

New reel nice, not perfect

THE CLAIM on the spinning reel is that it employs "no tangle technology." That doesn't mean foolproof, however, and by golly I knew I was just the fool to prove it.



Kelly Bostian
Outdoors

kelly.bostian
@tulsaworld.com
581-8357

Product reviews won't be a regular feature in this column, but every so often something might be just interesting enough to tempt me. When Carrell Tallent of Mainstream Marketing told me about the

newest product he represents I was interested from several angles.

Anything that claimed to be truly revolutionary where fishing reel design is concerned had to be interesting. Hasn't it all be tried? It also claimed a "green" angle by virtue of eliminating the need to dispose of tangled lines. Discarded line around fishing areas is high on my pet peeves list, so that was interesting. And I was interested in learning a little more about how new products find their way to local store shelves.

Tallent said WaveSpin reels, which are not yet on area store shelves, were the darlings of July's International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades show, better known as ICAST. That, essentially, is why his company represents them. He also said that he and local bass pro Justin Titus of Broken Arrow would be putting the reel through its paces and that I was welcome to participate.

The unavoidable irony at this point is that part of the marketing process involves putting such products in the hands of outdoor writers like me. In recruiting me to participate, Tallent was doing his job, which is part of the process of getting new products in front of local anglers. In this case I was willing to play



Carrell Tallent holds a heavy shouldered largemouth bass for a photo Tuesday morning before releasing it back into Verdigris River. KELLY BOSTIAN/Tulsa World

along but beware, dear reader, we're treading in the realm of marketers today.

The serrated appearance of the spool on these new spinning reels is odd, but the concept seems logical. With smooth spools the line is in constant contact so there is more friction as line is cast. If a loop forms, it gets pinched against the spool's surface and, often, when the line is next cast it will grab that loop, pull off more line and cause a bird's nest. With notches in the spool a loop can drop into the indentations; so, no pinching, no tangles. Less friction also means longer, easier casts, or so the claim goes.

Titus took us to the Verdigris River at a point straight east of Broken Arrow off 71st Street and we worked some fine looking bass waters a 20-minute drive from downtown Tulsa on Tuesday. We picked line and purposely put loops into our spools. The following casts sounded awful but the loops did disappear without causing bird nests.

Then I got mean. I flipped off the anti-reverse and slapped at the handle with slack in the line. I got sloppy with casts (sloppier than usual) and went from a buzz-bait to a spinner and got some twist into the line. I reeled in loads of slack while holding the rod and reel nearly vertical. After about two hours I got what I wanted. "Well, there you go, I've never seen

it do that, ever," Tallent said. Away went about 30 yards of 8-pound-test SeaGuar fluorocarbon. There was no unraveling that mess. Ha! Mission accomplished.

Then Tallent allowed that the spool may have been filled a little too full and it might work better with less line. In three more hours of fishing I had no more tangles, try as I might. I also have to admit that the combination of that WaveCast DHxL reel with a 6 1/2-foot medium-weight CastAway graphite rod had me casting beyond my typical skill level. Titus even commented "perfect cast ... nice, right where it needed to be" on several throws. I considered that high praise from a pro. Then again, maybe he was just tired of pulling my lures out of the trees and wanted to encourage better casts.

At one point Tallent and Titus compared some of their most recent tackle acquisitions from sponsors and clients. They had piles and boxes of new lures I'd never seen before. The fishing and testing part of the new products business is an enjoyable process to say the least. I think I found a couple of guys who have jobs that are even better than mine. We did catch some heavy shouldered river-dwelling bass Tuesday as well, by the way.

The WaveSpin did live up to its maker's claims Tuesday, but I think also proved that any reel needs to be spooled correctly and used properly with the right kind of line to avoid tangles and to cast at optimum performance. The WaveSpin is a smooth-casting, smooth-retrieving reel, but nothing is foolproof.