
Classic Rods and Rodmakers: Bill Edwards' Quadrates

by Bob Maulucci

As my ongoing love affair with four sided "quadrate" rods continues, I find myself digging deeper to find interesting four sided rods from the classic era. Two rods that have left my bench recently are a delightful pair of Edwards rod tapers sent from rodmaker Chris McDowell.

The first of these rods is just the right ticket for modern casting tastes. Measuring in at 7', this rod should be suitable to many modern people preferring shorter rods. Chris's finely detailed measurements show a few important things. One, they show the Edwards' beveller can produce tapers more finely tuned than the average hand planer working with 5" centers. Secondly, the numbers show great variance between tips, making me suspect that the beveller did something strange on tip two (Look at the strange numbers around the 25" station). The second rod is a more commonly seen configuration, measuring in at 8'6." I bet this rod could lay out a long line in the hands of a capable caster.

Eustis Edwards started the Edwards' family legacy, working for the Leonard Company and later with fellow Leonard alumni Loman Hawes, Fred Thomas, and Ed Payne. After several combinations of joint ventures amongst these makers, Eustis set out with his own, E.W. Edwards Rod Company. He made rods both for his own label and eventually for Winchester and Bristol. Many believe these to be among the finest production rods ever made. Sons, Gene and Bill joined their father and later went on to find their own successes after the death of their father in the early 1930s.

It is Bill Edwards who is responsible for the fabulous "Edwards' Quadrate" line of rods. The tapers of his W.E. Edwards Rod Co. range from Ultra Light 6' models to 10' 6" Salmon rods. The main line of rods consisted of four distinct series, designated by the numbers 30, 40, 50, and 60. The #30 rods were lower to standard quality 3 piece rods in longer 8' and up lengths; the #40 rods were 2 piece rods; the #50 rods were the cream of the crop, 3 piece rods from 7'6" to 9'6" models; the #60 series rods were heavier salmon models. The rods that I have seen are built on blanks with rounded edges and have plastic winding checks that make a nice transition from grip to square blank. The squared NS ferrules make for a smooth transition to the blank itself.

If you have yet to build a quad, I think you will like them. I find that they have a deadly accuracy and invoke smooth casting stroke from the fisherman. Their reserve power is there to give you a sense of security when you feel like stretching out a cast to a distant fish, and their dynamic nature makes them comfortable and convenient all day fishing tools. Enjoy these two tapers from the master who has inspired modern greats like Sam Carlson, Per Brandin, John Zimny, John Irgens, Mike Spittler, Glen Brackett, and others to carry on the "quadrate" torch. Thanks again to Chris for these tapers.



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Edwards' Quadrate #25 7' for 4 DT 2/2

	#1	#2
0"	.062	Broken
2.5"	.070	.077
5"	.088	.086
7.5"	.102	.094
10"	.103	.100
12.5"	.106	.102
15"	.108	.102
17.5"	.115	.108
20"	.129	.115
22.5"	.132	.117 (.013 diff in the two #2 mics)
25"	.137	.136
27.5"	.140	.130 (Yes this is correct)
30"	.144	.131
32.5"	.149	.143
35"	.158	.148
37.5"	.162	.151
40"	.158	.152

Ferrule

44"	.166
45"	.170
47.5"	.180
50"	.194
52.5"	.200
55"	.202
57.5"	.203
60"	.208
62.5"	.219
65"	.229
67.5"	.238
70"	.239
72.5"	.248
75"	.280 estimated

Handle starts at about 74"

Guide Spacing

1st	4 3/16"
2nd	9 1/8"
3rd	15"
4th	21"
5th	27 3/8"
6th	34 1/4"
7th	40 1/4" (foot to ferrule serrations)
8th	47 5/8"
stripper	55 3/4"

Edwards' Quadrate #35 8' 6" for 6 DT 3/2

1"	.057	.062
5"	.085	.090
10"	.097	.110
15"	.112	.120
20"	.125	.138
25"	.155	.153
30"	.165	.160
35"	.176	
40"	.188	
45"	.208	
50"	.215	
55"	.224	
60"	.238	
65"	.249	
70"	.257	
75"	.276	
80"	.312	
85"	.331	
90"	.352	

.365 max. before cork

Guide Spacing

1st	4 1/2"
2nd	10 1/2"
3rd	16 1/2"
4th	23 1/8"
5th	30"
6th	37"
7th	44 7/8"
8th	54"
9th	63"
Str.	73 1/2"

