

Learner's Corner - Rods by Johnny Butler of Fly South (JohnBButlerIII-FlySouth@yahoo.com)

I. Questions to Ask

- A. What am I going to fish for with my rod? Trout, bass, sunfish, stripers, redbfish, etc.
- B. Where am I primarily going to fish? Saluda, small streams, western rivers, ponds
- C. What rods do I already have?
- D. How much do I want to spend?

II. Answers

- A. One rod cannot do everything. You cannot use one rod and effectively fish for small trout in Smokies headwaters and all trout in the North Mills and Stripers in the Congaree. You have to compromise on something such as length, weight, etc. For example a 9 foot rod is great for the Saluda and, southeastern tailwaters and western rivers but is a little long for the Davidson and North Mills. A 6 weight rod is great for the Saluda, small stripers, and bass but not as much fun for most trout, especially small trout and small sunfish. You do not want to fish for 99 % of trout with an eight weight rod.
- B. If you live in the Midlands area and you are buying one rod, I would recommend an 8 1/2 foot, 4 piece, 5 weight rod. It will not do everything but it will be fine for the Saluda, fine for the Davidson, Tuckaseege, North Mills, western rivers (maybe a little short but still serviceable) bass and sunfish and **small** stripers.
- C. All things equal buy the cheapest quality rod you cast well and which has a warranty of some kind.

III. Suggestions

- A. **I CANNOT STRESS THIS ENOUGH!!! CAST ANY ROD BEFORE YOU BUY IT!!! DO NOT BUY A ROD FROM A CATALOG OR ONLINE UNLESS YOU HAVE ALREADY CAST IT SOMEWHERE. EVEN BEGINNERS CAST SOME RODS BETTER THAN OTHERS. USUALLY THE ROD WILL TELL YOU IF IT IS THE BEST ONE FOR YOU. IF A SHOE STORE LETS YOU TRY ON SHOES BEFORE BUYING WHY DOESN'T A FLY FISHING RETAILER LET YOU CAST A ROD BEFORE BUYING? THE ANSWER - IT IS A LOT OF TROUBLE AND TAKES TIME AND EXPERTISE.**
- B. Do not buy a 2 piece rod. Modern 4 piece rods cast as well as 2 piece rods and if you ever have to travel on an airline for a fishing trip, the 4 piece rod will fit in most checked luggage. Heck a 2 piece rod will not even fit in a lot of car trunks.
- C. Be careful where you set the rod down, assembling and disassembling the rod, make sure the sections are securely put together, be careful trying to pull your fly from a tree or a snag, be careful taking off your strike indicators.

D. Do not put your rod back in the case wet.