

# So you want to start carp fishing?...



## Part Two:

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Ian Gemson of smartcarping.com continues his advice on choosing the right tackle.

### REELS, BIG PITS OR FREE SPOOL AND LINE

The majority of angling is undertaken using fixed spool reels. A fixed spool reel is normally controlled by a clutch which may be at the front or at the rear of the reel body. The clutch allows the angler to set the tension at which line can be pulled from the spool with the bale arm engaged. This tension needs to be set to prevent breakage of the main line when playing a large fish. The Free spool or often called baitrunner® which is a Shimano trade mark, is an additional clutch that can be engaged to let line flow freely from the spool with the bale-arm engaged, but with a simple turn of the reel handle or flick of the free spool lever, the normal clutch tension is re applied to the spool.

What advantage does this give? With the rods in the rests or on alarms, the baitrunner allows line to „freespool“ from the reel when a fish picks up the bait and is hooked against the lead or feeder. If the line was unable to release from the spool, then the rod would be pulled into the water or the line would break.

### FREE SPOOL REELS

Carp reels fall into two main categories, the first and possibly the most popular is a free spool type reel, Most anglers refer to these as baitrunners® which is a Shimano trade mark for their easy to use free spool system. Due to the self hooking nature of modern carp rigs when a carp picks up your bait and is hooked they normally spook and swim off at great speed, without a free spool system on your reels your carp rod and reel would be dragged into the lake.

Free spool type reels are available in a whole range of sizes from small reels suitable for Barbel, Tench or Bream fishing with small capacity spools 195M 12lb line through to the biggest which can hold 600m 12lb line.

### BIG PIT REELS

Big pit reels are designed to carry large quantities of high diameter line which is required when tackling large lakes and reservoirs. The extra diameter line (increased breaking strain) would fill a normal spool quickly and therefore creates a lot of line drag as the line leaves the spool during a cast, this drag will greatly reduce your casting range. To ensure you have enough line of the right diameter on the spool for the range you are fishing, a large spooled big pit reel is the answer. These reels have slower gearing and longer reel handles which enable them to have very powerful retrieve capability which can be useful when pulling in a ton of weed or that once in a life time huge carp. A front clutch system is the norm on most big pit reels some have a standard clutch which means you have to turn the front drag knob many turns to get the clutch to fully disengage, others have a quick front clutch which only require a small 90 degree turn to disengage. The front clutch needs to be loosened after you have cast your rig out into the lake to achieve the free spool you will need if you get a take.

### LINE

There are two main types of fishing lines available monofilament and fluorocarbon line. Mono filament line is normally a cheaper line and has a better breaking strain for its given diameter than the same diameter fluorocarbon line. However fluorocarbon line has a couple of advantages over monofilament. Due to the makeup of fluorocarbon the line has the same light refractive index as water this means that it is invisible in water once it is laying on the lake bed, it is also a sinking line which means



it will sit nicely on the bottom of the lake bed out of the way of the carp as they swim near your rigs. Monofilament line has many properties which can be useful when fishing, abrasion resistance, suppleness, knot strength, pre stretched, coloured, diameter and floating not forgetting breaking strain the choice is huge. A good value for money line is what most people will be looking for with this in mind I would recommend Daiwa sensor in either dark or clear depending upon your preference a line that is supple knots well and has low diameter with a strong breaking strain. If you are fishing clear lakes with little or no snags 12lb line which has a diameter of .33mm is ideal however if your venue is snaggy or has gravel bars or bed of muscles which can damage your line then 15lb at .37mm or 18lb at .40mm would be suitable. If you want to spend a little more on your line Pro clear by Terry Eustace is a great line that has all the benefits of mono being thin, supple, knots well and best of all sinks like a stone.



Fluorocarbon line is generally thicker and more wiry this can make the line more difficult to cast at range, if you are fishing close in or even at mid range you would not have the lines problems. A good fluoro is P-Line Fluorocarbon which for a fluoro line is remarkably supple and soft. Please note you will normally pay double or triple the amount you pay for the same breaking strain monofilament line.



### ROD RESTS AND ALARMS

To allow the free spool system to work correctly and to keep your nice tackle off the muddy floor bank sticks or rod pods are used. Both are effective rod support systems with the rod pods working well on hard ground where putting bank sticks in is difficult and sticks are best suited to a more grassy or muddy type bank.

A rod pod normally has four bank sticks one in each corner held vertically in place by interconnecting rods or poles. Due to the large number of joints rod pods can be difficult to stabilize and in operation very wobbly. This rod pod uses a three rod buzzer bar to mount the front alarms or rests and rear rod rests.



Bank sticks are available in aluminium, steel, stainless steel and carbon fibre no



matter what material you decide upon they all do the same thing, with a point at one end and a female thread to accept the rod rest or alarm at the other. The rear rod rest should support the rod without damaging the carbon and at the same time grip the rod to help prevent the rod from being dragged into the lake if you have forgotten to turn the free spool on. These have adjustable rubber balls that grip the rod when it is placed upon the rest.