The Joe Humphreys' Fly Fishing Stream School

At-Home Practice Set

Practice Materials & Scorecards - Print One Exercise Per Page

"The secret of life is having something exciting to look forward to. And fly fishing is that - you're going fishing."

- Joe Humphreys

How to use this pack

Print the pages you need. Scorecards reward the four elements of Joe's method - depth, drift, line control, imitation - plus stealth and stewardship, so a kid can have a great day without landing a single fish. Photocopy the at-home sheet for every family; it keeps skills alive between sessions and pulls parents in.

The big idea: a kid who scores well on drift, depth and stealth is fishing correctly - the fish will come. We measure the process, not the luck.

1. Rig-Race Drill - set up a rod from scratch

Kids arrive with tangled, unstrung rods. Make rigging a game against the clock - each angler's own stopwatch, own card, own personal best - so it never eats your session again.

The 6-step sequence (post it)

Assemble the rod sections - line up the guides straight.

Double the fly line into a loop and feed the LOOP through the guides (easier than the thin end).

Attach the leader to the line - loop-to-loop (Perfection Loop).

Add tippet to the leader with a Double Surgeon's Knot.

Tie on the fly with a Davy Knot (or Improved Clinch). Wet it.

Hook the fly to the keeper, reel up the slack - ready to fish.

Run it against your own clock

6-10: steps 1-2 only, no timer. Win = guides lined up, line through all of them.

11-13: full sequence, beat 5 minutes, then beat your own time.

14-17: full sequence under 3 minutes, knots pass a tug-test.

Times stay on the angler's own card. Nobody reads them to the group.

2. Knot Mastery Card

Initial each box when the angler ties the knot correctly three times in a row, unassisted. Your tier's knot set = Knot Tier badge: Minnow (6-10) Davy + Double Surgeon's; Brook Trout (11-13) adds Improved Clinch + Perfection Loop; Brown Trout (14-17) all five. Shade the boxes that do not apply to your tier.

Knot	What it's for	Tier	Tied 3x unassisted (initial + date)
Davy Knot	Fly to tippet (beginner go-to)	Minnow, Brook, Brown	
Double Surgeon's	Add tippet (join two lines)	Minnow, Brook, Brown	
Improved Clinch	Fly to tippet (classic standard)	Brook, Brown	
Perfection Loop	Loop at the leader butt	Brook, Brown	
Blood Knot	Join two same-diameter lines	Brown	

3. Casting Scorecard - Stop-High Target Lanes

Ten casts at hoop/plate lanes (Minnows 15-20 ft; older tiers 15-25 ft), yarn fly. **In-lane = 2 · Close = 1 · Pile/tailing loop = 0.** (A tailing loop is when the line crosses itself and the fly hooks the leader.) Track three rounds to see progress. Scores stay on the angler's own card.

Cast #	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Cast #	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Total /20			

Coaching the score (don't just count)

Piles (0): stroke too long - shorten it, stop higher.

Tailing loop: punching too hard - smooth 'squeeze,' don't throw.

Consistent 2s: add the 'TUCK!' call and a little weight.

4. The Four-Elements Drift Scorecard

Joe's scoreboard. After one drift through a seam, the angler rates each element 1-5 and names ONE thing to fix next drift. This is the heart of self-coaching.

Element	What 'good' looks like	Score 1-5
Depth	Fly ticked the bottom / got down fast	
Drift	No drag - fly moved at the speed of the bubbles	
Line control	Rod tip up, slack managed, in contact	
Imitation	Fly matched what's under the rocks	

One thing I'll fix on my next drift:

5. "Great Day" Scorecard - win without a fish

The #1 morale fix. Points for doing it right. A perfect process day = 20 points, fish or no fish. Celebrate high scorers, not just whoever got lucky.

Earn points for…	Points	Got it?
Found 3 seams and named the feeding side	4	
Approached low - kept my shadow off the water	3	
Made 5 clean stop-high casts	4	
Got my fly to the bottom on a drift	4	
Tied my own knot on the water	2	

Earn points for…	Points	Got it?
Kept a fish wet OR helped a buddy	2	
Took the ‘Look Up’ moment	1	

6. Bug-Hunt Field Sheet

Flip a rock in the riffle. Draw or tally what you find, then pick a fly to match. ‘What’s on the menu today?’

Bug I found	Clue (tails? case? size?)	How many	Fly to match
Mayfly nymph	3 tails, gills on belly		
Caddis larva	Worm in a stick/pebble case		
Stonefly nymph	2 tails, 2 claws, crawler		
Scud / cress bug	Tiny gray-orange ‘shrimp’		
Midge	Tiny thread-like wriggler		
Something else!	Draw it →		

7. The Stream School Badge Ladder

Five badges map to Joe’s method. Earn them in any order, each at your own tier’s standard (see the Badge and Patch Program); all five at your tier’s standard = Stream School Angler. Harvey Leaders sign off.

Badge	Earn it by…	Signed off
Knot Tier	Your tier’s knot set, 3x each unassisted (Minnow 2, Brook Trout 4, Brown Trout 5)	
Cast Tier	Scoring 14+/20 on the casting scorecard at your tier’s hoop distance	
Rig Tier	The 6-step Rig-Race at your tier’s standard (Brown Trout: full nymph rig from memory)	
Stream-Reading and Bug Tier	Finding 3 seams + calling the feeding side, and ID-ing the core bugs at your tier’s standard with a fly to match	

Badge	Earn it by…	Signed off
Steward Tier	Demonstrating keep-fish-wet (3-second lift) + Clean/Drain/Dry	

All five earned?

Stream School Angler - present a certificate at the capstone ‘teach-back,’ where the angler teaches one skill to a peer. Passing it on is the most Joe Humphreys thing a kid can do.

8. At-Home Practice Sheet (for families)

Set up a 5-minute backyard range

You do not need a rod. A broom handle, a stick, or just your casting hand teaches the stroke: stop at 12, drift, tap and stop at 11, squeeze at both stops. If you have a rod, tie a 1-2 ft piece of bright yarn to the end of an old leader (no hook). Set out 3 paper plates or hula hoops at 15, 20, and 25 feet (Minnows: 15 and 20). Glasses on for any rig with weight on it. That’s it - five minutes a day keeps the cast sharp.

This week’s home reps

☐ 20 short-stroke casts, stick or hand first, rod second if you have one - stop the rod HIGH, let the yarn land softly (don’t throw it).

☐ Tie a Davy knot 5 times. Then tie it once with your eyes closed.

☐ Practice the Double Surgeon’s knot joining two pieces of string.

☐ Watch water anywhere - a creek, a gutter in the rain - and find the seam where fast meets slow.

☐ Do one ‘Look Up’ outside: stop, look around, name one thing you notice.

Practice log

Day	Casts in the hoop (/10)	Knots tied	‘Look Up’ ✓
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Water rule: any practice at real water needs a parent or adult with you. No exceptions.

Parents and partners: *you don't need to fish to help. Just hold the hoop, count the hits, and ask 'which knot did you practice?' Five minutes of attention beats an hour of equipment. At the next session, the check-in is 'show one thing you practiced'; scores stay on your own card.*