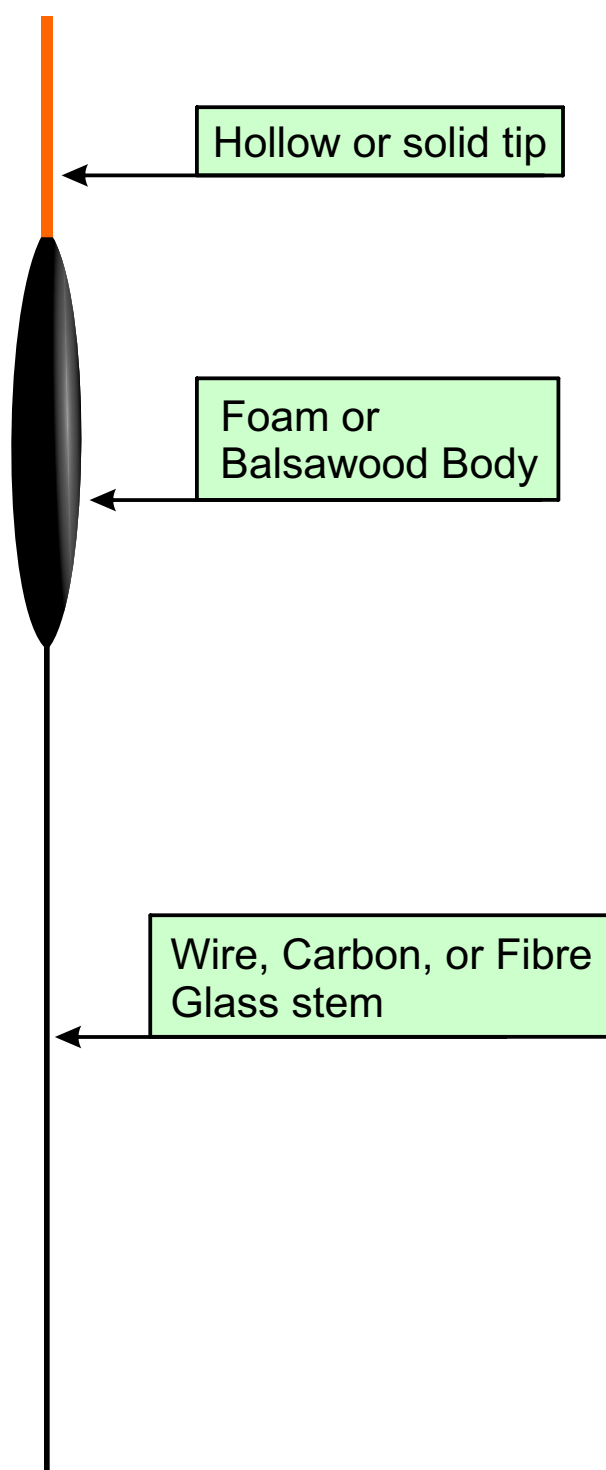
POLE RIGS & TERMINAL TACKLE -

There are literally thousands of different Pole floats on the market and each one will appeal to every angler in a different way. But, fortunately, we can simplify things a little bit. I stress that what follows is purely my own opinion and is intended as just a guide to help you.

POLE FLOATS -

Modern Pole floats are increasingly made from a high density foam (*ROHACELL*) and is very durable and strong. More importantly it will not take on water, unlike other materials.

The very high visibility tips or bristles are commonly a hollow tip and the stems are made from different materials that really help you to decide which one to use.



TIP or BRISTLE -

Pole float *bristles* are made of either a hollow plastic or a Solid Nylon material.

Hollow tips are more buoyant and great for heavier baits like hard pellets, Corn or Meat.

They are very easy to see because, in the right conditions, the light can be reflected through them, making them 'glow'.

Solid Tips are much more sensitive and much useful for shy biting fish, particularly in the colder months when every bite counts.

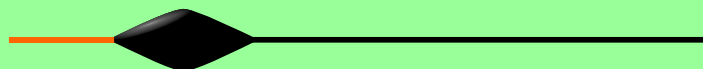
BODY -

In the past, Pole float bodies were and still are, traditionally made from Balsawood. In more modern times they are more often than not made from a high density foam called *Rohacell*.

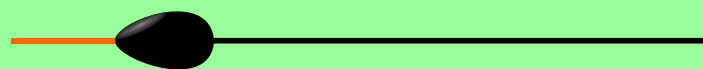
The shape of a Pole float body will depend heavily on the conditions, the species you are fishing for and the type of bait you will want to use.

The first shape I want you to consider, is the slim rugby ball shape, (Seen Left) now more commonly known as an *F1 Float*.

This shape of float is very versatile and stable in all but the roughest of conditions. The slim body offers very little resistance to the biting fish or to the angler striking in to the bite. I will use these type of floats for most open areas of my swim.



The second shape would be a *Diamond* shape body. This shape is extremely stable in rough conditions.

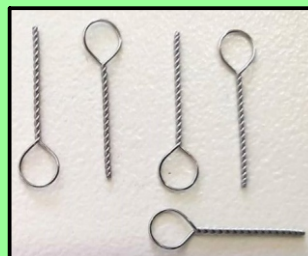


Another great shape to look for is a *Dumpy Pear* shape. Look for floats with a long wire stem. These floats are excellent shape for deeper water and, in larger sizes, for rivers.

EYES -

The small wire loop on most pole floats is known as the *Eye*. Float eyes can be made of twisted wire that is pushed into and glued to the body of the float. These are good for Silverfish rigs that do not take much abuse.

If you are expecting a fight, and by that I mean Carp, look for a float that has a *Spring Eye*. This is coiled wire eye that is glued to the float bristle, making it much tougher.



Some floats have the line running through a tube inside the body of the float and, sometimes, even through the bristle. Inline floats, as these are known, are especially useful for heavy duty fishing against snags like tree branches, reeds and lilies. A personal favourite of mine.

STEMS -

The *stem* of the float plays an important roll in which float to choose for any given situation. Many Pole floats may look almost identical, the only difference being the stem. But why?

There are three basic stem types.

- Wire
- Carbon
- Fibre Glass (Glass)

Cane is another material that can be used as a Pole float stem, but they are getting rare these days.

CARBON -

Use a *carbon stem* when you are fishing with a slow falling bait like maggots, expander pellets and bread. The lightness of carbon allows the float to settle quite slowly and will follow the bait down through the water. Great for *fishing on the drop*.

GLASS -

Glass stems are very strong compared to the others, making them great for situations where the float may take a battering from the fish. Particularly good for fishing in the margins or against islands with heavy plant growth. Lighter versions can be used for fishing shallow when the fish are being particularly aggressive.

WIRE -

Wire stems are much more stable in the water than the others, as you may expect. If you use a Glass or Carbon stem in the wind, and then put on a Wire float, you can immediately notice the difference in the attitude of the float. Wire stemmed floats will remain incredibly still in any waves and can help combat strong *undertow*.

Wire floats have to be the only float to use on rivers with any kind of strong current (Flow) for all the same reasons as above.

Wire is my favoured stem for fishing a bait on the bottom when I know that I will not have to chase the fish up in the water. I will have an identical carbon stemmed float set up incase this does happen.

To so sum up,

- Carbon stems for slow falling baits.
- Glass stems if you think you may be in for a fight.
- Wire stems for fishing deep, in the wind and on the bottom.

WEIGHTS -

We have touched on weights, split shots and Stotz in the earlier pages, so I won't go through that again in full. But I will say that if there is any chance of hooking a Carp, which is more often than not these days, then I will always use Stotz on my Pole rigs. I will try to only use split shot for Silverfish rigs.

There may be a chance of hooking a bigger fish on a Silverfish rig and there won't be much I can do about that. But I will always have a 'Stotz rig' set up in a similar way to how the 'Split shot rig' is set up.

OLIVETTES -

We have mentioned *Olivettes* in the *Ledgering* section. But Olivettes were really designed for Pole fishing.

There are two basic types of Olivettes. An *Inline* version where the line passes through the centre and is trapped in place by shots or Stotz.



The other is a *Fixed Olivette*. The line is held in place over two pegs, one at either end, by small sections of *Silicone rubber tubing*.



Olivettes are generally used when a large amount of *Bulk weight* is needed. Usually for deeper lakes or rivers. In fact, anything you know you will need a large amount of weight one place and/or you need to move the bulk frequently.

The Fixed version allows you to change the Olivette for a different size. But In all honesty, I have never done this before. I always have a separate rig set up in case I need to use a different sized float.

PLUMBING THE DEPTH -

We have spoken about different sized plummets and this is when they will really be worth their weight in gold. Because a Pole is so accurate, you can be very precise when it comes to finding out what shape the bed of the river or lake is.

I always start with a *Medium* sized plummet to get my rig at the right depth first. I will use the heavier plummet to find out what the bottom is made up of, Mud, clay, silt or stones. Finally the smaller plummet for very soft areas and for fine tuning the float (Low line stretch).

TYPES OF POLE FLOATS -

There is no great surprise to know that there more Pole floats to choose from than there are stars in the sky and you may be easily confused. But to be honest, it is reasonably straight forward. We have looked at body shapes already, so you should be familiar with those by now.

Like before, What follows is purely my opinion and may differ from angler to angler, But I think it's a good start.



SLIM or F1 FLOAT -

I use this float for nearly all of my Pole fishing. Long or short Pole, these floats are extremely versatile and reliable.

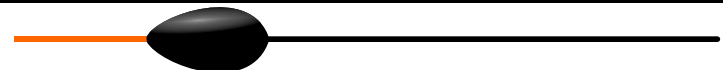
They are available with either carbon or wire stem, making them twice as useful. I can have similar rigs set up so that should the fish move up from the bottom, I can chase them up with a slower carbon stemmed rig. Or chase them down with a wire stem.

Watch out for the *Chianti* floats. They look very similar to an F1 float but, having a cane tip instead of plastic, they behave very differently. Chiantis still have their place in fishing though and are still a firm favourite with canal anglers with lighter lines and squatts.



PENCIL FLOAT -

I like to use these *Pencil* shaped floats for fishing larger baits like meat or corn. I will fish these floats towards the bottom of any island shelves or anywhere where there are few snags to get caught up on. Like the F1 float, the Pencil float offers little resistance, but has a little more buoyancy to carry slightly bigger baits.



PEAR or ROUNDED PEAR -

Better suited for larger baits in deeper water, or maybe when it's a little bit breezy. Look for floats with a longish wire stem to aid stability and a decent hollow tip. Some Pear floats are available with carbon stems. Use these floats for when you want to use a larger bait and leave the wire stems for deeper venues. If you find yourself on a really deep venue, don't be afraid to use an Olivette as your bulk weight.

PASTE FLOATS -

These floats do seem to break some of the rules that we may have covered so far.

They will have Glass or Carbon stem, but they are designed to be fished hard on the bottom.

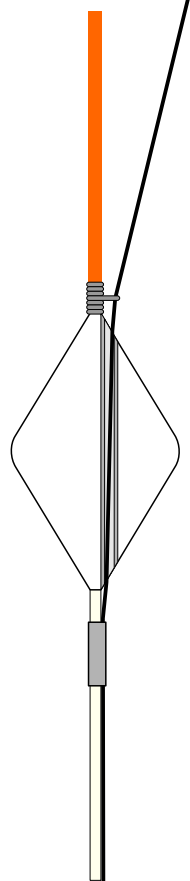
They sometimes have a solid tip, to fish a large, heavy bait.

Some need shots like any other float, others need none and are classed as *Self Cocking Floats*.

They will have a nice long bristle so you can see all the dips, lifts and bobs as the fish chomp away at the ball of paste on the hook.

I never got on that well with the self cocking float to be honest and I prefer the MIDDY XK55 floats that need a few Stotz down the line, all bulked together just above the hook length knot.

I feel using floats with a few shots on the line helps to stabilise the rig much better.



MARGIN FLOATS -

You need a strong, short float with a decent glass stem and a good thick bristle, 2mm or more. If possible, I like my margin floats to be *inline*, with the line running through the body and, on some models, through the bristle too. With all the fish activity that might happen when fish are feeding aggressively in a margin fed swim, I like my margin floats to have a little extra weight too. Somewhere between 0.3 and 0.5g to help keep the bait in place when fish are thrashing around. The last thing you need is the bait wafting around and getting the fish foul hooked if you can help it.

A short 10cm hooklink helps with this too.

SHALLOW FLOATS & DIBBERS -

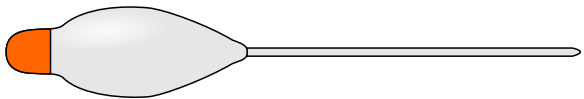
There is a balance that you have to find if you want to fish shallow with a Pole. You need a float that is as light as you can get away with, yet still carry enough weight to be able to *Slap* it on the surface of the water.

When we talk about fishing shallow, you not looking to be much deeper than about 12" (30cm) under the surface. So you need a short, dumpy float that will not worry the fish too much. For shallow fishing I will choose one of two types of float.



SHALLOW or SLAPPING FLOAT -

These lovely little floats are made by Preston Innovations and feature a short, thick, stubby tip. A Pear shaped body and a short fibre glass stem. There's no real finesse to shallow fishing, the float is either there or it's gone. So you don't need a long sensitive bristle. The 4x10 version only needs a few shots on the and I will vary where I position the shots, either spaced out or under the float. I will also use these floats for fishing bread in the winter and have them shotted very low in the water.



DIBBER FLOATS -

I have no idea why these are called *Dibbers*....Maybe because they 'Dib under'? Who knows....? But I do know that they are great little floats to have in your winder tray. Short and stumpy with no bristle, my favoured Drennan Dibbers are made from clear plastic. The idea is that the lack of colour doesn't spook the fish as much. But in my humble opinion, when the fish are going crazy for food on the surface, you could paint it bright pink and they probably wouldn't care. The plastic is incredibly strong and can take a proper kicking, in fact, I can't remember ever breaking one of these floats. Great for larger baits, big pellets and meat fished shallow. They can even take a small blob of paste. (Yes, paste fished shallow. Try it!)

Always use strong shallow floats because the float is very near to the hook and a thrashing, angry fish. This also puts it close to or on the rim of your landing net where a more delicate float would get smashed to pieces.

SHOTTING TABLE -

Below is a table that, hopefully, will help you decide which shots, Stotz or Olivettes to use for your Pole rigs.

To get your floats shotted correctly you need to be able to work out which weights to use and how many. Each weight is given a number according to it's size. The higher the number, the smaller the size of the shot or weight is.

You can use two small shots to equal the weight of the next size up. For example;

1x No.8 (the larger shot) is equal to 2x No.10 (the smaller shots).

So we can break the larger No.8 shots down into two smaller No.10 shots that will equal the same weight as the No.8. The reason for doing this is to control the speed of the bait through the water. You could use larger No.8 shots but the bait will sink much faster. By breaking the shots down into smaller sizes and spreading the shots out down the line, we can slow the bait down as it sinks and be much more in control.

1x No.8 is equal to 2x no.10

1x No.9 is equal to 2x No.11

1x No.10 is equal to 2x No.12

1x No.11 is equal to 2x No.13

All a bit confusing at first, I know. But once it clicks, you'll find it easy.

THE most important shot or Stotz as far as Pole rigs are concerned, is the **No.9**.

No.9 shots are pretty much **0.05** of a gram.

So, **2x No.9** is equal to **0.1g** (One tenth of a gram).

Why is this important to know?

Well, when you buy your Pole floats they might have something like **0.3g** or they may have **4x12** stamped on them. (They may have nothing at all, which case you're on your own!). Let's look at the easy one first, the floats rated in grams.

You have a float that says **0.3g** on it.

We already know that **2x No.9** is equal to **0.1g**

So, we will need **6x No.9** shots to *set the float*.

But what about the *dropper shots*? We need fine dropper shots close to the hook to register fine bites.

Of our **6x No.9** we can replace one of them with **2x No.11** shots instead and still have the same weight of shots to set the float.

So, now we have **5x No.9** and **2x No.11** to set a float needing **0.3g**.

It all looks great on paper but in reality things may turn out slightly different. But use this as a guide.

The other markings you may see on Pole floats are, I believe, from when anglers used to use Styl leads more often. The **4x** and then a number, indicates how many styls and the size you would need to use. Nowadays, however, they are normally used with regular shots or Stotz.

To convert these types of floats to use with shot/Stotz, you will need to know the following table. I have included the shotting that I would recommend as starting point for you to begin with.

POLE FLOAT CONVERSION TABLE

3x10 is equal to **0.1g**
(4x No.11)

4x10 is equal to **0.15g**
(6x No.11 or 2x No.9 + 2x No.11)

4x12 is equal to **0.2g**
(3x No.9 + 2x No.11)

4x14 is equal to **0.4g**
(7x No.9 + 2x No.11)

4x16 is equal to **0.6g**
(11x No.9 + 2x No.11)

4x18 is equal to **0.75g**
(11x No.8 + 1x No.9 + 2x No.11)
or
(1x 0.5g Olivette + 4x No.9 + 2x No.11)

So, which do you choose?

Well, that could be a tricky one to answer because fishing can change from day to day. But my advice would be to follow an unwritten rule that goes something like this:

ONE FOOT (30cm) OF DEPTH NEEDS 0.1g OF WEIGHT.

If your fishing a swim that is 4ft (1.2m) deep, then you will need a float that takes at least 0.4g in weight.

It's not perfect, but it is a good way to start. Weather may play a part in your choice. If it's windy you may need a heavier float. If it is cold, you will need a lighter, more delicate set up.

The mood of the fish will have an effect too. If they are feeding at mid depth in a swim that is 4ft deep, you only need a 0.2g float. so on and so on.

Of course, you may not know how deep the water is until you have plumbed the depth, and you have to a rig on to do that. So you may have to change the rig once you have found the depth.

I can write everything I know and try to cover every situation here, but the truth is that something will always be missed. Because that is the challenge of fishing. No two days are the same.

MAKING A POLE RIG -

I'm going to take you through a step by step tutorial of how I make my own Pole rigs. This rig will be for fishing with an expander pellet. You will have to recreate this rig as part of the DDAS Junior Coaching Program.

You will need the following items: (recommended product in brackets)

- A spool of line. 5lb (0.15mm Guru N-Gauge)
- Some Stotz ranging from No.8 down to No.13
- Some pinchers (Preston Stotta or similar)
- Silicone Pole float sleeves (Frenzee multi box)
- A **0.3g** or **4x12** Pole float (Preston F1 Pellet)
- 2 litre bottle with the top cut off filled to the top with water and one or two drops of washing up liquid.
- Try the different sizes of silicone tubing on the stem of the Pole float until you find one that is a snug fit. Cut **three** pieces off about **3** or **4mm** long.
- Thread the end of the line through the eye of the float down from the bristle to the stem and thread on the three pieces of silicone tubing.
- Push each of the sleeves onto the stem of the float. The first should be close to the body with a 1cm gap. The last sleeve should be at the end of the stem and the middle sleeve should be positioned between the other two. I use three sleeves in case one should break, so I have a spare on the stem. The only time I use only two sleeves is on short floats like a Dibber where there is no room for three sleeves.
- Once you have worked out the shotting for the float, push the float up the line about 10cm and then, with your pinchers, start attaching the two droppers at the end of the line first. Then attach the bulk shot anywhere between the droppers and the float stem.
- When the shots/Stotz are all on the line, it's time to test the rig in your container. Dunk it in a few times to get the float wet and then let it settle. You want to see the water level somewhere on the bristle. The washing up liquid is used to soften the tension on the surface of the water in your container. I would expect to see the body of the float fully submerged if I have got my shotting right or that the float is a reliable one. If it sinks, obviously I need to take some shots off and rethink my calculations. If the bristle nearly sinks, but not quite, I will take the last **No.11** shot off and replace it with a **No.12** or **No.13** to bring the float back up to where it needs to be. If you need to add some shots to your rig, I will always add any *trimming shots* ABOVE THE BULK SHOTS as necessary.

When I am fishing, I will only have 1 or 2mm of the bristle showing. But, at home, I will leave more and there is good reason for that.

The surface tension in the lake is far less than the tension in my container at home, because the lake is so much bigger. The washing up liquid helps to reduce the surface tension a bit, but it will not be the same as the real thing.

For that reason I try to leave a little more of the tip showing at home, so when I get to the lake, the chances are that it will be just right.

I will do the final retune after I have started fishing with a bait on, during the 'live' fishing conditions.

- Now we are shotted, trimmed and happy with our rig, it's time to get rid of the line that we used to pinch the shots onto. You will see now why I only use 10cm of line to pinch the shots onto. Slide the float and all the shots/Stotz up the line so the last weight is clear of the damaged line. You will be able to feel where the line has been damaged as you move the weights. You need to do this bit **SLOWLY**. Do it too fast and you will heat up the lead weight and burn the line, and quite possibly your fingers too.
- Cut off the damaged piece of line and tie a nice neat Figure of Eight loop knot with your loop tyer.
- Now I will slide the last dropper shot down to the loop knot and slide the float further up the line, out of the way.
- Arrange the rest of the shots about 4cm apart from each other, nice and evenly until the last trimmer shot.
- I maybe should have mentioned at the start for you to measure your Top Kit. You can do this with a tape measure but, because you do not have to be that accurate (You will probably have to trim your rig to length after you have plumbed the depth anyway). My Top Kits are the distance between my finger tips with my arms out stretched, plus from my finger tips to my throat. Those two measurements are pretty constant on me unless I lose a hand, an arm or a throat....They measure the exact length of my Top Kit, so I know my rigs will be about right. For Juniors, it's worth rechecking as you grow. Otherwise you will end up with some very long Pole rigs!
- Cut the line where your measurement comes to.
- Tie a large Figure of Eight loop in the end of the line. I used my finger to measure up and back again. This will be the size of my loop.
- Now, again with your loop tyer, tie a small Figure of Eight loop in the end of the big loop.

We will look at why we do this shortly.

- You can attach the hooklink now, if you wish to. I usually leave mine off until I get to the lake so I will know exactly what hook I will need.
- Time to put the rig on a *Pole winder*. Plastic objects that are designed to hold your rigs neatly without them getting damaged. I like the *Preston Double Winders* but any will do. I use the 18cm winders that take two rigs, one up and one down. It saves much more space in your box than the single winders. Pop your hook in the hole or the loop round the little peg and start winding your rig on. Keep it to the same side of the winder so they don't tangle and **DON'T** wind it on too tightly, you will kink the line.
- If you are using the Preston winders, use the sliding pegs to secure your rig with the little loop you tied. If you don't have a *slider winder*, you can get *elasticated anchors* to secure the line.
- Always, and I mean **ALWAYS** write the rig information on the side of the winder with a fine permanent marker pen. Info like;
 - Type of float
 - Size of float,
 - Weight of main line,
 - Weight of hooklink
 - Hook size.
- I even write the sizes of the shots I used to make the rig so it's easier when I come to remake them.

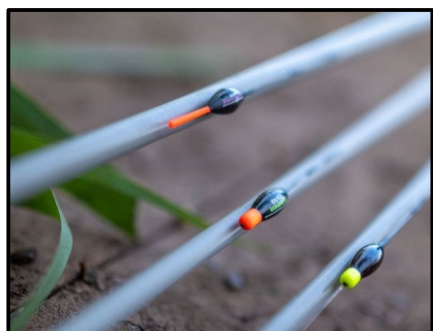
So, that's it! Only 40 more to go before your winder tray is full!

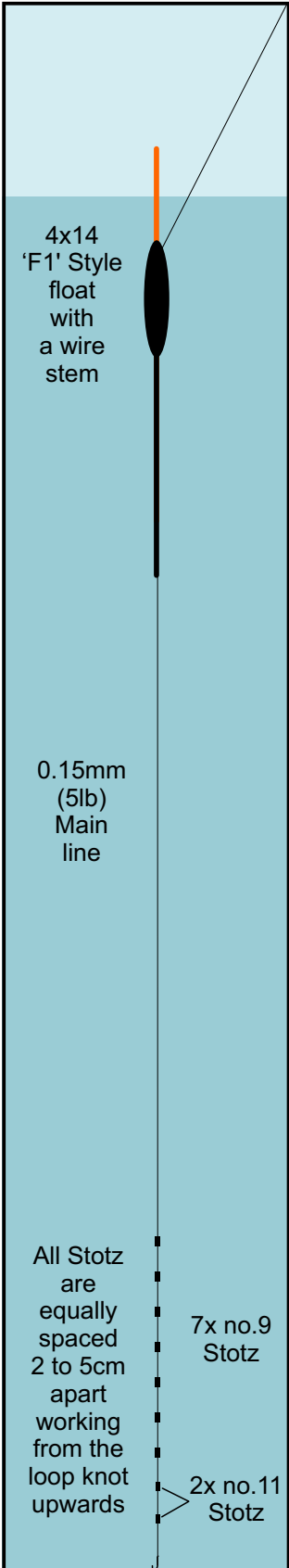
But in all seriousness, you don't need hundreds of Pole rigs tied up. Just have enough so that, if you break one, you have a spare. The double winders I use take two floats per winder. So I always buy my floats in pairs.

I also buy the complete range when I find a float I like, so I have all options covered. It saves time on the bank and makes me more efficient as an angler. Looks pretty cool in your Seat Box too!

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #3

Don't forget to buy some yellow floats too, they are brilliant for darker backgrounds against the reflection of trees and bushes.





4x14 'F1' Style float with a wire stem

0.15mm (5lb) Main line

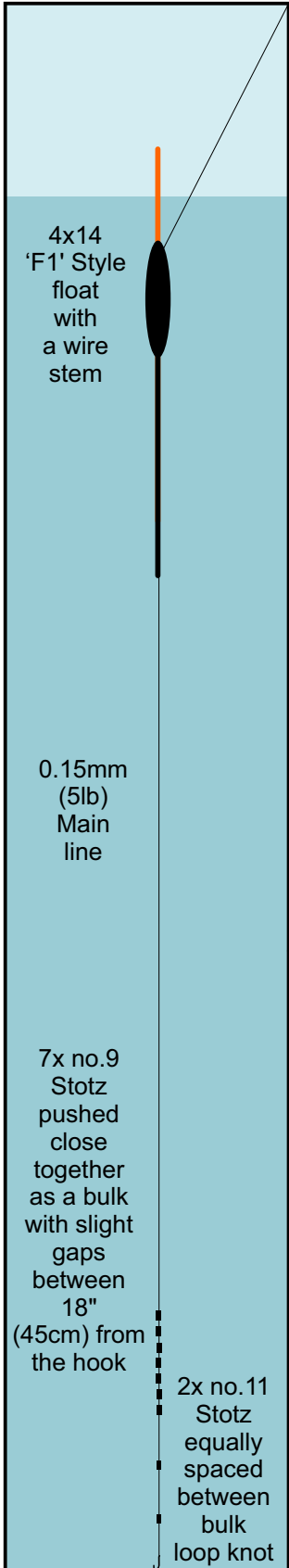
All Stotz are equally spaced 2 to 5cm apart working from the loop knot upwards

7x no.9 Stotz

2x no.11 Stotz

Size 16 F1 Pellet hook on a 10cm 4lb (0.13mm) Hooklink

STRUNG OUT BULK -
This is how I set up nearly all of my Pole rigs of this type when I first put them on the winder. I will move them around when I'm fishing to where I feel they need to be for the situation I find on the day. A strung out pattern gives you a good start to search your peg for the fish and find what depth in the water they are comfortable. Keep your eye on the spacing of the shots when you do start catching fish regularly. The shots can become dislodged, and your rig will not be behaving in the way that you think it is. I will always use 5lb (0.15mm) line for this type of rig. There is no reason go higher for open water unless there are very big fish about. I don't like shot on the hooklink, so I use a short one of just 10cm.



4x14 'F1' Style float with a wire stem

0.15mm (5lb) Main line

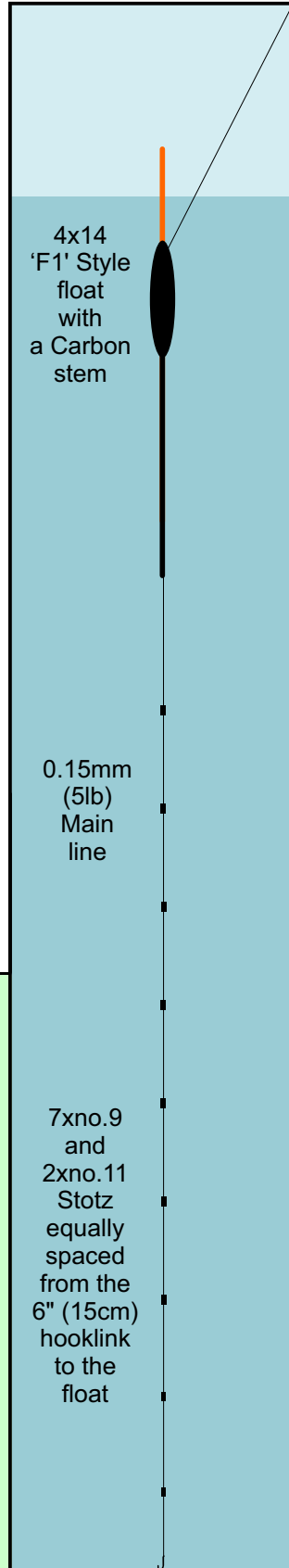
7x no.9 Stotz pushed close together as a bulk with slight gaps between 18" (45cm) from the hook

2x no.11 Stotz equally spaced between bulk loop knot

Size 16 F1 Pellet hook on a 0.13mm (4lb) Hooklink

BULK & TWO DROPPERS -
This pattern is used for fishing very positively on the bottom, mainly for Carp and Bream. It is seen as a positive rig because you are essentially ignoring any fish in the upper and middle layers of the water, to target fish on the bottom. I will use a slightly heavier **4x14** float, maybe more, depending on the depth. I will again use a 10cm hooklink for the same reasons as before.

SHIRT BUTTON SHOTTING PATTERN -
Generally used for slow falling baits. Spreading out the shots in this manner allows the bait fall in a more natural way and maintains control over the bait as it sinks. The closer the shots are spaced, the fast it will fall and vice versa. Good pattern for targeting Silverfish.

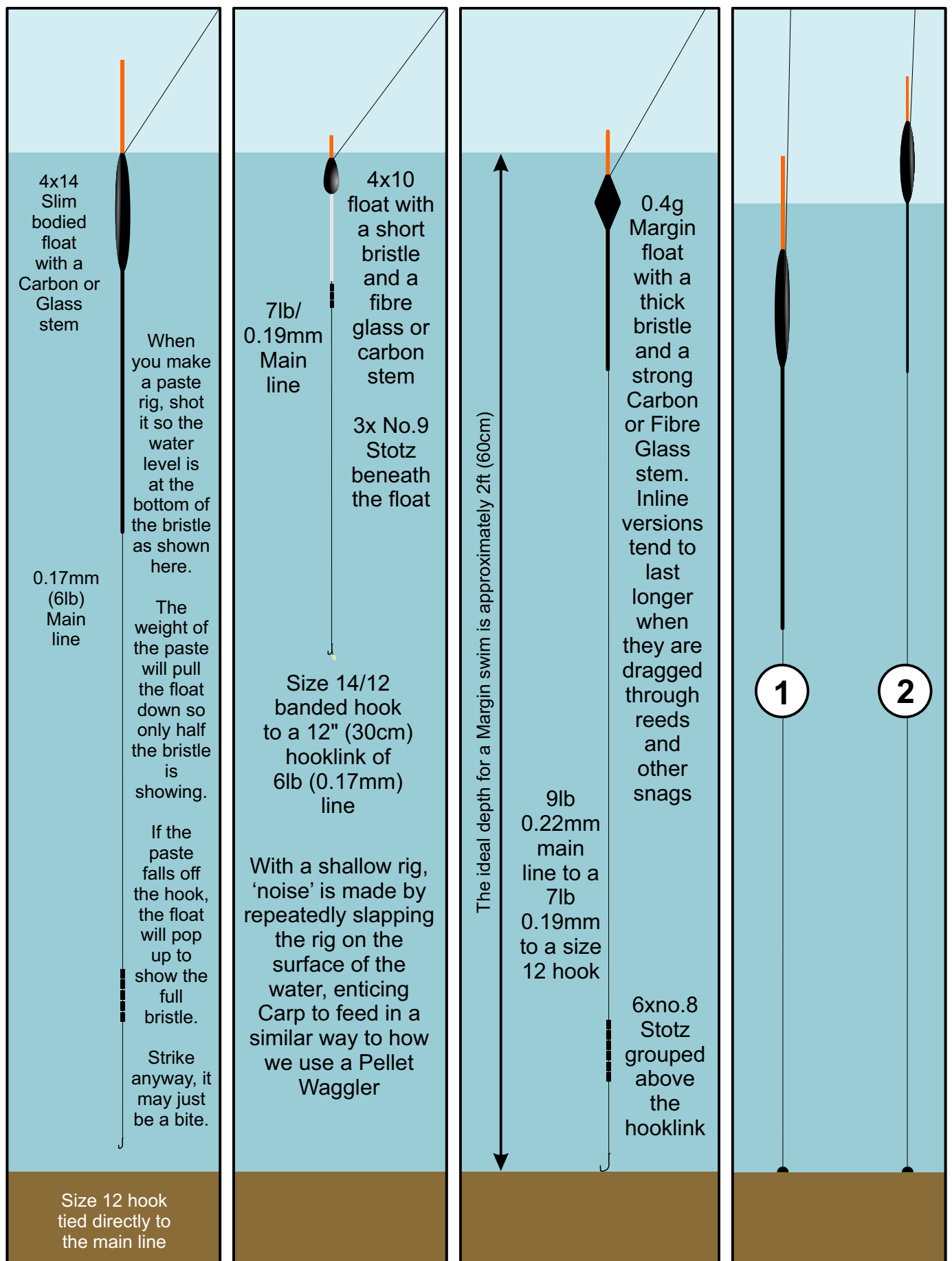


4x14 'F1' Style float with a Carbon stem

0.15mm (5lb) Main line

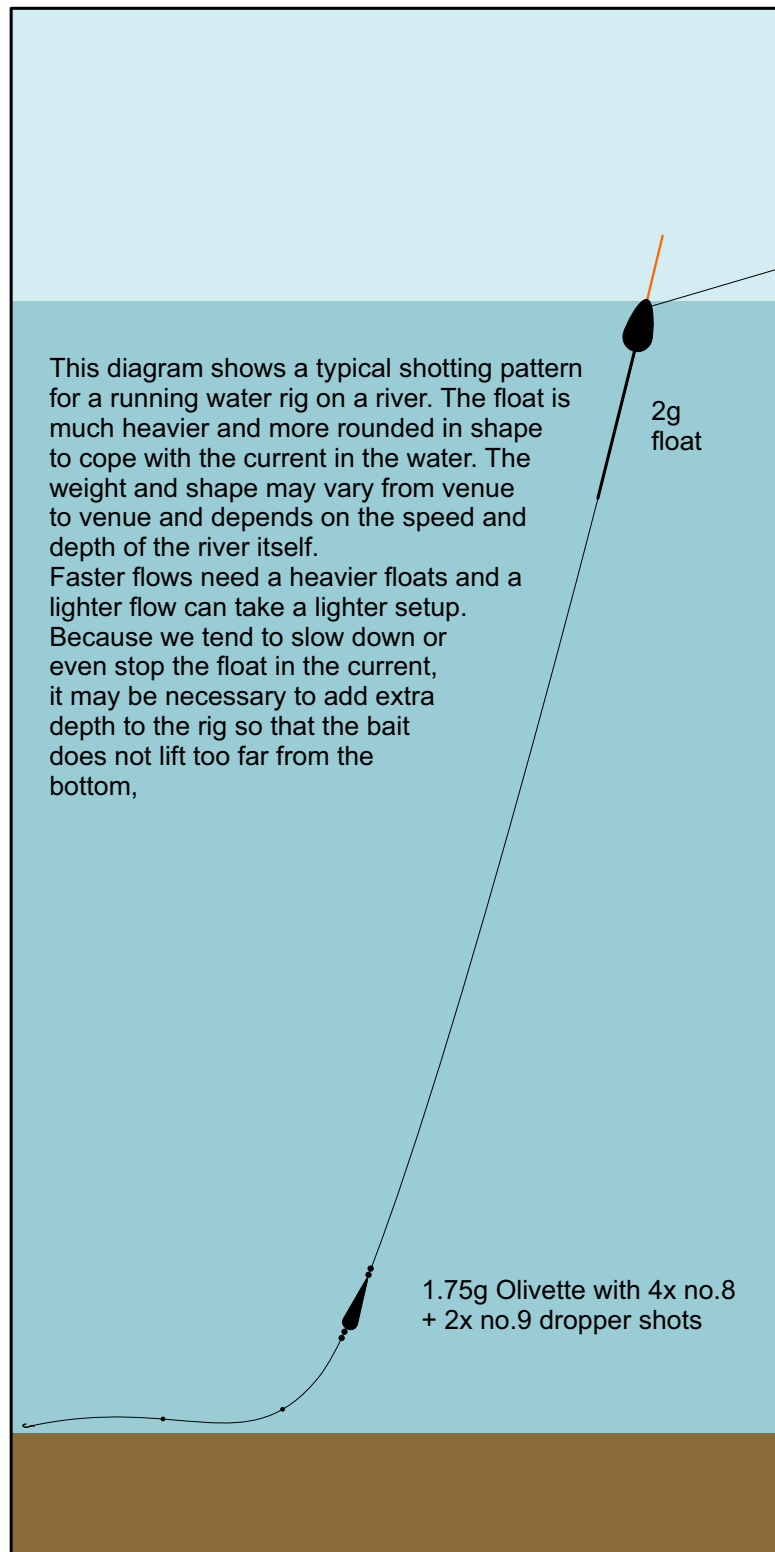
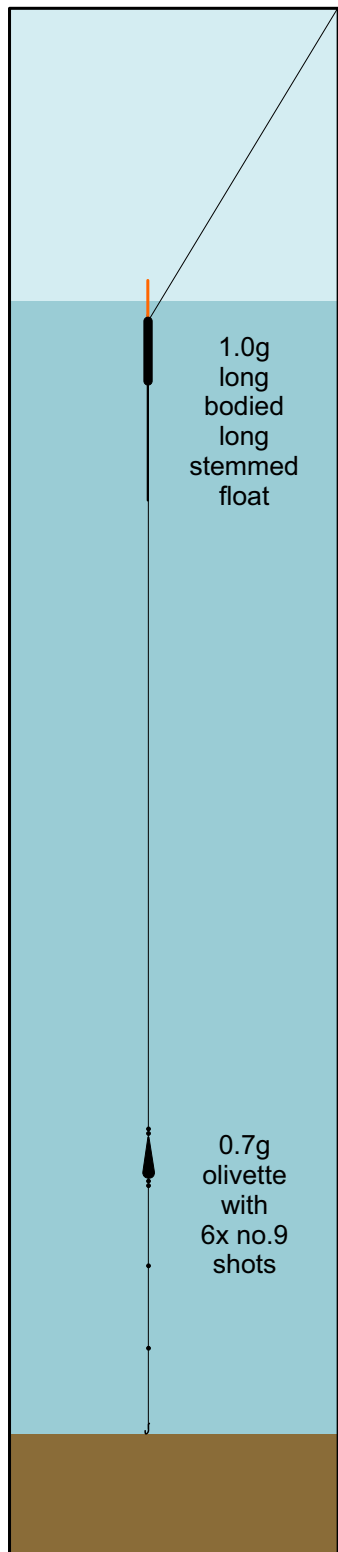
7x no.9 and 2x no.11 Stotz equally spaced from the 6" (15cm) hooklink to the float

Size 16 F1 Pellet hook on a 0.13mm (4lb) 6" (15cm) Hooklink



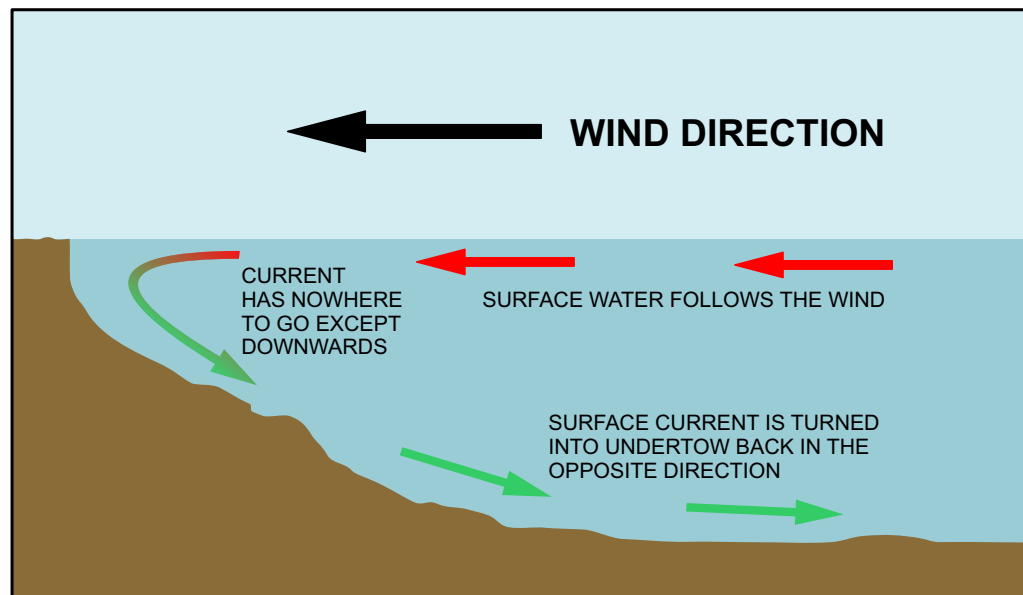
With Margin, Paste and Shallow rigs, you will probably be targeting larger fish. In the Margins you may be fishing close to snags like trees, bushes, reeds, weed and tree roots. Fishing shallow also means you may hook into the larger, braver and more experienced Carp. Fish that are not worried about showing themselves on the surface. In either case, stronger tackle is required as well as steady nerves to tame these beasts on the Pole.

Far right diagram shows how you need to think about how you plumb the depth with different rigs and bait. Fig.1 A paste rig is set with the water level halfway up the bristle, where the bait will pull it when you fish. Fig.2 is a Pellet rig with the body touching the water. This will mean the bait will lay slightly on the bottom.



SHOTTING WITH OLIVETTES -
To me, Olivettes only really come in handy for deeper waters, probably over 6 or 7 feet deep. (2 to 2.3 metres). I may use them when I feel I simply need a heavier float, when there is a strong undertow or when it's really windy. Usually the last two go together.

The left diagram shows a 1g float with a slim body. This is the kind of float I would use on deeper venues. I have shown a 1g float, but I would go heavier to a 1.25g or a 1.5g float if I had to. A lot would depend on the wind, depth and undertow conditions.



UNDERTOW.
Undertow is generated in lakes on a windy days. Basically, the wind blows the surface of the water towards one end of the lake. When it can go no further, the energy has to go somewhere. It can't go up, so it goes down and back in the opposite direction. This can play havoc with your rig as the float goes one direction and the bait in the other. A heavier rig will help.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIPS FOR PRESENTING YOUR BAIT -

There are so many ways of presenting your bait with a Pole and a few of them are listed here. Because of the direct control you have over your float, you can vary the ways in which your bait behaves in your swim without adjusting your rig or even shipping your Pole back.

- **FREE FALL** - The easiest presentation is to just lay your rig on the surface and let gravity do it's thing. Heavily dependent on shot positions.
- **TIGHT LINE** - Same as above only you hold a tight line to your float. This helps slow the bait down a little through the water.
- **CENTRED** - Lay your rig on the surface of the water and drag it over so the middle of your rig is over the spot that you are feeding. Let the float move freely to 'catch up' with the bait and then the float will settle over your feed zone.
- **DROP, HOLD & LOWER** - Feeding fish can be a pest. I'll explain. You may hear anglers say "*I had too many fish in my swim*". You may think that this is not a bad problem to have. But if you allow your rig to *sweep* into a heavily populated swim, the chances are you will end up *foul hooking* one of them. Which we don't want. The best way avoid this is to position your rig over the feed zone, drop your rig in quickly but, hold your float completely out of the water until the rest of the rig catches up. You will see your line straighten when it does. Hold it there for a second or two. Then lower it slowly down so your float can settle. You're not looking for bites on the drop, you just want to get your bait through the feeding fish so they can pick the bait up properly. Usually used with pellets.
- **FLICKING** - Sometimes, despite how carefully you have fed your swim, the bites can slow down or stop completely. The chances are that the fish still there, they have just backed off, away from your feed zone. You can test this by flicking your rig past your feed zone straight out, to the left and right. You may just reconnect with your fish again. If you do, fish this new area by changing the angle of your Pole or adding sections if you can.
- **SLAPPING** - Noise plays a big part in fishing, as long as it is the right kind of noise!. Some baits, particularly Pellets, Meat and Corn. Make an inviting sound when they hit the water. You can replicate this sound by literally hitting the water with your Pole rig, **NOT YOUR POLE**. Try to keep the Pole tip out of the water. Particularly effective when you are fishing for Carp, shallow in the summer.
- **LIFT & DROP** - When you are fishing on the bottom with expander pellets, things can become a little bit cloudy down there. You can bring your bait to the attention of the fish by slowly lifting the float out of the water and dropping it back in

again. This action will lift your bait out of the cloudy chaos and reintroduce it, hopefully catching the attention of the nearest fish. Do this every 30 seconds to two minutes, depending on what the fish want.

If you ever questioned whether if you actually needed a Pole, then this list is a good reason why you do. Poles can be a very effective weapon because everything listed here can be done without you needing to bring the Pole back even once. Something impossible with a rod and reel.

MARKING THE DEPTH -

Making a note of the depth of your rig is vital to keeping the depth about right. If you need to adjust your depth more shallow or deeper, you will need a reference to measure it from, or bring it back to.

Some anglers use a small shot directly underneath the float as a marker.

But I prefer to make a mark on my Pole using either float paint or Tippex.

But there is a vital thing to remember before you do this.

Most people will put the hook on the bottom of the Top Kit section so they can mark their Pole. This is ok if you are fishing a depth similar to the length of your Top Kit, but if you are fishing shallow or at a depth much shorter than your Top Kit, the rig will be held so tight that it will stretch the line anything up to 5cm or more.

If you mark your Pole with the rig stretched out like this, you will get a false reading and you could end up fishing way deeper than you want to.

Take the tension out of the rig before you mark the Pole to get a true reading of the depth.

Tippex or float paint (Same stuff only coloured) is fine to paint on your Pole. It won't harm the Pole and it scratches off with a finger nail easily.

BACK SHOTTING -

By placing a No.8 shot or Stotz above your float, about halfway between the float and your pole tip, you will find that you will hit more bites. The shots help take up some of the slack line, so you have less to pick up when you do get a bite.

Back Shotting will also help you to keep more control over your rig on windy days by stabilising the line and stop it blowing the float around.

Remember not to lower the back shots into the water though. You may end up getting false bites and frustration will set in as you strike at nothing all day.

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES -

Pole fishing can be fairly extreme and needs some special equipment to take it to those extremes. Very long Poles can be awkward to use and put a lot of strain on your body. The need for a decent Seat Box is essential for comfort and to help your back. A footplate or platform will help you to hold your pole correctly and enable you to have some vital accessories close by.

Your seated position needs careful consideration to prevent muscular strains and/or back problems.

Good sized side tray will help to keep everything that you need close to hand. One with a pram style hood or a lid is even better.



ROLLERS -

Single Pole rollers are essential for any Poles up to 6 or 7 metres. Poles longer than that will require two rollers.

I recommend that the rollers to choose are the *Flatbed* rollers, with 4 adjustable legs, two flat and three vertical rollers. You can use both sides of the roller independently, important when you have no room behind you to push a long Pole back and you have to break it down twice.



POLE ROOST -

Poles can be expensive and so are the spares. Putting your Pole or Top Kits on the ground is a recipe for disaster. They can get damaged and/or broken turning your happy days fishing into an expensive one. A Pole roost will keep your Top Kits safe and secure in high winds. A roost will also stop Top Kits getting all gritty and muddy, the deadly enemy of carbon fibre. You can buy them for your Seat Box legs or as a free standing unit. Either option will be better than nothing.

POLE SOCKS & TULIPS -

These items have a few uses. They both keep your Pole safe and protected

They can also save you time in matches because the Pole will always be in the same position, so you can concentrate on what you are doing rather than reaching around for your Pole.

They will keep your Pole in place when the wind is blowing, stopping it from falling on the ground and getting damaged.

You may have to ship your Pole back up a slope and without a Sock or Tulip, your sections could slide beneath the waves and be lost forever.



POLE SOCK -

Small, soft mesh pouches on a padded frame that can be screwed into attachments on your Seat Box. A Sock will hold your Pole when you don't need it or when you are landing a fish. This model (above) has a Tulip between two Socks. Single or double Socks, both are good. I use the Sock for the larger sections of my Pole.

TULIP -

I use my Tulip for holding my Pole when I have removed the Top Kit to land a fish. Made of flexible plastic with a rubber spring, it holds the Pole firmly and securely.

LONG LANDING

NET HANDLE -

Having a long handle will help you to land fish quicker which also means there is less stress for the fish. Long

handles take some getting used to and they can be expensive. Shorter handles are fine for smaller anglers, but bare in mine that long 4 metre handles have two threads so you can use them at two lengths. If you look after it, a handle should last for years, so a 4 metre handle could save you money in the long term.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR POLE -

We have looked at the kind of equipment you need to look after your Pole on the bank. But there is much more you can do to keep it in tip top condition.

DRYING -

Even on the hottest of summer days, your Pole will get wet from time to time. You need to dry it out thoroughly to stop it from smelling bad and going mouldy. The carbon will be fine but, who wants a furry Pole?

If you air dry your Top Kits the elastics will last much longer than if they left wet. Note I said AIR dried, not sun dried.

Drying your Pole also makes it easier to clean.

CLEANING -

Once the Pole has dried completely (I stand all the sections in a quiet corner of a room for a day or two)

I use special brushes to clean the inside of the Pole. These brushes are called *Roubaisien Kits*. Sections of aluminium tubes that screw together with a wooden handle and three different sized brushes. I have adapted mine to a long telescopic classroom pointer. This makes it far easier to use. I always use the brushes dry so that I can get all the grit, sand and dirt loosened off before I wash it. Removing dirt matters as much on the inside of the pole as it does on the outside.

Once you have swept the sections out, I will rinse the insides out with a hose (summer) or in the shower (winter)

Now get a washing up bowl or clean bucket and fill it with warm tap water and a few drops of washing up liquid. Use a soft sponge to carefully clean the sections, rinsing your sponge frequently. Don't go to the bottom of the bucket or bowl with the sponge or you will pick up the grit you have just washed off and you may scratch your Pole.

If it's warm, you can lay the sections (not Top Kits) out in the garden on your Pole roosts to dry thoroughly. Otherwise I will bring them inside and dry them as before.

Only when the Pole is completely dry will I pack it away again.

I will put the Top Kits that I have used out to dry, putting them together and storing them somewhere safe. I will also give the elastics a wipe with a dry cloth and some fresh lubricant before putting them back in their tubes.

STORAGE -

Most Poles will come in some kind of case or carry all. Which fine when the pole is new, but the Top Kits, when assembled, may need a different kind of protection.

My preferred choice is the *Top Kit Tubes* from Preston Innovations.



These tubes have separate compartments with a protected divider. Each section of your Top Kit is stored in it's own compartment and so are perfectly protected. You can even attach your rigs at home and keep them on the Kits in the tubes, ready for action.

They are not cheap. But cheaper than new sections.

SKID BUNGS -

Some makes of Pole come with *Skid bungs* as standard. A plastic or foam protector that fits inside the end section of your Pole that stops them getting damaged or chipped. If you have to push your Pole through any trees or bushes, Skid Bungs can help lead the way because of their bullet shaped ends.



Poles can get quite hot in the sun and there is not much you can do about that really. Just be aware that when you reach for your Pole, it might be hot. Some pole have a special finish on them that feels cold even in direct sunlight. My Pole has this finish and I love it. I have no idea how it works and I don't care. Maybe it's just *Magic*....

SUMMARY



Pole fishing has changed the face of coarse fishing, so much so, that it has become a conquering method.

To get anywhere in matches these days, even at club level, fishing with a Pole has to be one of the skills you have to master.

I first tried Pole fishing way back in the 80's, when modern Pole fishing was just emerging in the UK. I loved it straight away, although I am glad that I was forced to fish for many years with a rod and line.

Modern Pole fishing is light years away from those early days and with the Carp age now well upon us, Poles have had to adapt and they swept many anglers along to keep up with and develop new ways of using them.

Yes they can be cumbersome and heavy at their longest lengths. They can also shatter the nerves when a big fish is hooked and this great long thing is bent at alarming angles.

But the pro's most definitely outweigh the cons.

Like them or not, they are here to stay and will continue to lead technology in fishing for many years to come.