

The Tuesday Swim...

Cult Carp Reels

Thursday 22 May 2014

I think its time for a bit of tackle talk, its been a while and I quite enjoy it...

I'm constantly chopping and changing when it comes to my general carp set up, the rods stay pretty much the same, for jungle warfare I use my B James IV with six inches missing off the top (possibly my favourite rod), general carp fishing a standard B James Mark IV full length, and for slightly heavier fish or snaggy swims my Allcocks Carp Superb with its longer handle, this rod has a little more back bone in the butt although it sports a Mark IV taper.


When it comes to reels though I can never make my mind up. For margin work I always use a Speedia Wide drum with 12lbs line or an Allcocks C815 for lighter lines, say 8-10lbs. But when it comes to fixed spool reels I keep using different models and find they are not quite right for one reason or another. I have the problem that my basement is fast becoming a museum for old fishing tackle, I'm a user not a collector so I am trying to sell the 'deadwood' and use the 'keepers'. Letting go of the 'deadwood' can be a hard process but I generally have never regretted selling any old tackle especially if it under performs.



For a fixed spool reel you need something that pairs well with a cane rod (my rod material of choice), call me a bit of a tackle tart but it needs to look right and feel well balanced. The obvious choice is the Mitchell 300 but that scratchy clutch, no line roller, and general coffee grinder mechanics can leave you with a heart-in-the-mouth moment when a larger fish takes flight. The [Hardy Altex](#) has a beautiful smooth clutch and casts very well but I don't trust that bail arm, maybe its because my particular example has let me down in the past, I keep thinking its going to let go just at a critical point.

So where do we go from here? I want a good retrieve, good size spool, excellent clutch, decent size handle, quality engineering, overall reliability and finally something that sits well on a cane rod. I think the answer comes from Sweden.

Cardinal welter-weights... thrive on hard work



Meet, first of all, a newcomer to this all-star cast, the **Cardinal 66 Express**. It's destined to become a first choice for specimen hunters who go for big barbel, carp or pike. With a gear ratio of 1:5.2 which claws back 83 cms of line per crank revolution, there's little chance of a fish creating enough slack to throw the hook when running inshore at speed. It's also a nice reel for the shore angler who wants to give cod and bass a sporting chance in white-water surf. Weight 400 g.

Cardinal 66. Use it in similar situations to those recommended for its speedier brother. Retrieve rate of 1:3.3, spooling back 53 cms of line per crank revolution. Weight 385 g.

Cardinal 60. Take a look at the price! A budget-priced version of the series, new for 1977. It has precision-cut prism cogs, self-lubricating bearing, stationary line roller and different design of housing. Otherwise the fine quality and will to work are all there. Retrieve ratio of 1:3.7. Weight 410 g.

Spare spools for 66X, 66 or 60 are available.

For recommended rods see chart on pages 26-27. For spool capacities, see chart on page 81.

The fore-runners - ABU 333 and 444A. They've been around for years, these two, and are still going strong. Anglers who bought one all those years ago will tell you that such is their tough knockabout quality that the only reason they can think of for replacing them is to get a more luxurious model.

ABU 333 Example capacity: 100 m 0.40 mm Abulon. Weight 315 g.

ABU 444A Superbly engineered with precision machined prismatic drive gear of solid brass giving 1:3.0 ratio - that's 45 cms of line per crank revolution. Example capacity: 130 m 0.35 mm Abulon. Weight 320 g.

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Finally after some trial and error I have found my reel of choice for carp or indeed pike and barbel fishing, the Abu Cardinal 66. The clutch is so well set up that I can use it as a Baitrunner, slackening off the clutch and then with a quick twist engage the reel into a fighting fish mode. The engineering is superb with a metal spool, roller on the bail arm, ultra smooth gears, decent sized handle, tight springs on the bail arm that slam it shut with a clunk, its the right weight, and overall it is the right size, not too large or too small. The green and cream is a good looking reel that sit well on a cane rod, only draw back, getting spare spools, anyone?



Looking forward I have a plan for the ultimate rod and reel set-up. I would stay with the Mark IV cane option but place something completely modern on it, a reel that showcases the best of new technology but already holds some form of cult status. I still want to experience the qualities of split cane but combine it with high octane engineering incorporating quality clutch control and line lay. The analogy could be that of placing a modern tuned and reliable engine with efficient brakes and cram it into a classic car. The reel I'm thinking of is the Daiwa SS2600 Tournament or its little brother the SS1600. Will it look strange? Possibly, but not as strange as the looks in the tackle shop when I rock up with a Mark IV and ask to place a SS2600 Tournament on it! Personally I can see this working, it could be a joyous set-up to use. Ok, tackle talk over and out.



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[5 thoughts on "Cult carp reels."](#)

1.  [Gary Hazell](#) said:

[May 29, 2014 at 6:13 am](#)

We share the same values on many aspects of fishing, much like you I like the robustness of the Abu reels and pair exactly the same one but on a Chapman 500 deluxe. My B James I keep for lighter river work especially as mine is a Kennet Perfection which I pair with a Speedia.

However the dilemma of pairing a contemporary reel resulted in the purchase of a Shimano 5500GT and for barbel using the 8000 Series. I believe a Mitchell 300 or Allcock's Mark IV would manage most situations but it is that underlying thought of will it let go!