Getting Terminal



Now, your fishing buddies, Negative Nellie and Cheapskate Charlie, may argue that the difference in strength and visibility

is not enough to make a difference. This may be true some of

the time. That said, on those tough days when you are searching

for that one bite to turn a bad day good, don't you want to have

every advantage possible? The added security of fluorocarbon's

Monofilament vs. Fluorocarbon For Leader Material

By John Bette

ne topic of discussion that seems to come up more than a few times a year is that of using monofilament for leaders vs. fluorocarbon, usually with the thought of saving a few bucks. I will first try to clarify some differences in the materials to help you better understand them without getting too deep into the science of these materials.

Monofilament is basically a single strand of nylon line, the exception being some of the newer co-polymer lines which are a blended or multi-strand nylon. Fluorocarbon is a multilayered material with a harder outer shell coating that is designed to resist abrasion better. Some of the chemicals used to make fluorocarbon are the same as those used to make Teflon, with which I'm sure most everyone is familiar. That is what helps give the fluorocarbon superior durability. Over the years, technology has really advanced monofilament, but for leader purposes it is just not strong enough yet for musky fishing.

With this column, I hope to clear up any confusion about why you shouldn't be using monofilament for anything but your main line, and help you to understand why it is important to use fluorocarbon for leader applications.

The argument always seems to be that monofilament is so much less expensive than fluorocarbon that you can save a lot of money, and this statement is 100 percent true. It does help with expenses and, yes, some people have success using it. There are many brands of monofilament leader material, which is mostly used in the saltwater market as a go-between for your main line and steel or fluorocarbon leader. The salt guys tend to want to have much longer lengths of material, in some cases 25 to 100 feet of monofilament leader. Keep in mind that if they are pursuing toothy fish they are still probably adding a piece of fluorocarbon at the lure end of their set-ups.

If the goal is to keep the odds of failure low, spend the extra money and use fluorocarbon. Fluorocarbon provides a much heavier outer coating as earlier mentioned, which in turn gives better abrasion resistance which is our first and foremost concern — the reason for using a leader in the first place. It is also going to provide reduced visibility, especially in clear water. Fluorocarbon has a refractive index closer to that of water than any other material on the market. While both monofilament and fluorocarbon look clear to the naked eye, science says otherwise.

higher abrasion resistance over monofilament gives a little more comfortable mindset when you do finally engage a fish. The two factors of higher abrasion resistance and better invisibility are not what I would call basic knowledge, but they are two of the main reasons people choose fluorocarbon over monofilament.

There is another important reason. While fluorocarbon is UV-resistant and will hold up in just about any weather element we face, monofilament is not. Monofilament breaks down from ultraviolet rays and is also damaged by heat and cold. Therefore, over time it will break down whether you ever have a fish leader materials, fluoro is the better choice. The only advantage strike or not. Monofilament simply will not last nearly as long

> and needs to be changed more often just as it does on your fishing reels when you use a monofilament application.

> Most of my friends who run trolling charters on a daily basis through the summer on Lake St. Clair will respool their reels once a month for this very reason. Their equipment is out in the sunlight all day everyday throughout a season, and these experienced fishermen understand the importance of taking care of their line to prevent failure. The same concept applies to a monofilament leader.

> Finally, fluorocarbon has less stretch than monofilament, so it helps get the hook set. It is a heavier material as well, so in a trolling application it will help keep your lures running a bit deeper. This makes fluorocarbon much more sensitive than mono, especially if you do any crossover fishing for walleyes or other species.

> Both materials have a place in the fishing industry. However, as far as your leaders go, spending a little extra on the higher quality leader will work to your advantage. We invest too much money in this sport to skimp on the little things that really do matter.

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If you objectively compare fluorocarbon vs. monofilament for

mono has is it is less expensive.